

Biography of
THE HONORABLE JOYCE ELLIOTT
ARKANSAS STATE SENATOR



CHAIRMAN – JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE –
PEER REVIEW
SENATE DISTRICT 31

Arkansas State Senator Joyce Elliott is serving her second term in the Arkansas Senate representing Senate District 31, which is comprised of a portion Pulaski County. For the current 89th General Assembly, she is chairman of five important committee including:

- Chairman, Joint Budget Committee (JBC) – Peer Review
- Chairman, Arkansas Legislative Council (ALC)-Higher Education Subcommittee
- Chairman, Vision 2025 Legislative Commission on the Future of Higher Education
- Chairman, Whole Child-Whole Community Program
- Chairman, Arkansas comprehensive School Improvement Plans

Senator Elliott also serves as vice chairman of Senate Education Committee and holds membership on the following committees: Senate Insurance and Commerce; Senate Rules, Resolutions and Memorials; Joint Budget Committee; Joint Public Retirement and Social Security Programs; Arkansas Legislative Council (ALC); Desegregation Litigation Oversight Subcommittee; ALC-Review; the Task Force on Substance Abuse Treatment Services; and the Academic Facilities Oversight Committee.

Senator Elliott has been active with the Democratic Party at the local, state and national level. She is first vice chairman of the Democratic Party of Arkansas, a member of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and its Resolution Committee.

She was the Senate Majority Whip for the 88th General Assembly. Elected in November 2008, she represented then-District 33 in Little Rock and served as vice chair of Joint Retirement and Social Security. Additionally she held membership on the following committees: Joint Budget Committee; Arkansas Legislative Council; Senate Education, Insurance and Commerce; and Senate Rules, Resolutions and Memorials.

During the 87th General Assembly, she served on several legislative committees and subcommittees including Senate Education; Senate City, County and Local Affairs; Arkansas Legislative Council; Legislative Joint Auditing; and the Joint Adequacy Evaluation Oversight Subcommittee.

Regionally and nationally, Senator Elliott works with legislators as a member of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), the Southern Legislative Conference (SLC) and the Councils of State Governments (CSG). With NCSL, she is co-chair of the Education Standing Committee and sits on the Task Force on International Relations. She serves on the Education Committee for SLC and the Education Policy/Public Policy Task Force for CSG. She also serves as the President Pro Tempore's appointee to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB).

Elliott was elected to the Arkansas House of Representatives in November 2000.

In December 2006, she finished her final term in the House due to term limits. As State Representative, she served on House Judiciary; Aging, Youth, and Families; Education, where she chaired the Subcommittee on Higher Education; State Agencies; and Budget. In her final term, she was chair of the House Education Committee and served on House Insurance and Commerce, Joint Budget, Joint Energy, and the Personnel Committee.

During her career, Senator Elliott has been recognized by many organizations and groups. On June 19, 2013, she was given the Arkansas Municipal League Distinguished Legislator Award by the Arkansas Municipal League for her exemplary service benefiting cities and town of Arkansas.

In 2003 the Central Arkansas Labor Council honored Elliott with the Marty Schuller Community Service Award for outstanding contribution to community service. The same year WiLL (Women's Legislative Lobby) recognized her with its Pacesetter Award for leadership and commitment to the vision of a just, peaceful and inclusive world, and she was named by the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* as one of the Ten Best Legislators of the 2003 General Assembly and the 2005 General Assembly. Also in 2003 Elliott received the Working Families Hero Award from Service Employees International Union Local 100 and the Women Who Mean Business Award from Business and Professional Women of Arkansas.

In February 2004, *Little Rock Monthly* listed her among Ten Women We Love for her contributions to Arkansas. Also in 2004 Elliott received the Arkansas Spirit Award from the Arkansas chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners and the Impact Award from the Arkansas Regional Minority Supplier Development Council, which honored her for championing legislation to expand opportunities for minority business owners to become suppliers for state government.

In May 2004, Elliott was recognized by Women and Children First: The Center Against Family Violence for her legislative and personal advocacy on behalf of families. In July 2004, Elliott, along with 14 other women state legislators from across the United States, was chosen to participate in the Foreign Policy Institute for State Legislators sponsored by the Center for Women's Policy Studies. She was also selected by the center as one of 16 women — six from the U.S. and 10 members of parliaments from 10 other countries — to participate in the GlobalPOWER Class of 2006, which focused on the status of women around the world.

Senator Elliott was honored by LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) with the 2005 President's Award, was named by *Power Play* magazine as the 2005 Power Player of the Year, was honored by The Omni Center for Peace and Justice and Ecology with an Arkansas Heroes Award for Peace and Justice, and was honored by The Center for Healing Hearts and Spirits with its Advocacy Award.

In October 2005, she was honored by her alma mater, Southern Arkansas University, with a Distinguished Alumni Award; by the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame with the Founder's Award; and by the Arkansas Public Service Association with an Advocacy Award. The same year, she was honored by the National Conference for Community and Justice with its 2006 Humanitarian Award, and the Democratic Party of Arkansas honored her with its Gressie Carnes Democratic Woman of the Year Award.

In November 2006, ACLU-Arkansas named Elliott the Civil Libertarian of the Year, and then-Governor-elect Mike Beebe named Elliott as one of the four members of his transition team. On January 11, 2007, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families thanked her for her service with its 2006 Legislative Friend of Children Award. In December of the same year, the Arkansas chapter of 100 Black Men recognized her with its Pillar Award for Education. And in 2009, Arkansas's *Talk Business* magazine named her as one of the Top Ten Legislators of the 2009 Legislative Session, the only freshman so named.

Civically, Senator Elliott is a member of the NAACP, the Arkansas Women's Forum and the Arkansas Women's Leadership Forum and serves on the board of directors for the Milton P. Crenshaw Aviation Training Academy. She has served on the board of directors of the MacArthur Museum of Arkansas Military History (Little Rock), Just Communities of Central Arkansas (Little Rock), Women's Action for New Directions (WAND) Education Fund (Arlington, Mass.) and City Year of Little Rock.

A former member of the American Federation of Teachers and the National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges, Senator Elliott also served on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the College Board of Trustees and the National Commission on the High School Senior Year.

A native Arkansan, Elliott was born in Willisville, where she graduated from high school. She earned an undergraduate degree in English and speech from Southern Arkansas University in Magnolia in 1973 and a graduate degree in English from Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia in 1981.

For 30 years Elliott taught high school juniors and seniors Advanced Placement and standard courses. In addition to Arkansas, Elliott taught in Florida, Minnesota and Texas. In June 2004 Elliott left the classroom and began working for the College Board, focusing on expanding access to AP classes for students currently underrepresented: African-American, Latino, rural and low-income students.

A retired educator, she is a member of Mosaic Church and enjoys reading, whitewater rafting, canoeing, traveling, walking/hiking, working out at the gym, listening to various types of music, dancing and seeking an overall balanced life. Senator Elliott has one son, Elliott Barnes of Little Rock.