

Biography of
THE HONORABLE LINDA CHESTERFIELD
ARKANSAS STATE SENATOR



SENATE MINORITY WHIP
SENATE DISTRICT 12

Senator Linda Chesterfield represents District 12, which includes parts of Pulaski County on both the south and north sides of the Arkansas River. She was elected to the Senate in November 2010 and sworn in January 2011. Senator Chesterfield is the vice chair of the Senate Education Committee.

Senator Chesterfield is the co-chair of the Policy-Making Subcommittee of ALC. She is a member of the Transportation, Technology and Legislative Affairs Committee, the Senate Efficiency Committee, the Joint Retirement and Social Security Committee, the Joint Budget Committee, the Arkansas Legislative Council, the Legislative Joint Auditing Committee, the Higher Education Subcommittee, the Highway Commission Review and Advisory Subcommittee, the Medical Marijuana Oversight Subcommittee, the Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER) Subcommittee and the Uniform Personnel Classification and Compensation Plan Subcommittee. For the 94th General Assembly, Senator Chesterfield is the Senate Minority Whip.

In 2003 Senator Chesterfield was elected to the House of Representatives, where she served through 2008. She is a former co-chair of the Local 911 Systems Blue Ribbon Committee Task Force, a former chair of the Senate Transportation, Technology and Legislative Affairs Committee and a former chair of the Senate Efficiency Committee. As chair of the Senate Transportation, Technology and Legislative Affairs Committee she won passage of legislation to improve the state's highway infrastructure. Senator Chesterfield has been quoted in the past as saying "Education and economic growth are inextricably intertwined as we move forward in Arkansas to reach our full potential as a state."

Senator Chesterfield sponsored legislation for a tax exemption for single parents with two or more children. She has also sponsored legislation that promoted growth at Pulaski Technical College and for other two-year institutions in Arkansas. Senator Chesterfield also supports funding of Historic Black Colleges and Universities.

When legislation is filed that would create a new board or commission, she makes sure that its members represent a diversity of cultural backgrounds.

Senator Chesterfield is a retired teacher with more than 30 years of classroom experience teaching 7th, 8th and 9th graders. She is a past president of the Little Rock School Board and the Pulaski County Association of Classroom Teachers. She also served two terms as president of the Arkansas Education Association.

Senator Chesterfield was on the board of the National Education Association and is the only Arkansan to have been elected to the NEA's nine-member Executive Committee. She was also the chair of the NEA Black Caucus. Senator Chesterfield has been president and treasurer of the Arkansas Democratic Black Caucus and chair of the Arkansas Legislative Black Caucus. She is the Connection Chair of Beta Pi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Inc.

Senator Chesterfield received the Doctor of Humane Letters from Shorter College and Philander Smith College. She has also received the Legacy Award from the American Association of University Women and the Arkansas Democratic Black Caucus, the Hendrix Distinguished Alumna Award and the Hendrix Odyssey Award from Hendrix College.

A native of Hope, Arkansas, Senator Chesterfield is the daughter of the late Ms. Ernestine Pondexter and the granddaughter of the late Ms. Ophelia Logan. She was an honor graduate of Henry Clay Yerger High School, class of 1965. She was the first African-American to graduate from Hendrix College in Conway. Senator Chesterfield earned her M.S.E. from Ouachita Baptist University. She and her husband are members of the First Missionary Baptist Church of Greater Little Rock, where she serves as chair of the Mission Society and is a member of the Deaconess Board.