

2005 Roast and Toast - Harris County Tejano Democrats



H O N O R A B L E R O D N E Y E L L I S T E X A S S T A T E S E N A T O R

Rodney Ellis currently serves in the Texas Legislature as a State Senator from Houston. During his fourteen-year tenure in the Texas Senate, the Senator has earned praise as a legislative leader on economic development, education, civil rights, tax cuts, criminal justice and workforce development issues.

Senator Ellis has passed over 300 pieces of legislation. One of his most notable legislative accomplishments includes passage of the \$450 million TEXAS Grants Program. This program has provided free college tuition to over 115,000 students and continues to contribute to a more skilled and competitive Texas workforce.

In 1999, Senator Ellis passed a tax relief bill that created the 3-day sales tax holiday and provided businesses franchise tax relief for job creation, capital investment, and research and development. By the end of the 2004-2005 fiscal year, this bill saved taxpayers over \$1.7 billion.

Ellis also authored the James Byrd, Jr., Act, an anti-hate crimes bill, and has been recognized for his leadership in improving and protecting the integrity of the Texas criminal justice system by increasing indigent criminal defense funding and fighting to ban the execution of the mentally retarded.

Senator Ellis currently serves as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Government Organization. This Committee looks at ways to improve the efficiency of Texas state

government. He also sits on the Senate State Affairs, Criminal Justice and Transportation and Homeland Security Committees. Over the course of his time in the Senate, Ellis has chaired the Senate Finance, Jurisprudence and Intergovernmental Relations Committees.

Senator Ellis is the co-founder of Apex Securities, Inc., an investment-banking firm that is affiliated with Rice Financial Products Company, a financial services firm. Rodney Ellis currently serves on the National Commission on Energy Policy, the University of Texas Law School Foundation Board, the Board of Directors for the Center for Policy Alternatives, the Board of Directors for the Innocence Project, Inc. and the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Board of Directors for the Utley Foundation.

Prior to his election to the Texas Senate in 1990, Senator Ellis served three terms as a member of the Houston City Council and as chief of staff to the late U.S. Congressman Mickey Leland. He holds a bachelor's degree from Texas Southern University and has a master's degree from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs. Ellis also earned a law degree from the University of Texas School of Law and studied at the London School of Economics.

Rodney Ellis is 51 years old. He is married to Licia Green-Ellis and has four children.