State Senator
GILDA Z. JACOBS
D–14th Senate District

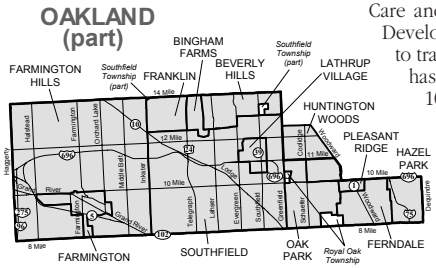
Office: Room 1015, Farnum Bldg., P.O. Box 30036, Lansing, MI 48909, (517) 373-7888, Toll-Free: (888) 937-4453, E-Mail: sengjacobs@senate.michigan.gov

Committees: Campaign and Election Oversight (Minority Vice Chair); Finance (Minority Vice Chair); Families and Human Services (Minority Vice Chair); Economic Development and Regulatory Reform; Health Policy

Biography: Democrat, of Huntington Woods, elected to the Michigan Senate in 2002 and reelected in 2006 after serving two terms in the Michigan House of Representatives, where she made history as the first woman Floor Leader in either house of the Legislature.

Senator Jacobs was elected chair of the 12th Congressional District Democratic Committee in 1999. Prior to serving in the legislature, she served as an Oakland County Commissioner from 1995 to 1998. She also is distinguished as the first woman elected to the Huntington Woods City Commission, serving from 1981 to 1994. She was the Mayor Pro Tem of Huntington Woods in 1993-1994.

In addition to her civic leadership, Senator Jacobs served as Development Director for JARC, a Jewish association providing residential care for persons with developmental disabilities. Prior to working for JARC, Senator Jacobs was administrative assistant to state Senator Doug Ross. She also worked as a special education teacher in the Madison School District. Senator Jacobs' extensive community service includes having served as a board member of the South Oakland NAACP, the Anti-Defamation League, Neighborhood Project, the Tri-Community Coalition, and the Women's Division of Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit. Senator Jacobs also serves as a member of the National Council of Jewish Women, Tri-Community Coalition, Advisory Board Member of the Save Our Children Coalition, and an Advisory Board Member of the Mentor Connection. She is a former vice-chair of the Oakland County Democratic Party.

Senator Jacobs served on the Board of Visitors Leadership Council for Endowments and Scholarships at the Institute of Gerontology at Wayne State University, the Community Advisory Council for the Junior League of Birmingham, the Triangle Foundation Board of Advisors, the Governor's Commission on Mental Health, and a member of the Child Welfare Improvement Task Force.

Senator Jacobs has been the recipient of many honors throughout the years, including the "Wonder Woman Award" from the Women's Survival Center, the Larry Pernick Award from the Michigan Democratic County Commissioners Association, the Michigan Counseling Association Legislative Service Award, the Chaldean Federation of America Public Service Award, the "Do Something Wonderful for Children" Legislative Award from Michigan's Children, and the 2002 "Woman of the Year Award" from the Na'Amat Greater Detroit Council for her dedicated efforts on behalf of women and children. She is the recipient of the 2008 Michigan's Children Legacy Hero Award, the 2009 Michigan Association of Community Mental Health Boards Go To Bat Award, the 2009 Michigan Speech-Language-Hearing Association Distinguished Service Award, the 2009 Michigan Fatherhood Coalition Public Service Award, and the Michigan Assisted Living Association Award. Senator Jacobs is recognized as a Friend of Diabetes and Kidney Health Care and was a Fellow at the Bowhay Institute for Legislative Development. The National Democratic Institute selected her to travel to Bosnia where she trained political candidates. She has appeared on the Democratic Leadership Council's 100 New Democrats to Watch—a national list of "next-generation" Democratic Leaders. A graduate of the University of Michigan, Senator Jacobs received her bachelor's degree with a distinction in education in 1970 and a master's degree in behavioral sciences in education in 1971. Her family includes her husband, John, two adult daughters, Jessica and Rachel, and a politically savvy dog, Jake.