

PRESS RELEASE

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CPPP Announces New Executive Director

Nationally renowned social justice lawyer and communicator Ann Beeson takes the CPPP helm on Sept. 3.

AUSTIN, TEXAS—The Center for Public Policy Priorities' Board of Directors and staff are pleased to announce that Ann Beeson has been named Executive Director of CPPP. A nationally renowned social justice lawyer, nonprofit leader, and effective communicator, Beeson brings robust experience, infectious energy, and creative innovation to CPPP as the organization begins its next phase of work toward a better Texas for all.

Board of Directors Chairman Flora Alexandra Brewer said Beeson is the perfect choice to continue CPPP's strong voice for policies that improve the lives of low- and moderate-income Texans.

"We believe Ann is the right leader for the Center for Public Policy Priorities' strategic goals and the emerging environment in Texas. She passionately and honestly believes in Texas and has a clear-eyed vision for making it even better," said Brewer. "She has demonstrated the ability to successfully lead policy initiatives that integrate a broad range of communication strategies and technologies from the outset, and we look forward to the experience and energy she will bring to CPPP."

A passionate advocate for progressive change in Texas and nationally, Beeson recently moved back to Austin after working as an executive in law and philanthropy in New York City for many years. Since returning to Texas, Beeson has worked with donors to expand progressive infrastructure in the state; launched HATCH, a new non-profit to involve the creative sector in social change; and co-produced *Why Bother? Engaging Texans in Democracy Today*, a public media and dialogue series to inspire civic engagement among low-income people, immigrants, people of color, and youth.

"The people of Texas have a champion in Ann, who works tirelessly to advance the cause of social justice," said Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation, which generously supports the work of CPPP. "As a native Texan, I can attest to the Texas-sized passion, smarts, and creativity Ann brings every single day to build a more just society."

Beeson joins the center from her position as Senior Fellow and Lecturer at the Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life, University of Texas, College of Communications.

“Ann understands that individuals are not defined by the socio-economic status they are born into, but by leading a life built on dignity and respect for others. When given equality and justice, individual initiative can create great opportunities,” said Jim Hine, incoming chairman of CPPP’s Board of Directors and former commissioner of the Texas Department of Aging and Disabilities Services. “She also understands that good public policy is born out of constructive debate, conducted in a civil manner that informs others through factual information and in-depth analysis.”

Beeson was the Executive Director of U.S. Programs at the Open Society Foundations from 2007 to 2011, where she oversaw a staff of 50 and the distribution of \$150 million annually to promote human rights, justice, and accountability nationwide. She was previously the national Associate Legal Director of the American Civil Liberties Union, where she worked from 1995 to 2007. She argued twice before the U.S. Supreme Court, litigated numerous cases around the country, and launched groundbreaking programs to stop the erosion of civil liberties in the name of national security and to protect free speech and privacy on the Internet.

In 2007, Beeson was recognized as one of the nation’s top lawyers by *American Lawyer Magazine*, and in 2001, she was named one of the 50 most influential women lawyers in America by the *National Law Journal*.

Beeson grew up in Dallas, Texas, and received undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Texas in the 1980s. She received her law degree from Emory University School of Law, where she was Editor-in-Chief of the Emory Law Journal. After law school, Beeson served as law clerk to the Honorable Barefoot Sanders, then Chief Judge of the Northern District of Texas.

Beeson begins her role at CPPP on Tuesday, Sept. 3.