Barack Hussein Obama II was born on August 4, 1961, in Honolulu, Hawaii. His mother, Ann Dunham, was born on an Army base in Wichita, Kansas, during World War II. After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Dunham's father, Stanley, enlisted in the military and marched across Europe in General George Patton's army. Dunham's mother, Madelyn, went to work on a bomber assembly line. After the war, the couple studied on the G.I. Bill, bought a house through the Federal Housing Program and, after several moves, ended up in Hawaii.

Obama was elected to the [Illinois Senate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illinois_Senate) in 1996, succeeding Democratic State Senator [Alice Palmer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alice_Palmer_%28politician%29) as Senator from Illinois's 13th District, which at that time spanned Chicago South Side neighborhoods from [Hyde Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyde_Park,_Chicago)–[Kenwood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenwood,_Chicago) south to [South Shore](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Shore,_Chicago) and west to [Chicago Lawn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicago_Lawn,_Chicago).[[59]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama#cite_note-59) Once elected, Obama gained bipartisan support for legislation that reformed ethics and health care laws.[[60]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama#cite_note-60) He sponsored a law that increased [tax credits](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tax_credit) for low-income workers, negotiated welfare reform, and promoted increased subsidies for childcare.[[61]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama#cite_note-Scott20070730-61) In 2001, as co-chairman of the bipartisan Joint Committee on Administrative Rules, Obama supported Republican Governor Ryan's [payday loan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Payday_loan) regulations and [predatory mortgage lending](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Predatory_lending) regulations aimed at averting home foreclosures.[[62]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama#cite_note-62)