

BIOGRAPHY OF
CONGRESSMAN ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT
Third Congressional District of Virginia

Congressman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott is currently serving his twelfth term in Congress representing Virginia's Third Congressional District. Prior to serving in the House of Representatives, he served in the Virginia House of Delegates from 1978 to 1983 and in the Senate of Virginia from 1983 to 1993.

During his tenure in the Virginia General Assembly, Congressman Scott successfully sponsored laws critical to Virginians in education, employment, health care, social services, economic development, crime prevention and consumer protection. His legislative successes included laws that increased Virginia's minimum wage, created the Governor's Employment and Training Council and improved health care benefits for women, infants and children. He also sponsored the Neighborhood Assistance Act, which provides tax credits to businesses for donations made to approved social service and crime prevention programs.



Congressman Scott has the distinction of being the first African-American elected to Congress from the Commonwealth of Virginia since Reconstruction and only the second African-American elected to Congress in Virginia's history. Having a maternal grandfather of Filipino ancestry also gives him the distinction of being the first American with Filipino ancestry to serve as a voting member of Congress.

Congressman Scott currently serves as the Ranking Member on the Committee on Education and the Workforce, a committee he has served on since his arrival to Congress in 1993. In his capacity as the most senior Democrat on the Committee, he is leading the fight for access to quality early, secondary and higher education for all of America's children with an emphasis on solving the growing problem of student debt, closing the achievement gap and dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline. In 2015, he was one of the four primary negotiators of the Every Student Succeeds Act, which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act for the first time in 13 years replacing the No Child Left Behind Act. Additionally, he is focused on ensuring that millions of Americans have the opportunity to go to work every day and know that they will be treated fairly, paid a decent and living wage, given a safe environment in which do their jobs and provided access to affordable health care.

From the beginning of his tenure in Congress, Congressman Scott has led efforts to pass comprehensive juvenile justice reform and crime prevention legislation. Towards that end, he has introduced the Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education (PROMISE) Act, which would provide resources to state and local governments for evidence-based strategies and programs to prevent juvenile crime.

As a part of his effort to provide universal health care for all, prior to the passage of the Affordable Care Act, Congressman Scott sponsored the All Healthy Children Act, which sought to ensure that millions of uninsured children in the United States have access to a comprehensive set of health care services.

Congressman Scott is also a recognized champion of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and has fought to protect the rights and civil liberties of all Americans. In 1997, he protected the right of all children with disabilities to obtain a free and appropriate education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by leading a successful effort to defeat amendments aimed at curtailing that right for some children. Congressman Scott also actively opposed passage of the USA PATRIOT Act and has been a leading critic of both Republican and Democratic Administrations' misuse of surveillance authorities. He is also a leading opponent of efforts to permit employment discrimination in federally funded programs.

As the former Chairman and Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security on the House Judiciary Committee, Congressman Scott is also a leading advocate for reforming our nation's broken criminal justice system. Congressman Scott sponsored the Death in Custody Reporting Act, which was originally signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 2000 and its subsequent reauthorization was signed into law by President Barack Obama in 2014. The law requires state and local law enforcement agencies to report to the U.S. Department of Justice how many individuals die each year while in police custody or during the course of an arrest. In 2010, Congressman Scott successfully led efforts in the House to pass the Fair Sentencing Act, one of the first successful reductions in a mandatory minimum sentence in decades. The law reduced the unfair sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine.

From 2013 to 2014, he co-chaired the House Judiciary Committee's Over-Criminalization Task Force with Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI). Based on the findings of their task force, Scott and Sensenbrenner co-authored the Safe, Accountable, Fair, and Effective (SAFE) Justice Act, which has been recognized as one of the most comprehensive criminal justice reform bills in a generation and has attracted significant support from across the political spectrum.

Having served for a total of six years on the House Budget Committee, Congressman Scott is also a leading voice on fiscal policy and reducing the deficit. He was an ardent opponent of the 2001 and 2003 Bush-era tax cuts that were skewed towards the wealthiest Americans and contributed trillions to the national debt. He opposed the 2008 taxpayer-funded bailout of Wall Street and the 2013 Fiscal Cliff deal that permanently extended most of the Bush-era tax cuts. He is dedicated to restoring fiscal sanity to the federal budget process in order to balance the federal budget and has advocated for the return of statutory Pay-As-You-Go budget rules, which helped bring the federal budget from deficit to surplus in the 1990s.

Congressman Scott is also a strong supporter of our nation's military readiness as well as our troops and their safety. He is a leading advocate for improving and increasing funding for veterans' benefits and health care, especially mental health care, and was the lead sponsor in the House of Senator Jim Webb's Post-9/11 G.I. Bill that was signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2008. Congressman Scott has routinely received an "A" from the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America for his service and commitment to our veterans.

In 2010, *The Hill*, a Capitol Hill newspaper, recognized Congressman Scott [as one of the 25 hardest working Members of Congress](#). *The Hill* later recognized him in 2012 as one of [Capitol Hill's 50 most beautiful people](#).

Congressman Scott was born on April 30, 1947 in Washington, D.C. and grew up in Newport News, Virginia. He is a graduate of Harvard College and Boston College Law School. After graduating law school, he returned home to Newport News and practiced law from 1973 to 1991. He received an honorable discharge for his service in the Massachusetts National Guard and the United States Army Reserve.

Congressman Scott is a member of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church in Newport News and is a member of many professional, community, and civic boards and organizations.