

Senator Chris Smith Bio

Senator Smith began his public service by serving on local boards within the City of Fort Lauderdale. In 1995 he was appointed to the City's Planning and Zoning Board. At a time of tremendous development within the City of Fort Lauderdale, Senator Smith fought to seek a balance between the need for economic development and the rights of existing property or homeowners.

In 1998, Sen. Smith was elected to the Florida House of Representatives serving the City of Fort Lauderdale and six surrounding municipalities. An early and strong advocate for Smart Justice, while in the House of Representatives Senator Smith led the charge against the tough on crime policies of the then Governor, Jeb Bush administration. In addition, after the election fiasco of 2000 in which Florida votes were ultimately decided by the Supreme Court, Senator's Smith co-authored Florida's election reform package of 2000 which became a model for the rest of the nation.

In his final term in the Florida House of Representatives, Representative Smith was elected by his peers to be the youngest Democratic Leader in Florida Legislative. His duties included developing democratic policy for the state, fund raising to retain and elect Democrats nationwide for the Democratic Party, Democratic candidate recruitment. In fact, Representative raised more funds than any other Democratic Leader in the history of the Democratic party. Although a partisan in Democratic principles, Smith understands that the political process requires compromise — this understanding has led him to be well-respected on both sides of the aisle.

After a successful career in the House of Representatives, Senator Smith was ran and was elected Florida State Senate in 2008 representing Broward and Palm Beach County. Due to redistricting, Senator Smith represented 14 municipalities in Central Broward County. In only the third year of his first term, Senator Smith was elected Democratic Leader of his chamber. Senator Smith is only one of a few African-Americans that hold this distinction for the House of Representative and the State Senate. As Democratic Leaders he is once again setting Democratic policy on statewide issues.

After the tragic death of Trayvon Martin in Sanford, Florida, Senator Smith called upon the Governor and Legislature for action. Due to inaction Senator Smith formed his own Task Force to discuss the controversial Stand Your Ground law in the State of Florida. After fighting against the Standard Your Ground when it was first introduced 2005 he has now authored bills on revising Stand Your Ground Smith and has been used as an expert nationwide on the effects of Stand Your Ground legislation. He has recently discuss the ramifications of that law on CNN, MSNBC, FOX News, NPR and numerous other media outlets.

After being term limited from the Florida Senate, Senator Smith was appointed by the Florida Senate to serve on the Florida Constitution Revision Commission (CRC). Once every twenty years, Florida's Constitution provides for the creation of a thirty-seven member revision commission for the purpose of reviewing Florida's Constitution and proposing changes for voter consideration. The Constitution Revision Commission (CRC) is composed of the Attorney General, fifteen appointees from the Governor, nine appointees from the Florida Senate President, nine appointees from the Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives and three appointees from the Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court. The CRC meets for approximately one year, holding public hearings, examining the Florida Constitution, identifying issues, performing research and possibly recommending changes to the Florida Constitution. Any amendments proposed by the CRC would be placed on the 2018 General Election ballot.

Growing up in the Fort Lauderdale area Senator Smith participated in numerous youth activities including sports teams. After his election to the Florida House, Senator Smith had a chance encounter with youth football coaches from the community. They told him about and of the year All-Star football games and other communities and their desire to do one and his community. From that request Representative Smith started the Chris Smith All-Star Classic, which is a celebration of youth sports which encourage children to return outdoors to play. Some of the sports covered by the classic are football, cheerleading, track, and cross country. In football and cheerleading, Chris Smith Classic culminates in a full day of games with football players and cheerleaders from age six (6) through 16. Subsequently, the Chris Smith All-Star classic now sponsors an Invitational Track Meet, Christmas Toy Giveaway, and a 5K race on Sistrunk Boulevard.

Chris has been married for 17 years to Desorae Giles-Smith, the assistant City Manager for the City of Lauderhill, Florida. They are the proud parents of two sons. Christopher Leveorn Smith, age 16, is a junior at Cardinal Gibbons High School in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Christian Nicholas Giles-Smith, age 11, is a 6th grader at Parkway Middle School, in Lauderhill, Florida.