



The Honorable Toni G. Atkins

California State Senate President pro Tempore

Toni G. Atkins was born and raised in southwestern Virginia, the daughter of a miner and a seamstress, and graduated with a bachelor's degree in political science from Emory & Henry College in Emory, Va.

In 1985, she moved across the country to San Diego, California, to help care for her sister's young son while her sister served in the U.S. Navy. In San Diego, before becoming involved in public service, she worked as director of clinic services at Womancare Health Center.

Atkins served as an aide to San Diego City Councilmember and LGBT trailblazer Christine Kehoe, and, in 2000, was elected to replace Kehoe as the council's District 3 representative. During her eight-year tenure, Atkins provided steady leadership as interim Mayor of San Diego amid a challenging and tumultuous time at City Hall.

Elected by voters to the state Assembly in 2010, Atkins served there for six years. In 2014, her colleagues selected her to be the Speaker of the Assembly – she became the first San Diegan and the first lesbian to hold the position. Atkins counts a major \$7.5-billion water bond, creation of the state's first Earned Income Tax Credit, and passage of two on-time, balanced budgets among her proudest accomplishments.

In 2016, Atkins was elected to represent the 39th District in the state Senate and was appointed to the prestigious Rules Committee, in addition to the committees on Transportation and Housing, Health, Labor and Industrial Relations, and Natural Resources and Water. Among the bills she got passed and signed was SB 2, which created a permanent source of funding for affordable housing, a signature piece of legislation she had worked on for seven years.

In January 2018, after just one year in the Senate, she was elected by her colleagues to be the next Senate President pro Tempore. In March 2018, she was sworn in, becoming the first woman and the first openly LGBTQ person to lead the Legislature's upper house.

Throughout her career, Atkins has been a champion for affordable housing, the natural environment, healthcare, veterans, women, and the LGBTQ community. She lives in the South Park community of San Diego with her spouse, Jennifer, and their dogs, Haley and Joey.