**Biography of U.S. Senator Johnny Isakson**

Johnny Isakson is a businessman who has built a respected record of public service to Georgia and the nation. He is the first Georgian ever to have been elected to the state House, state Senate, U.S. House and U.S. Senate. In 2016, he became the first Republican in Georgia to be elected to a third term in the U.S. Senate.

Isakson began his business career in 1967 when he opened the first Cobb County office of a small, family-owned real estate business, Northside Realty. During Isakson’s 20 years as president of Northside, the company grew into the largest independent residential real estate brokerage company in the Southeast and one of the largest in America.

Isakson entered politics in 1974 and served for 17 years in the Georgia legislature in both the House and Senate. In 1997, then-Gov. Zell Miller appointed Isakson to lead of the Georgia Board of Education as chairman. Isakson was elected in 1999 to the U.S. House for the first of three terms. In 2004, he was elected to his first term in the U.S. Senate, and he won re-election in 2010 and 2016.

Isakson brings commonsense leadership to Congress through his bipartisan efforts to address federal spending, reduce the debt, create jobs and reform burdensome federal regulations.

Since becoming chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs (VA) in 2015, Isakson has worked tirelessly to bring oversight and accountability to the agency responsible for providing care and support to our nation’s veterans. A veteran himself, Isakson has been a member of the Senate VA Committee since he joined the Senate in 2005 and played a crucial role in the massive VA reform bill, the *Veterans’ Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014*. Georgia is home to more than a dozen military bases, as well as to more than 750,000 veterans. In addition to aiding veterans, Isakson also has worked to strengthen our armed forces and has shown unwavering commitment to the men and women serving our country today.

Isakson is also chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Ethics and takes very seriously his role in maintaining the integrity of the U.S. Senate.

Isakson is a member of the Senate Committee on Finance, which has jurisdiction over taxes, trade, Medicare and Social Security. Isakson has worked to help Americans better prepare for retirement and plan ahead financially to ensure their retirement savings don’t run dry, including introducing the *Lifetime Income Disclosure Act*. Isakson has provided a businessman’s perspective on the Finance Committee and will play a key role in the debate over how to reform the nation’s broken tax system.

Isakson has also introduced the *Biennial Budgeting and Appropriations Act* to end reckless spending and reform the federal budget process by converting it from an annual spending spree to a two-year cycle, with one year for appropriating federal dollars and the other year devoted to much-needed oversight of federal programs.

Isakson also continues to serve as a member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations where he has led reforms to foreign assistance programs to enhance economic growth and bolster U.S. national security, including with his *Global Food Security Act of 2016* to address global hunger. He continues to work on reforms to programs such as the Millennium Challenge Corporation and Power Africa by working for streamlined processes, better monitoring and evaluation, and more private sector involvement.

Additionally, Isakson remains in close coordination with the Peace Corps following the passage of his *Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act of 2011* that provides better security and protection measures for Peace Corps volunteers. The law is named in memory of a Peace Corps volunteer from Georgia who was tragically murdered during her service.

In 2015, after years of work on behalf of the American victims of the Iran hostage crisis, Isakson was successful in securing their compensation through the U.S. Victims of State Sponsored Terrorism Fund. The 52 Americans – including three Georgia residents – were held captive in Iran for 444 terrifying days in 1979-81.

On the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, Isakson maintains his career-long commitment to improving education. He played a key role in two reforms of the federal *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*; the first of which brought greater transparency to student success and the second of which returned control to local schools and parents.

On labor issues, Isakson has used his business experience to seek the right balance on the critical labor issues facing employers and workers. In 2014, his bipartisan, bicameral *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* was signed into law to modernize, streamline and improve existing federal workforce development programs and to provide increased flexibility for states and local workforce boards by reducing burdensome federal mandates and strengthening accountability.

In healthcare, Isakson has fought to repeal and replace Obamacare, which has increased costs and decreased access to health care. He has fought for patient-focused health care reform and patient-focused, quality, affordable health care. In 2016, Isakson successfully included a number of his health priorities in the *21st Century Cures Act,* a comprehensive medical research and innovation bill that will spur the development of medical treatments and cures. Isakson also championed creating Medicare coverage for home infusion therapy services.

Isakson graduated from UGA in 1966 and served in the Georgia Air National Guard from 1966 to 1972. He and his wife Dianne married in 1968 and have three children and eight grandchildren. They live in Marietta and attend Mount Zion United Methodist Church, where Isakson previously taught sixth grade Sunday school for 30 years.

###