

Biography of Speaker David Ralston (R-Blue Ridge)

David Ralston is the 73rd Speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives, a position he has held since 2010.

He was first elected to the Georgia House of Representatives in 2002 and represents House District 7, which includes Fannin and Gilmer counties and a portion of Dawson County.

Prior to serving in the House, he served in the Georgia State Senate from 1992 until 1998.

In 2011, he was honored as “Georgian of the Year” by Georgia Trend Magazine. In 2018, he was honored by the Zell Miller Foundation with the Zell Miller Award for Distinguished Public Service.

Speaker Ralston is currently the longest-serving active speaker of a state house in the nation. He is also the second-longest serving Speaker of the Georgia House of Representatives in state history. He serves as an Executive Committee member of the National Speakers Conference, the National Conference of State Legislatures and the Southern Legislative Conference.

A champion for job creation and economic development, Speaker Ralston has been a driving force behind many legislative accomplishments which have made Georgia the #1 state in the nation for business year after year, such as Georgia’s Transportation Funding Act of 2015 and the state’s first-ever cut to the income tax rate in 2018.

Speaker Ralston has also worked with leaders in both parties to move Georgia forward through bipartisan legislation like Georgia’s comprehensive adoption reform in 2018 and the state’s first-ever paid parental leave policy for state employees and teachers in 2021.

In 2022, Speaker Ralston led the fight for historic reform of mental health care in Georgia. Georgia’s Mental Health Parity Act and accompanying funding transforms both access to and delivery of mental health services and treatment options throughout the state.

Born in Ellijay, Speaker Ralston is a graduate of Gilmer County High School. He went on to attend Young Harris College and North Georgia College (now the University of North Georgia), where he earned his bachelor’s degree with honors. He later received his law degree from the University of Georgia.

Speaker Ralston and his wife, Sheree, reside in Blue Ridge where he is a practicing attorney. An active member of his community, he has previously served as President of the Fannin County Chamber of Commerce and the Blue Ridge Mountains Arts Association.