



JOHNNY ISAKSON

UNITED STATES SENATOR · GEORGIA



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. Isakson has played a key role in reforming veterans' health care and benefits and making the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) more responsive to the veterans it serves.

In 2017 and 2018, under Isakson's leadership, the committee passed [25 pieces of legislation](#), which have all been signed into law. Its landmark legislation, S.2372, the *John S. McCain III, Daniel K. Akaka and Samuel R. Johnson VA Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks (MISSION) Act*, called the [VA MISSION Act](#) for short, includes some of the most significant reforms enacted to-date to improve the VA's current healthcare delivery system and help provide veterans with more choice and fewer barriers to care.

Georgia is home to more than 700,000 veterans as well as more than a dozen military bases. 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 guarding 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, including introducing the *Lifetime Income Disclosure Act*, which allows workers to plan ahead financially to ensure their retirement savings don't run dry.

Isakson has provided a businessman's perspective on the Finance Committee and helped lead the successful drafting and passage of H.R.1, the historic *Tax Cuts and Jobs Act*, which reformed America's tax code for the first time in 31 years — putting more money in the pockets of American families. This new law nearly doubled the child tax credit and the standard deduction and lowered tax rates across the board. It aggressively modernized the U.S. corporate tax system by creating a competitive 21 percent tax rate and adopted new international tax rules similar to

our major trading partners, in order to discourage companies from shifting jobs overseas and empower American workers to once again compete on a level playing field in the global marketplace.

Isakson has repeatedly 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, which collects fines from companies that do business with countries that sponsor terrorism. The 52 Americans – including three Georgia residents – were held captive in Iran for 444 terrifying days in 1979-81. The first payment was distributed from the fund in 2017.

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 critical workforce issues facing employers and workers, so that people who need jobs can be matched up with employers who need their skills. 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, 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 and improving the delivery system for patients with multiple chronic conditions.

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.

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