

## **About Joni**

*Senator Joni Ernst, native of Red Oak, Iowa, has dedicated her life to her state and country, having served in the military for over 23 years and now representing Iowans in the United States Senate. Joni is working to grow a strong economy; stand up for Iowa farmers, families, and small businesses; hold Washington accountable, ensure a strong national defense, and support our veterans.*

**Born:** *July 1, 1970 in Red Oak*

**Residence:** *Red Oak, Iowa*

**Committees:** *Armed Services; Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry; Environment and Public Works; Small Business and Entrepreneurship*

**Education:** *Iowa State University (B.A.), Columbus State University (M.P.A.)*

## **Early Life**

*Born and raised on a farm in Montgomery County, Joni's parents instilled in her the values important to Iowans: hard work, service, and sacrifice. After graduating top of her class at Stanton High School, Joni went on to Iowa State University where she joined the university's ROTC program.*

## **Military Career**

*After graduating from Iowa State, Joni joined the U.S. Army Reserves. In 2003, she served as a company commander in Kuwait and Iraq, leading 150 Iowa Army National Guardsmen during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Joni retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Iowa Army National Guard after 23 years of military service.*

## **Public Service**

*Known for her independent leadership and commitment to public service, Joni previously served as the Montgomery County Auditor where she worked to eliminate wasteful government spending and protect taxpayers' hard-earned dollars, and was the local commissioner of elections. As a state senator, Joni fought to balance the state budget and helped turn Iowa's \$900 million budget deficit into a \$1 billion surplus. In November 2014, Joni was elected as the first woman to serve in federal elected office from the State of Iowa and also became the first female combat veteran elected to serve in the United States Senate.*

## **Family Life**

*Joni still lives in Red Oak, not far from the family farm where she grew up, and near her family. Her daughter Libby is a cadet at The United States Military Academy in West Point, New York.*