



# Bill Nelson

## U.S. Senator - Florida

### Biography

Perhaps the two most defining events in Bill Nelson's life occurred in 1972 – he got married to Grace Cavert and was elected for the first time to public office. Today, over three decades later, he's earned a reputation as a principled family man, a staunch advocate for all Floridians and a moderate voice in the increasingly partisan world of national politics.



Florida's own Bill Nelson was elected to the U.S. Senate in November 2000, after serving six years as a member of the Florida Cabinet. He currently serves on the Senate Commerce, Armed Services, Budget, Finance, Intelligence, and Aging committees and is recognized as the leading congressional expert on NASA.

As a member of the Senate's Commerce Committee, Nelson has taken on the cause of privacy by supporting measures to protect consumers from identity theft and working on legislation to stop unsolicited e-mails that plague individuals and businesses.

In his role on the Senate's Armed Services Committee, he has worked tirelessly for the families of Florida's men and women serving overseas by addressing their concerns about basic equipment needs, such as the lack of body armor, and the hardships facing many from extended tours of duty. He's also opposed efforts to reduce the military's aircraft carrier fleet as our nation continues to fight the global threat of terrorism.

Other priorities Nelson has championed during his tenure in the Senate include: preventing oil drilling off Florida's coast; ensuring veterans and their spouses get the benefits they deserve and have access to quality health care; and, fighting for a meaningful Medicare prescription drug benefit for seniors that allows the government to negotiate lower drug prices from pharmaceutical companies. In the wake of the 2004 hurricane season, he has worked to secure adequate federal relief for storm victims and reform the federal agency charged with assisting people after disasters.

Nelson's public service career began in 1972, with his election to the Florida Legislature. During his three terms, he helped enact the nation's first state law to protect consumers from computer fraud and advocated for responsible growth management laws.

Elected to the U.S. Congress in 1978, he served six terms representing Orlando and the Space Coast and became an early advocate for a balanced federal budget.

In January 1986, Nelson spent six days orbiting Earth as a payload specialist aboard the space shuttle Columbia. That experience gave him a new perspective on the Earth's fragile environment and a greater appreciation of the importance of our nation's space exploration program.

In 1994, Nelson was elected to the Florida Cabinet as state Treasurer, Insurance Commissioner and Fire Marshal. During his six years in the post, he earned his reputation as a common-sense problem solver and strong consumer advocate by fighting to keep insurance rates affordable for homeowners, cracking down on life and burial insurance sales abuses that targeted the elderly and minorities, and forcing European insurers to honor unpaid Holocaust-era claims.

A fifth-generation Floridian, Nelson was born in Miami on Sept. 29, 1942, and educated in Melbourne's public schools. He has been married to his wife, Grace, since 1972 and has two grown children, Nan Ellen and Bill Jr.