



Michael Watson SECRETARY OF STATE

Michael Watson is currently in his second term as Mississippi's 36th Secretary of State. Since taking the oath of office at the outset of his tenure, Secretary Watson has launched numerous initiatives and expanded existing efforts. From strengthening the integrity of Mississippi's elections process through legislation, to reducing the regulatory burden on businesses with the award-winning Tackle the Tape initiative and safeguarding the state's natural resources through the assembly of the Conservation Task Force, Secretary Watson has worked to serve all Mississippians.

Not only has he effected policy change, but he continues to find ways to give back to Mississippians and build relationships across the state. By creating the SOS Student Ambassador leadership program, Mississippi Businesses Against Trafficking, and completing his 82-County Tour, he has personally invested in citizens from across the state and all walks of life.

Prior to taking office as Secretary of State, Watson served three terms in the State Senate, where he represented District 51 in Jackson County. He authored the Fetal Protection Act, which strengthened the penalties for injuring an unborn child. He also wrote Mississippi's first comprehensive law to tackle illegal immigration, as well as legislation to allow alternate-track diplomas—one of the first efforts to return a focus to career and technical training for high school students.

A graduate of Pascagoula High School and the University of Mississippi, where he earned a Bachelor of Business Administration degree and a law degree, Watson began his work in public service as an intern for then U.S. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott in the summer of 1999. That experience strengthened his desire to become a public servant in order to improve the quality of life for all Mississippians.

Born and raised in Mississippi, Michael is a husband to his wife Lauren, father of three beautiful young daughters, the son of a shipyard worker and bank teller. After his work as a pipefitter, Michael's father entered the ministry and continues to serve as pastor at Liberty Church in Gautier. His mother passed away shortly before Michael became Mississippi's 36th Secretary of State.