

= Robert Ford (politician) =

Robert Ford (born December 26 , 1948) is an American politician who served as a Democratic member of the South Carolina Senate since 1993 , representing District 42 , which is located in Charleston . From 1974 to 1992 , he served as a member of the Charleston City Council .

Originally involved in the civil rights movement , several of Ford 's public statements and legislative proposals as senator attracted media attention and controversy . He finished in third place in the June 2010 Democratic primary election for Governor of South Carolina . He resigned on May 31 , 2013 , in the midst of a political scandal on public funds spent in adult establishments .

= = Personal life = =

Ford was born in New Orleans , Louisiana ; his parents were leaders in the African American community . Ford attended Wayne State University and Grambling State University , from which he was expelled in 1969 before graduating for leading civil rights demonstrations . He was expelled by the university , despite it being historically black , because it relied on public funds which were controlled by a state government opposed to desegregation . Ford was a member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference staff from 1966 to 1972 and worked for Martin Luther King , Jr. as a member of an advance team of the Poor People 's Campaign . He was arrested 73 times for participating in protests during the civil rights movement . In 1973 , he won a draft evasion trial on basis of conscientious objection . Ford worked as a car salesman and later became a full @-@ time legislator . Ford is a lifelong bachelor .

= = Political career = =

Ford was elected to serve on the Charleston City Council , where he served from 1974 to 1992 , and ran for the State Senate and was elected on November 3 , 1992 , taking office in 1993 . He was reelected in 1996 , 2000 , 2004 , and 2008 . He served on the Senate Committees on Banking and Insurance , Corrections and Penology , General , Invitations , Judiciary , and Labor , Commerce and Industry , and was the ranking Democrat on several committees . Ford is a member of the South Carolina Legislative Black Caucus . Ford resigned on May 31 , 2013 during a brewing campaign finance scandal .

Ford has been described as entertaining , controversial , and politically incorrect . He supported Hillary Clinton in the 2008 Democratic presidential primaries and questioned Barack Obama 's appeal to white voters . Ford later apologized for his comments , stating that any Democrat could win and that he had supported other African American candidates for president in the past . Ford 's comments prompted a primary challenge in 2008 from Charleston lawyer Dwayne Green . In the beginning of his campaign , Green managed to raise double the amount of campaign funds Ford raised , and although Ford 's fundraising improved he for the first time attended a candidate forum to receive free publicity , because his campaign had financial difficulty resulting from the contested primary and a fire in his home . Green was defeated in the primary election by a wide margin . Ford praised Obama 's election in November 2008 , but criticized South Carolina Congressman James Clyburn 's family for allegedly attempting to profit off Obama 's victory .

= = = Political positions = = =

As senator , Ford has introduced many bills with only a small number becoming law , but has been more successful in contributing to compromise bills . After becoming senator , Ford attempted to have the Confederate flag removed from the South Carolina State House . It was the last state capitol to display a Confederate battle flag , and Ford had picketed the building in the 1960s as a symbol of discrimination . Following years of debate , the flag was moved to a nearby monument with the adoption of a compromise bill authored by Ford . He was responsible for the passage of a 1998 bill that paired Martin Luther King , Jr . Day with Confederate Memorial Day as paid holidays .

Ford stated that he hoped the legislation would improve race relations in South Carolina .

Ford described the election of judges by popular vote as a major goal and supported increasing the number of judges . He supported giving more authority to law enforcement , including the ability to search people on parole and probation without warrant , making attempted murder a crime with lifelong sentence , and increasing penalties for possession of illegal guns . Ford is a proponent of stricter regulations of the financial industry . He sponsored a 2006 ban on payday lending , which was shown to discriminate against African Americans . In 2008 , Ford blocked all House bills in the Senate until the bill was taken up . The bill failed in the Senate by a close vote and was heavily amended so lenders would not be banned but restricted . The bill then passed with Ford voting in favor but failed to advance after changes made in the House . A bill preventing consumers from taking out more than one loan at a time passed the House in 2009 . Ford supported offshore drilling , stating conservation was not a priority for most citizens of the state . Geologists believe there is little oil to be found off the South Carolina coast . Ford wants to prevent the widening of Interstate 26 through Charleston , calling instead for a study for transportation needs . Ford emphasized the need for more funding for school programs , which he claimed is necessary due to the small number of pupils attending college and to remedy lacks of knowledge in geography and civics , which he wants reinstated as a school subject . Ford was told about favoritism , intimidation and racism in the South Carolina Highway Patrol and publicized it with Glenn McConnell . Subsequently , director and deputy director of the South Carolina Department of Public Safety resigned under pressure from governor Mark Sanford .

Ford sponsored legislation defining a hate crime " as an assault , intimidation or threat based on ' actual or perceived ' race , religion , color , sex , age , national origin and sexual orientation . " He also introduced several bills concerning gay rights in lodging , hospital visitation rights and partnerships . His partnership bill would provide for civil unions in South Carolina . The effort was judged by state senator Mike Fair as predetermined to fail , but Ford cited the Democratic National Committee 's platform on the issue and argued that Barack Obama 's election showed that a change should be attempted . Even if passed , the measure would be unenforceable , due to a constitutional amendment banning unions similar to marriage in South Carolina . Ford worked to outlaw profanity and saggy pants and to keep music from minors that is " profane , vulgar , lewd , lascivious or indecent . " Ford argued he did not expect these proposals to be approved but wanted to start a discussion specifically targeting young African American men 's fashion as well as rap music . He stated : " You don 't have to emulate prisoners no more . You can emulate somebody like Barack Obama . "

Ford often opposed governor Mark Sanford 's political goals , arguing his proposed reforms were unwanted by the public , and he mostly opposed Sanford 's fiscal policy and worked to override budget vetoes by the governor , claiming he was removed from the interests of citizens . An exception were security measures for the State House complex which Ford agreed were too costly . He also opposed Sanford 's goal to increase the number of roll calls in the State Senate and voted against a 2008 immigration reform bill favored by Sanford , stating it would be an ineffective deterrent and would lead to less driving safety . The reform would have required all employers to use state driver 's licenses or a database from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to check the legal status of workers . Ford co -@- sponsored a bill with Glenn McConnell that would limit the governor 's authority to appoint and remove board members overseeing the Charleston port and increase required qualifications for board members . Ford opposed a bill giving Sanford authority over the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control .

= = 2010 Gubernatorial candidacy = =

Ford ran to succeed Mark Sanford as Governor of South Carolina in the 2010 gubernatorial election . His platform included reinstating video poker to the state to generate returns from taxes on the gaming industry in an effort to balance the state budget , something he has proposed since the late 1990s . A law Ford sponsored in 2008 to make gambling legal failed to advance ; he planned a voter referendum to repeal the ban . Ford faced state senator Vincent A. Sheheen of Camden and State

Superintendent of Education Jim Rex in a primary election . Sheheen 's campaign has raised \$ 33 @, @ 000 as of January 2009 , while Ford 's campaign raised \$ 6 @, @ 000 . On June 8 , 2010 , Ford finished in third place in the primary election with 18 percent of the vote .

= = Electoral history = =

South Carolina State Senator , 42nd Senatorial District , 1992

Primary election , August 25 , 1992

Threshold > 50 %

Ford won the general election unopposed on November 3 , 1992 .

South Carolina State Senator , 42nd Senatorial District , 1996

Ford did not have a primary opponent on June 11 , 1996 .

General election , November 5 , 1996

South Carolina State Senator , 42nd Senatorial District , 2000

Primary election

Threshold > 50 %

First Ballot , June 13 , 2000

Second Ballot , June 27 , 2000

Ford won the general election unopposed on November 7 , 2000 .

South Carolina State Senator , 42nd Senatorial District , 2004

Primary election , June 8 , 2004

Threshold > 50 %

General election , November 2 , 2004

South Carolina State Senator , 42nd Senatorial District , 2008

Primary election , June 10 , 2008

Threshold > 50 %

General election , November 4 , 2008

South Carolina State Senator , 42nd Senatorial District , 2012

Senator Ford was unopposed for reelection in both the Democratic primary and the general election

General election , November 6 , 2012