

Sen. Toni G. Atkins (CA039 D)

State Senator from CA Senate District 39

Building: State Capitol
Room: Suite 8610
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Sacramento, CA 95814-4900

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Legal Name: Toni G. Atkins
Nickname: Toni
Ethnicity: White/Caucasian
Gender: Female



Political Party: Democratic Party - Majority
Elected: First elected in 2016 - 68% of vote last election
Seniority: 5 of 40
Terms Served: Currently serving 2nd consecutive term
Next Election: 2024
Reelection Status: This legislator may run for reelection

Born: 08/01/1962 in Wythe County, VA
Residence: San Diego, CA
Family: Married
Spouse: Jennifer LeSar

Education: Emory and Henry College (VA), Bachelor's Degree Political Science; Harvard University Kennedy School of Government Senior Executive Program (MA), 2004

Occupations: Volunteer/Advocate - Former Director of Clinical Services, Womancare Health Center; Public Official - Former Staff Member, Office of San Diego Council Member Christine Keho; Business - Senior Policy Analyst, LeSar Development Company, 2008 - Current

Political Experience: Member, San Diego City Council, District 3, 2000 - 2008; Deputy Mayor, San Diego City, 2005; Member (CA076 D), CA State Assembly, 2011 - 2012; Majority Whip, CA State Assembly, 2011 - 2012; Member (CA078 D), CA State Assembly, 2012 - 2016; Majority Floor Leader, CA State Assembly, 2012 - 2014; Speaker, CA State Assembly, 2014 - 2016; President Pro Tempore, CA State Senate, 2018 - Current; Senate President Pro Tempore, CA State Senate, 2024

Capitol Staff: Mr. John Casey, Chief of Staff
Ms. Kimberly Rodriguez, Legislative Director; Policy Director
Ms. Niesha Fritz, Communications Director
Ms. Diane M. Griffiths, General Counsel; Deputy Chief of Staff
Ms. Grace Davis, Director of Scheduling; Executive Assistant

District Offices: SAN DIEGO
Suite 100; 7575 Metropolitan Drive; San Diego, CA 92108
Phone: (619) 688-6700; Fax: (619) 688-6712
Ms. Pamela Ison; District Director
Mr. Doug Case, District Communications Manager
Ms. Tylisha Suseberry, Administrative Assistant



BRIEFING REPORT

CREATED ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 2024

Sen. Toni G. Atkins (CA039 D)

State Senator from CA Senate District 39

District Offices: Mr. Jason Weisz, Senior District Representative
Ms. Samantha Brown, District Representative
Ms. Toni Duran, District Representative
Mr. Cole Reed, District Representative
Mr. Christopher Vallejo, District Representative

Biography: Senate President pro Tempore Toni G. Atkins (D-San Diego) was born and raised in rural southwestern Virginia, the daughter of a miner and a seamstress, and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Political Science from Emory & Henry College in Virginia.

In 1985, she moved across the country to San Diego, California, to help care for her sister's young son while her sister served in the U.S. Navy. In San Diego, before becoming involved in public service, Atkins committed herself to providing safe access to healthcare for women, becoming Director of Clinic Services at Womancare Health Center at the age of 27.

Her foray into public service began when Atkins served as an aide to San Diego City Councilmember and LGBT trailblazer Christine Kehoe. In 2000, she was elected to replace Kehoe as the council's District 3 representative. During her eight-year tenure, Atkins provided steady leadership as interim Mayor of San Diego amid a challenging and tumultuous time at City Hall.

"Throughout her career, Atkins has been a champion for affordable housing, the natural environment, healthcare, veterans, women, and the LGBTQ community."

Elected by voters to the state Assembly in 2010, Atkins served there for six years. In 2014, her colleagues selected her to be the Speaker of the Assembly - she became the first San Diegan and the first lesbian to hold the position. Atkins counts a \$7.5-billion water bond and creation of the state's Earned Income Tax Credit among her proudest accomplishments in the Assembly.

In 2016, Atkins was elected to represent the 39th District in the state Senate, where she has continued to advocate on behalf of women, LGBTQ, the climate, and increasing the state's supply of affordable housing. After just one year, she was selected by her colleagues to serve as Senate President pro Tempore. In March 2018, she was sworn in, becoming the first woman and the first openly LGBTQ person to lead the Legislature's upper house. Atkins is the first person in 150 years, and the third person in California history, to lead both houses of the Legislature.

Throughout her career, Atkins has been a champion for affordable housing, the environment, healthcare, veterans, women, the LGBTQ community, and mitigating the increasing impacts of climate change. She has authored landmark legislation on housing, including SB 2, which created a permanent source of funding for affordable housing, a signature piece of legislation she worked on for several years, and SB 9, which streamlined the process for homeowners to create a duplex or subdivide an existing lot in single-family zones. In 2022, Pro Tem Atkins introduced the 'California Dream for All Program,' an innovative new way for the state to help first-time homebuyers dramatically lower or eliminate their down-payment requirements and lower monthly mortgage payments. That same year, she authored several critical pieces of legislation, including SB 1375, which allows qualified nurse practitioners to provide abortions



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Biography: without the supervision of a physician, and SCA 10, a constitutional amendment to make explicit the fundamental right to abortion and contraceptives.

Senator Atkins lives in the South Park community of San Diego with her spouse, Jennifer, and their dogs, Joey and Mia.