

Governor Bill Haslam



Born and raised in Knoxville, Tennessee, Bill was blessed with parents who instilled their strong faith and work ethic in their children. As a young man, Bill excelled in academics and sports and was a leader in student government. At thirteen, Bill got a job pumping gas at a family-owned service station, and quickly learned that running a small business took diligent hard work. When Bill was 16 years old, tragedy struck his family. The sudden, unexpected death of his mother marked a turning point in his young life. Bill's dad pulled the family together and they leaned on each other and on their faith to get through the tough days.

Bill entered Emory University in 1976, and on the first day of class, met Crissy, a young woman from Memphis who would later become his wife. While attending college in Atlanta, Bill was a volunteer leader for Young Life, a Christian ministry that reaches out to adolescents. During the summers, Bill volunteered for the grassroots political campaigns of Howard Baker and Lamar Alexander and gained a deep understanding of the type of principled leadership needed to govern.

After graduating with a degree in History, Bill and Crissy married and moved to Knoxville, where Bill had agreed, at his father's urging, to work "for a couple of years" managing his family's small chain of gas stations. In the early years, Bill spent long days driving all over the country identifying, negotiating and purchasing good locations for new truck-stops. While lots of politicians talk about creating jobs—Bill Haslam has actually done it. When he first went to work for the company, Pilot Corporation had 800 employees; and when he left had more than 14,000 employees in 39 states. Throughout his time at Pilot, Bill sustained the company's growth by allocating resources wisely, managing the business conservatively, working hard to increase sales and satisfy customers. It was here that Bill gained the essential hands-on knowledge that makes the chief executive officer of a complicated enterprise successful.

In 2003, at the urging of many friends, he ran successfully for Mayor of Knoxville. The skills he honed in the private sector have helped make him an extremely effective Mayor. Reelected in 2007 with 87 percent of the vote, Bill has balanced seven consecutive city budgets, tripled the Rainy Day Fund, insisted that city government focus on providing services in an efficient manner, helped found key education initiatives, and recruited and retained thousands of jobs to the city.

On November 2, 2010, Bill was elected with 65 percent of the vote – winning 90 of 95 counties and securing the largest victory of any non-incumbent gubernatorial candidate in our state's history.

Having celebrated their 31st wedding anniversary in 2012, Bill and his wife, Crissy, have also been blessed with three children, a daughter-in-law, two sons-in-law and a new grandson. For 28 years, Bill and Crissy have been members of Cedar Springs Presbyterian Church (EPC) in Knoxville and for 22 of those years Bill has served as an Elder.