

JO BONNER

Former Congressman Jo Bonner is serving as chief of staff to Gov. Kay Ivey. Bonner joined the Ivey Administration in December 2018, as the governor's senior advisor.

Previously, Bonner served as Vice Chancellor for Economic Development at The University of Alabama System (UAS) from 2013 to 2018. During his final year at UAS, he was as an executive on loan, serving as Interim Executive Director of the Tuscaloosa County Industrial Development Authority.

For more than a decade, Bonner represented Alabama's First District in the U.S. House of Representatives. He was first elected to the 108th Congress in November 2002 and was successfully reelected to five additional terms. As a student at The University of Alabama, Bonner worked on Capitol Hill as an intern for Congressman Jack Edwards. After graduation, he returned to Washington as press secretary and later chief of staff to Congressman Sonny Callahan. He parlayed his almost 18-years-experience as a staffer into a convincing win in a crowded Republican primary during the summer of 2002. Bonner never lost an election and ran unopposed in the November 2012 general election.

In Congress, Bonner earned a reputation as a respected and influential voice of reason in both Alabama and Washington. He was a member of the House Appropriations Committee, where he served on three key subcommittees, as well as the House Ethics Committee. Widely respected on both sides of the aisle, Bonner was selected by House Speaker John Boehner to serve as chairman of Ethics during the 112th Congress.

While Bonner and his staff were well-known for having the state's best constituent services, he devoted a significant amount of time to help turn around the sluggish economy of South Alabama. In 2012, the *Mobile Press-Register* called Bonner "a champion for South Alabama" and he is credited with playing a major role in helping land several significant economic development projects, including the \$5 billion ThyssenKrupp project to Alabama in 2007, as well as helping secure \$5 billion in contracts in 2010 for Austal to build 20 new ships for the U.S. Navy.

His crowning Congressional accomplishment came in 2012 when Airbus announced plans to build their first U.S. Final Assembly Line in Mobile. Over the years, Congressman Bonner developed friendships and strategic partnerships with the top corporate leaders at Airbus, one of the world's largest aerospace and defense companies. The Airbus project has resulted in more than \$1 billion being invested in Alabama, creating thousands of new jobs in the aerospace industry and putting Mobile on track to become the fourth largest commercial aviation city in the world.

According to *Yellowhammer's* 2021 list of Power and Influence, Governor Ivey's chief of staff "is one of the most gifted power players the state has seen in a long time... and could easily be a candidate for a major statewide office. He exudes statesman qualities." *Yellowhammer* went on to say, "Bonner has been as active on Alabama's pressing issues as possibly any chief of staff to the governor, ever. Seldom does one person in politics have the skillset Bonner possesses. He has a mastery of political communications and thorough understanding of public policy. Following years of exposure to national political figures, he is awed by very little."

Bonner has received numerous awards and honors including a 2020 induction into the Alabama Academy of Honor; the Academy is the state's premiere recognition of 100 living Alabamians for their outstanding accomplishments and service. In 2016, the Business Council of Alabama (BCA) created the inaugural "Congressman Jo Bonner Spirit of Leadership Award" and honored Bonner as its first recipient. In 2013, Bonner, received the Distinguished Public Service Award, the highest honor the U.S. Navy bestows on a civilian. He also received the 2012 "Governor Bob Riley Building a Better Alabama Award" by the BCA. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from The University of South Alabama for his distinguished record of public service in 2012. He serves on numerous boards around the state including the American Village Citizenship Trust, the AlabamaGermany Partnership and the Alabama School of Math and Science Board of Directors. In May 2017, Gov. Ivey appointed Bonner to serve as her designee to the Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery Council. This group is tasked with restoring and protecting one of Alabama's greatest natural resources, the Alabama Gulf Coast, following the 2010 BP-Deepwater Horizon explosion.

Bonner earned a B.A. degree in Journalism from The University of Alabama in 1982. He is married to the former Janée Lambert, of Mobile, and they are the parents of a daughter, Lee, age 25, and a son, Robins, age 23.