

Biography of Senator Malcolm A. Smith

Senator Malcolm A. Smith was elected State Senate Majority Leader by his fellow Senators in January of 2009, becoming the first African-American Majority Leader and President Pro Tempore in New York State history.

Senator Smith has established key priorities for the Senate such as stimulating local economies statewide through job creation and economic development; reforming the rules of the Senate to make the legislative process more open, accountable and inclusive; and reducing wasteful government spending while preserving vital services. On the first day as Majority Leader, Smith began delivering on these goals by introducing a legislative package to fundamentally change the way business is done in Albany and increase transparency for the public.

Facing the worst fiscal crisis in decades, Senator Smith has made economic revitalization and fiscal responsibility the cornerstone of his immediate agenda. Key to Senator Smith's plans to grow the economy and expand opportunities for middle income families is the securing of funding for transportation and infrastructure projects including: The World Trade Center; The Moynihan Train Station; The Westside Rail Yards; The Buffalo Waterfront; The Syracuse Electric Car Company; and a High Speed Rail that connects the Empire Corridor to Upstate and Western New York.

Senator Smith and the Democratic Conference have also led the charge for a moratorium on home foreclosures and will continue their fight to impose reasonable regulations on HMOs and other health insurers to ensure families across the state have access to quality and affordable health care.

As a state legislator, Senator Smith has championed several measures to bolster public safety – two of which were signed into law in 2008. As a matter of law, the Municipal Police Training Council must now develop procedures that enhance police officer recruitment efforts and increase police awareness of racial, ethnic, religious and gender issues. Smith also sponsored a measure creating a new section of law that makes it a class B Felony to supply alcohol or drugs to minors for the purposes of illicit sexual contact. The offense is punishable by up to 25 years in state prison.

Smith has represented the 14th Senate District in Queens since 2000. His unique skills and diverse background in both the private and public sector has helped expand social and economic opportunities for constituents in his home district.

Smith has brought tens of millions of dollars back into Queens to help build affordable housing, improve schools and create jobs. In his first year in the State Senate, Senator Smith collaborated with Assemblywoman Barbara Clarke to secure \$1 million for the Jamaica Clinic, a first-of-its-kind health clinic in Hollis, New York. And, in 2002, Senator Smith collaborated with City and State officials to negotiate an agreement yielding \$10 million to clean up the Westside Corporation Toxic Site in Jamaica, Queens.

Senator Smith is an avid supporter of charter schools. He is the founder of Peninsula Preparatory Academy, the first public charter school in the Rockaways, and he serves on the Board of Trustees of the Merrick Academy-Queens Public Charter School in Jamaica Queens.

Throughout his career, Senator Smith has distinguished himself as an effective legislator and advocate in the areas of Economic Development and Community Renewal, Minority- and Women-owned Business Enterprises, Health, Housing and Education. In 2004, as part of the New York to Shanghai Trade Mission, Senator Smith led a delegation of local businesses to China, to open up a robust reciprocal exchange between the two countries. The trip was so successful that Senator Smith has expanded his business-to-business relationships to include an economic, cultural and educational "Sister to Sister" relationship between New York State and India.

Smith began his career in public service as a senior aide to former Congressman Floyd H. Flake in 1986. Smith also served as a chief aide to former City Councilman Archie Spigner, a City Hall assistant to former Mayor Edward I. Koch and was a member of the national advance staff for Vice-presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro.

Prior to his public career, Smith had a distinguished career in real estate development. A founder of Smith Development Group in 1991, Smith built more than 100 much needed housing units in Southeastern Queens, Far Rockaway and Brooklyn, including several noteworthy commercial projects such as Pathmark Plaza-Springfield Gardens, the interior of the Federal Aviation Administration building and the baseball fields at Roy Wilkins Park in Jamaica.

Senator Smith is a graduate of Fordham University, where he earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Economics. Senator Smith furthered his education with a certificate program on negotiations from Harvard Law School and obtained an MBA with a concentration in Finance and Operations Management from Adelphi University.

Senator Smith is married to Michele Lisby-Smith. They have two children, Julian and Amanda.

As Senate Majority Leader, Senator Smith is an ex officio member of all Senate standing committees and the ranking Minority member of the Rules Committee.