

JEFF SESSIONS (R-AL)**IN OFFICE**

Up for re-election in 2020

4th Term


Re-elected in 2014

SENIORITY RANK

18

Out of 100

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BGOV BIOGRAPHY

By Brian Faler, Bloomberg News

Jeff Sessions is the ranking Republican on the other budget committee, the one that's been overshadowed in recent years by the Paul Ryan-led House Budget Committee.

He took over the top Senate Budget slot in 2010. Sessions hasn't offered the sort of sweeping budget plans that catapulted Ryan onto his party's presidential ticket, nor has he been a major player in the series of deficit-reduction negotiations that dominated the 112th Congress.

The courtly, unpretentious lawyer brought a prosecutorial zeal to the committee, grilling officials in President Barack Obama's administration and Democratic colleagues alike on tax and spending matters. He can be counted on to provide a running tally of the number of days it's been since Senate Democrats approved a budget.

Budget Work

In both 2011 and 2012, he brought to the floor a budget he said was based on President Barack Obama's spending request. It was unanimously rejected, providing an instant talking point for Republicans. Sessions also sounded the alarm that Democrats were double counting \$716 billion in Medicare cuts included in their health-care overhaul by using that money to simultaneously offset other costs and also extend the life of Medicare's main trust fund.

He has pushed to clamp down on budget gimmicks long used by colleagues to disguise spending, such as so-called CHIMPS -- "changes in mandatory spending programs" -- which are one-time deferrals of mandatory spending used to cancel out discretionary spending increases.

Sessions is a reliable Republican, one of the chamber's more conservative. He's also pushed parochial interests. Sessions notes on his website he helped ensure the 2003 legislation that created the Medicare prescription drug benefit included provisions increasing funding to rural hospitals. That will funnel almost \$1 billion to Alabama facilities over a decade, Sessions estimates.

He replaced the retiring Judd Gregg as ranking Budget Committee Republican after he was bumped from the same position on the Judiciary Committee by Chuck Grassley of Iowa.

Grassley could have asserted his right to the top Judiciary spot in April 2009 when Arlen Specter switched parties, but Grassley and Sessions agreed to wait until the start of the 112th Congress in 2011 to make the change. All the switching has to do with party-imposed term limits for chairmen and ranking members of committees.

Judiciary Committee

When Sessions took the top Republican seat on Judiciary in 2009, it was just in time to lead opposition to President Barack Obama's first Supreme Court pick, Sonia Sotomayor. Sessions opposed her nomination as well as to Obama's second pick, Elena Kagan, though both were eventually confirmed.

His tenure on Judiciary has had a special resonance because the committee rejected his bid in 1986 to become a federal district judge in Alabama.

At the time, Sessions was a 39-year-old U.S. attorney accused by Democrats of having made racially insensitive remarks. Sessions acknowledged referring to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and other organizations as "communist inspired" and "un-American organizations with anti-traditional American values," the New York Times reported in April 1986.

Among those opposing his nomination was Joe Biden, the future vice president who at the time was the top Democrat on Judiciary, and Patrick Leahy of Vermont, now the committee chairman.

Sessions served almost five more years as U.S. attorney in Alabama, and then was elected attorney general of Alabama in 1994. Sessions was elected to the Senate, in 1996, succeeding Democrat Howell Heflin, who retired, and has since been twice re-elected.

Updated Oct. 25, 2012

BIO FROM REPRESENTATIVE'S WEBSITE

From the Senator's Website

Jeff Sessions was born in Selma, Alabama on December 24, 1946, and grew up in Hybart (pronounced Hib-ert), the son of a country store owner. Growing up in the country, Sessions was instilled with the core values ^ honesty, hard work, belief in God and parental respect ^ that define him today. In 1964, he Jeff Sessions became an Eagle Scout and has received the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award. After attending school in nearby Camden, Sessions worked his way through Huntingdon College in Montgomery, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1969. He received a Juris Doctorate degree from the University of Alabama in 1973. Jeff Sessions, the young man. Sessions served in the United States Army Reserve from 1973 to 1986 ultimately attaining the rank of Captain. He still considers that period to be one of the most rewarding chapters of his life.

Sessions' interest in the law led to a distinguished legal career, first as a practicing attorney in Russellville, Alabama, and then in Mobile, a place he now calls home. Following a two-year stint as Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of Alabama (1975-1977), Sessions was nominated by President Reagan in 1981 and confirmed by the Senate to serve as the United States Attorney for Alabama's Southern District, a position he held for 12 years. Sessions was elected Alabama Attorney General in 1995, serving as the state's chief legal officer until 1997, when he entered the United States Senate.

As a United States Senator, Sessions has focused his energies on maintaining a strong military, upholding the rule of law, limiting the role of government, and providing tax relief to stimulate economic growth and empowering Americans to keep more of their hard-earned money.

Dubbed a 'budget hawk' by the Alabama press, Sen. Sessions was selected for the 112th and 113th Congresses to serve as the Ranking Member on the Senate Budget Committee to restrain the growth of federal spending and make permanent tax cuts that benefit American families. As a senior member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Sessions is a leading advocate of confirming federal judges who follow the law and do not legislate from the bench. As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sessions is a strong advocate for America's military, including the four major defense installations in Alabama ^ Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville; Fort Rucker, near Ozark; Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery; and the Anniston Army Depot. Sessions was recently appointed to the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. His membership on the EPW Committee will give him the opportunity to develop policies that promote reliable and affordable energy sources and reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

Bloomberg GOVERNMENT

A strong environmentalist, Sessions was responsible for legislation that created the newest addition to the National Wildlife Refuge system, the Mountain Longleaf National Wildlife Refuge near Anniston. He authored legislation that extended wilderness protection for Dugger Mountain in the Talladega National Forest, and the White House, upon Sessions' recommendation, formed a high-level working group to assess mercury pollution in the Gulf of Mexico.

Senator Sessions authored the Honoring Every Requirement of Exemplary Service (HEROES) Act, which was signed into law in May 2005. This legislation increased the payment received by the families of fallen combat soldiers from \$12,000 to \$100,000 and also increased the maximum servicemen's life insurance benefit from \$250,000 to \$400,000.

Sessions played a leading role in ensuring that the Medicare Prescription Drug law included a rural health care component that reduced the disparity in Medicare payments that has devastated Alabama hospitals. As a result, Medicare payments to Alabama hospitals will increase by nearly \$1 billion over a 10-year period. Sessions authored a key provision in the 2001 tax cut bill to make interest earned on tuition savings and prepaid tuition plans tax free. That provision will mean a big financial boost for families of the 50,000 Alabama children enrolled in the affordable Alabama Prepaid College Tuition Plan.

While serving in the United States Senate, Sessions has received numerous awards including- the Reserve Officers Association Minuteman of the Year Award, the National Taxpayers Union Friend of the Taxpayer Award, the Watchdogs of the Treasury Golden Bulldog Award, the National Federation of Independent Business Guardian of Small Business Award, the Coalition of Republican Environment Advocates Teddy Roosevelt Environmental Award and the Alabama Farmers Federation Service to Agriculture Award.

In 2008, the people of Alabama overwhelmingly voted to return Sessions to the Senate for the third time to another six-year term, casting more votes for Sessions than any Republican in Alabama history.

He keeps close tabs on the concerns of his Alabama constituents, holding town meetings and traveling to all 67 counties in the state each year.

Sessions has served as a lay leader and as a Sunday school teacher at his family's church, Ashland Place United Methodist Church, in Mobile. He served as the Chairman of his church's Administrative Board and has been selected as a delegate to the annual Alabama Methodist Conference.

Sessions and his wife, Mary Blackshear Sessions, originally of Gadsden, Alabama, have three children, Mary Abigail Reinhardt, Ruth Sessions Walk, and Sam. They have seven granddaughters, Jane Ritchie, Alexa, Gracie, Sophia, Hannah, Joanna, and Phoebe and two grandsons, Jim Beau and Lewis.

PERSONAL PROFILE

COMMITTEES

[Senate Committee on Armed Services](#)

[Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works](#)

[Senate Committee on the Judiciary](#)

[Senate Committee on Budget](#)

CAUCUSES

[Congressional Study Group on Germany](#)

[Senate Steel Caucus](#)

[Senate Border Security and Enforcement First Caucus](#)

Birthdate 12/24/1946

Birthplace Selma, AL

Political Party Republican Party

Spouse Mary Blackshear Sessions

Residence Mobile, AL

Family 3 children ; 9 grandchildren

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Education

Huntingdon College
Graduated 1969

Univ of Alabama-Birmingham
Graduated 1973

Attorney, Guin Bouldin & Porch Attorney, Stockman & Bedsole 1973 - 1986
Lieutenant, (US)Army 1973 - 1977 Captain, US Army Reserve 1975 - 1977 Assistant us Attorney , United States of America 1981 - 1993 us Attorney, United States of America 1994 - 1996 Attorney General, State of Alabama 1996 - Present Senator:Alabama.

