



Senator Donzella James
Senate District 35

Senator Donzella James is a democratic senator representing Metropolitan Atlanta's 35th District of Georgia, which includes portions of Fulton and Douglas Counties. She proudly served four and one half full terms, beginning in 1995, and retired to offer herself to serve in the US Congress.

In 2009, Sen. James was re-elected to serve once again in the State Senate. Sen. James currently serves as the Chairwoman of the Urban Affairs committee and as Vice Chairman of the Interstate Cooperation committee. She is also a member of the Appropriations, Education and Youth, and Economic Development and Tourism committees. She has worked to bring progressive change in the area of crime reduction, a safe and clean environment, stronger drunk driving laws and sex trafficking laws, economic development, increased access to affordable healthcare, affordable housing and quality education.

Sen. James is a distinguished and experienced lawmaker, having sponsored or co-sponsored more than 400 pieces of legislation throughout her tenure in the Georgia Senate. She was proud to support Senate Bill 1 during the 2015 Legislative Session which requires insurance companies provide coverage for autistic children ages 6 and under, up to \$30,000 per year. Sen. James championed House Bill 89, a piece of legislation that gives local ordinance continued flexibility to incorporate drug-free commercial zones, making our communities safer places for Georgia families.

Sen. James has been an ardent supporter of education, fighting to increase funding and minimize cuts to the budget during the most recent economic recession. She has also championed veterans issues, dedicating a Douglas County bridge in PFC Melvin Johnson's honor, the first African American soldier to lose his life in the Vietnam War from Douglas County.

A state senator with passion for issues affecting those in need around the world, Sen. James has led the charge to strengthen Georgia's relationship with the continent of Africa. With the passage of Senate Resolution 9 during the 2013 Legislative Session, she was instrumental in urging the Georgia Department of Economic Development to promote and reinforce beneficial ties with African nations. She has traveled extensively to gain a better understanding of the humanitarian issues facing nations around the world, specifically those in Nigeria, Liberia, Ghana, Congo, Turkey, Costa Rica, and South Korea.

Sen. James is leading the charge to address the housing disparities in Georgia. Senate Bill 125 seeks to repeal the prohibition against cities and counties enacting any rent control laws as a way to keep housing affordable. She also was successful in passing SR 37 creating the Senate Property Owners' Associations, Homeowner's Associations, and Condominium Associations Study Committee to undertake a study of the conditions, needs, issues, and problems and recommend any action or legislation which the committee deems necessary or appropriate.



Sen. James earned a Bachelor degree in criminal justice and political science from Morris Brown College in Atlanta, Georgia, an honorary Doctorate of Humanities from Macon's Emmanuel Bible College, an honorary doctorate degree from the Bride of Christ Bible College and Seminary in Nigeria and studied additionally at Georgia State University. Sen. James has a proven record as a successful policy-maker and known to be committed to the people, a fiscally responsible professional, and a strong woman of faith. She has been a major force for progressive change, and her commitment to family values and the salvation of Georgia's children has been exemplary. Having been mentored by Shirley Chisolm, the Founder of the National Women's Political Caucus (NPWC), Sen. James has always been an advocate for women in politics and women's rights. THE NPWC was formed in 1971 to identify, recruit, train, endorse and support women seeking public office including Congresswoman Maxine Waters.

Sen. James has been the recipient of numerous awards throughout her time in the Georgia Senate including the 2014 Friends of Nigeria Award, the 2014 Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials Freedom Fighter Award, the 2013 Rising in Community Excellence Award, the 2013 Mother's Against Drunk Driving Legislator of the Year and the 2023 Leroy Johnson Legislator of the Year Award, among others.

As a leader in her community, Sen. James is a member of the Executive Advisory Board for Tapestry Ministries, Keep South Fulton Beautiful, African Women in Leadership Organization, the International Women's Thing Tank, and the Sonje Yo Human Rights Organization. She is also a member of the National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, Women in Government, the Georgia Association of Black Elected Officials, the Georgia Legislative Black Caucus, the Georgia Women's Caucus, the Georgia Working Families Caucus, the Environmental Caucus, the International Legislative Caucus, the Georgia-Africa Caucus, the Douglas County Delegation and the Fulton County Delegation.

Sen. James is a retired federal employee with dedicated service as a member of the National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees. Sen. James, a native of Atlanta, also taught in Atlanta public schools for more than a decade.

The Senator and the late Mr. Elmo James were married for more than 35 years. They are parents of two sons, Brian James and the late Kerry James; daughter-in-law Cheryl Renee; three grandchildren, Kerri, Ryan and Bryce; and one great-grandchild Isis. She is a newlywed and married her current husband, Mr. Benny Robinson, in June 2022.

August 2023—Senate Press Office

