

Representative Merika Coleman Bio

Representative Merika Coleman was elected to the Alabama House of Representatives in 2002 and is now serving her fifth term as a member of the Legislative body. She currently serves as a member of leadership of the 105-member body as the **Assistant Minority Leader**, the first person ever to serve in this position.

Representative Coleman is a member of **the powerful Judiciary committee** that creates and develops all criminal and civil laws in the state of Alabama. In addition, she is **the only female member of the Banking Committee** and is a former member of the Ways and Means Committee that develops the budget for all Alabama State Departments. Previously, Representative Coleman served as **Chair of the Boards and Commission Committee**, one of only three women of House of Representatives that served in leadership at the time.

In addition to Representative Coleman's two degrees from the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), a Bachelors of Arts in Communications and a Masters of Public Administration, she completed her **Doctor of Jurisprudence** from the Birmingham School of Law and was a member of the 2017-2018 graduating class, graduating with honors.

Professionally, Representative Coleman presently serves as an **Assistant Professor of Political Science and Social Justice Initiative Special Assistant** at Miles College located in historic Fairfield, AL. In addition, she is the owner of the **Law Offices of Merika Coleman, LLC**, a law firm which focusses on domestic relations and family law as well as estate planning.

Nationally, Representative is a sought after legislator by many women and political groups for her ideas on a range of issues such as **eradicating human trafficking, the role of black women in politics, healthcare reform, reproductive rights for women, pay equity, economic development, defense spending and common sense gun regulations**. She has made appearances on the *Rachel Maddow Show* on MSNBC and Reverend Jessie Jackson's **nationally recognized show, Keep Hope Alive**.

Representative Coleman has been recognized by numerous organizations for **her commitment to the poor and improving the quality of life for all Alabamians**. Most recently, she was **inducted into the U.A.B. M.P.A. Program Hall of Fame** for her contributions to public service. She was honored by the Boy Scouts of Alabama for her **commitment to youth and acknowledged her place in Alabama political history as the youngest woman ever elected to the Alabama Legislature. She was first elected at the age of 28.**

Although politically and professionally, she has accomplished many things, her greatest accomplishment is the **role of mother**. She is the mother of **Elexia**, who was a member of the 2019 graduating class of Vanderbilt University. Most recently, Elexia was a Field Director for the **Alabama Democratic Party** responsible for **voter education and engagement**. She is now pursuing a dual Masters of Public Health and Masters of Business at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Her son **Xaviar** is a junior business management major at Miles College.

Notable Legislation:

- Passed Constitutional Amendment to remove racist language from the 1901 Constitution.
- Passed Human Trafficking Legislation and resolution to require Human Trafficking Training for hospital personnel, law enforcement and truckers.

2022 Legislative Session agenda:

- Declaring racism a public health crisis that sets up a commission to identify healthcare disparities (Rep. Coleman passed an interim resolution on this matter and now has a bill drafted)
- 4 human trafficking bills-disclosure of johns; requirements to put signs with the hotline number on it in public places; eliminate coercion or deception for victims that are physically or mentally ill. Allow victims and witness to testify by video.
- Extreme Risk Protection Order(ERPO) also called Gun Violence Protective Order Act- allows courts to issue ex parte protective orders for folks who pose a harm to themselves or others.
- Identify and eliminate racial profiling on traffic stops.
- Remove the “Heart of Dixie” slogan from Alabama car tags.
- Pass a resolution urging the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution