

Biography of

THE HONORABLE CECILE BLEDSOE

ARKANSAS STATE SENATOR



92nd General Assembly Committee Assignments

Co-Chair - ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (ALC)

Co-Chair - ALC-EXECUTIVE SUBCOMMITTEE

Vice-Chair - INSURANCE & COMMERCE - SENATE

Member of - JBC-CLAIMS; REVENUE & TAX - SENATE; PUBLIC RETIREMENT & SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAMS-JOINT; LEGISLATIVE JOINT AUDITING-STATE AGENCIES; SENATE RULES; RESOLUTIONS & MEMORIALS

ex officio - ALC-CLAIMS REVIEW

ex officio - JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE

ex officio - ALC-GAME & FISH/STATE POLICE

ex officio - ALC-REVIEW

ex officio - JBC-ADMINISTRATIVE RULE & REGULATION REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

ex officio - ALC-PEER

ex officio - ALC-CHARITABLE, PENAL AND CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS

ex officio - ALC-ARKANSAS HEALTH INSURANCE MARKETPLACE OVERSIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE

ex officio - ALC-HIGHER EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE

ex officio - ALC-ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

ex officio - ALC-LOTTERY OVERSIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE

ex officio - ALC-OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE

ex officio - ALC-POLICY MAKING

ex officio - ALC-PERSONNEL

ex officio - ALC-HOSPITAL AND MEDICAID STUDY SUBCOMMITTEE

ex officio - ALC-HIGHWAY COMMISSION REVIEW AND ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE

ex officio - ALC-LITIGATION REPORTS OVERSIGHT SUBCOMMITTEE

ex officio - LEGISLATIVE JOINT AUDITING

Senator Cecile Bledsoe of Rogers ranks first in seniority in the Senate and represents District 3. It encompasses the eastern part of Benton County, including Rogers, Pea Ridge, Garfield and Avoca.

She was first elected to the legislature in 1998 and served for six years in the House of Representatives. At the time that was the maximum length of time a House member could serve, under the Arkansas term limits amendment.

In 2008 she was elected to the Senate and was sworn in on the first day of the 2009 session. That's when she officially became a member of the Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare and Labor. The committee assignment was a natural fit, because of her experience running a surgical clinic.

In 2013 she became the chair of Public Health during a period in which the position was under tremendous pressure. The field of medicine never stops changing and expanding, which means there have been changes in hospital administration, the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals and the obligations of insurance companies. All of those industries are influential, and as they grow their influence in politics grows.

Senator Bledsoe tries to keep the playing field level, with the constant goal in mind of making sure that health care is accessible and affordable.

Senator Bledsoe also served on the Health Reform Legislative Task Force that recommended structural changes to the Arkansas Medicaid system, which is one of the most controversial political issues at the Capitol.

No matter how complex the issue, Senator Bledsoe brings expertise to the debate. Just as importantly she brings a calm voice and a civil tone. It's a characteristic that serves well in her new position as Senate co-chair of the Legislative Council, the panel in charge of monitoring state government operations during the interim between sessions.

She is vice chair of the Senate Committee on Insurance and Commerce and a member of the Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee. She also serves on the Joint Budget Committee, the Legislative Joint Auditing Committee and the Joint Committee on Public Retirement.

She is usually in the middle of the discussion when legislation is filed to change the scope of practice of physicians, nurses, therapists and other medical providers.

Senator Bledsoe is a faithful co-sponsor of pro-life bills. She supports and co-sponsors tax cut measures, such as the legislation cutting income taxes by \$100 million a year for middle class families, which also lowered capital gains taxes.

Senator Bledsoe sponsored the act that amended the definition of “Public Utility” to clarify that service stations will not be classified as public utilities. The result was that they were able to sell electricity for charging of battery-operated vehicles and hybrid electric vehicles. This removed potential obstacles to retail service stations that charge electric vehicles for a fee.

She sponsored Act 904 of 2011, which allowed the multi-year registration of personal use vehicles. For the first time, this gave citizens in Arkansas the ability to register their personal vehicles for up to three years in advance.

She helps secure grants and appropriations for volunteer fire departments, non-profits and civic organizations, as well as the Fayetteville Veterans Home.

Senator Bledsoe was the lead sponsor of the Telemedicine Act of 2015, as well as legislation creating a diabetes action plan for Arkansas.

Lately she has been supporting “Stop the Bleed,” a campaign supported by emergency medical personnel and the Health Department to train more people how to apply tourniquets when they’ve been injured. More than half the legislature attended a training session that she helped organize.

She has helped secure grants and appropriations for several fire departments, city and community organizations, Northwest Arkansas Community College, and the Fayetteville Veterans Home.

She has received numerous accolades during her time in the legislature: the Arkansas Medical Society selected Senator Bledsoe for their "Legislator of the Year Award" and she was recognized as a "Distinguished Legislator" by the Arkansas Municipal League. She received the Family Council Action Committee Statesman Award and the Arkansas State Chamber's Leadership Award.

Senator Bledsoe is active in the community and has served on numerous boards and commissions.

She's a former vice president and assistant office manager of the Surgical Clinic, and a graduate of the University of Georgia with a bachelor's degree in journalism.

Senator Bledsoe is from Brunswick, Georgia, and has lived in Rogers for 40 years, with her husband of 46 years, Dr. Jim Bledsoe. They have three children and they attend Cross Church in Rogers.

In spite of her busy workload, she finds time to be with her 10 grandchildren.