

FABIAN NELSON

b. July 17, 1985

MISSISSIPPI STATE REPRESENTATIVE

“It’s OK to disagree with a person’s lifestyle, but it is not OK to impose on that person’s civil liberties and civil rights.”

**He is Mississippi’s
first openly LGBTQ
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Fabian Nelson is Mississippi’s first openly LGBTQ lawmaker. A realtor turned legislator, he assumed office in January 2024.

Born in Yazoo City, Mississippi, Nelson grew up in a politically active family. His father was a dentist and a community leader. Both parents continually worked to improve the lives of less fortunate neighbors. Nelson recalls visiting the state Capitol in grade school. Seeing the politicians on the House floor, he told his teacher he would one day sit among them.

Nelson earned his bachelor’s degree from Jackson State University in 2011. After obtaining a master’s degree in business administration from American Public University in 2016, he pursued a career in realty and started his own firm.

For Nelson, the real estate business only accentuated the housing and socioeconomic inequities in his community. He began his advocacy work assisting low-income first-time home buyers.

In a 2020 special election, Nelson made a bid for the Mississippi House of Representatives District 66, which includes part of Jackson, the state’s capital. He received only a handful of votes, a result he attributes to his lack of name recognition and inability to effectively canvas during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

When Nelson decided to run again for the seat in 2023, he didn’t have a platform. He instead visited thousands of homes district-wide, surveying constituents on the issues most important to them. He used their input to establish his legislative priorities: Medicaid expansion, full funding for the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP), economic development, and universal broadband access.

In August 2023 Nelson won the Democratic primary with more than two thirds of the vote and endorsements from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and the LGBTQ+ Victory Fund. In November he ran unopposed, securing the seat. The win made him the first openly LGBTQ lawmaker in Mississippi’s history. Mississippi was one of only two states that had yet to elect an openly gay legislator. Louisiana remained the sole outlier.

In addition to his stated campaign priorities, Nelson is pro-choice and a longtime advocate for underserved and LGBTQ+ communities. As a politician, he continues to fight the ongoing barrage of anti-LGBTQ+ legislation in his deeply conservative state. Nelson sits on the HIV planning council for the Mississippi Department of Health and on the board of the LGBTQ+ civic organization Capital City Pride, where he co-chairs the advocacy committee.

Nelson lives in Byram, Mississippi. He is the father of four foster children.

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