

Biography of
THE HONORABLE JOHNNY KEY
ARKANSAS STATE SENATOR



CHAIRMAN – SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
SENATE DISTRICT 17

Senator Johnny Key of Mountain Home represents Senate District 17, which includes portions of Baxter, Boone and Marion counties. First elected to the senate in 2008, Senator Key currently serves as chairman of the Senate Education Committee and the Arkansas Legislative Council (ALC) Administrative Rules and Regulations Committee. He is vice chairman of the Joint Budget Committee (JBC) and ALC-Policy Making for the 89th General Assembly. Additionally, he is a member of the following committees: Senate Insurance and Commerce; Senate Efficiency; Arkansas Legislative Council; JBC - Special Language; ALC-Higher Education Subcommittee; JBC - Personnel; ALC-Personnel; Joint Public Retirement and Social Security Programs; the Desegregation Litigation Oversight Subcommittee; ALC-Peer; Vision 2025 Legislative Commission on the Future of Higher Education; Academic Facilities Oversight Committee and the Arkansas Lottery Commission Legislative Oversight Committee.

During the 88th General Assembly, Senator Key served as chairman of Joint Retirement and Social Security as well as the Arkansas Lottery Commission Legislative Oversight Committee. He held membership on the Joint Budget Committee, Arkansas Legislative Council, Senate Education, Senate State Agencies and Governmental Agencies, and Senate Efficiency. During the 87th General Assembly, Senator Key served as chairman of the Academic Facilities Oversight Committee and vice chairman of the Joint Committee on Public Retirement and Social Security Programs.

He was a member of several committees and subcommittees, including Senate Education Committee; Senate Committee on City, County and Local Affairs; Joint Budget Committee; Legislative Joint Auditing; the Arkansas Lottery Commission Legislative Oversight Committee; and the Joint Adequacy Evaluation Oversight Committee.

Regionally and nationally, Key is a vice chairman of the Education Standing Committee and a member of the Budgets and Review Standing Committee of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). He also holds membership on the Education Committees for both the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and the Southern Legislative Conference (SLC) and is a member of the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee of the Council of State Governments (CSG).

Senator Key has been in public service since 1997, as a justice of the peace on the Baxter County Quorum Court. In 2003 he began a six-year term in the Arkansas House of Representatives and began serving in the Arkansas Senate in 2009. Senator Key has a conservative political philosophy and his legislative priorities are a reflection of his beliefs. He has sponsored legislation to reduce taxes on families and businesses. He was a sponsor of the bill cutting the sales tax on groceries in half and also sponsored legislation to exempt retirement and pension income. He sponsored legislation to authorize Eden Alternative and Green House projects, which are long-term care facilities that emphasize quality of life.

A supporter of higher education, Senator Key has allocated a significant share of General Improvement Funds to Arkansas State University at Mountain Home and North Arkansas College in Harrison to pay for capital projects. Additionally, he sponsored legislation to make it easier for families to save for college tuition through tax-deferred savings allowed under Section 529 of the IRS code. He has consistently supported expanded job training and technical education for students who do not go to college and need job skills. Key has also worked with Mothers Against Drunk Driving to curb drinking by teenagers and successfully supported legislation to create drug courts, expand criminal drug task forces and give law enforcement the tools needed to control the growing abuse of methamphetamine.

Civically, Senator Key serves on the ASU Mountain Home Advisory Board and is vice president for government for the Economic Arkansas Executive Board.

Key has been recognized by many organizations and groups in his career including:

- 2013 Legislative Pacesetter of the Year by the Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
- 2012 Distinguished Service Award from Arkansas State University
- 2012 Invest in Live Award from the UAMS Cord Blood Bank of Arkansas
- 2011 Guy Newcomb Award for his legislative influence and leadership from the Arkansas Pharmacists Association during its 129th Annual State Convention.
- 2010 Person of the Year by Arkansas Phi Beta Lambda for his support of Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) and Phi Beta Lambda.

Senator Key is a graduate of Gurdon High School, Class of 1986, and in 1991 he received a Bachelor of Science in chemical engineering at the University of Arkansas. Key and wife Shannon have one son and one daughter and are members of First Assembly of God Church in Mountain Home.