

CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

2014 HOBBY POLICY SUMMIT – SPEAKERS

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**James Aldrete** [@jamesaldrete](#)

James Aldrete is President and Creative Director of Message Audience & Presentation, Inc. MAP's creative and strategic work has been recognized in *Campaigns & Elections Magazine*, as well as the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, and *Slate Magazine* among other media outlets. MAP served as part of the Obama Media Team in '08 and '12 as consultants for progressive organizations like Planned Parenthood, SEIU and TSTA. Prior to founding MAP, Aldrete served as Deputy Press Secretary to the Ann Richards for Governor Campaign, and as Creative Director for Gold Communications, an Affiliate of Public Strategies, Inc. Aldrete received his Master of Arts in Speech Communication from the University of Texas at Austin.

**Joan Alker** [@JoanAlker1](#)

Joan Alker is the Executive Director of the Center for Children and Families and a research associate professor at the Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy. Her research focuses on health coverage for low-income children and families. She is an expert on Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Alker has more than 20 years of experience working on issues affecting low-income families. She holds a Master of Philosophy in politics from St. Antony's College, Oxford University and a Bachelor of Arts with honors in political science from Bryn Mawr College.

**Ana Almaguel**

Ana Almaguel is a Planning Project Manager at the Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service Department. Ms. Almaguel works on public health, health care access for the medically indigent, emergency preparedness, and adult mental health planning. She has also been a Peace Corps volunteer in Guatemala; social worker associate at Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA), inpatient and outpatient, for mono-lingual Spanish-speaking children and families with HIV or AIDS; and program coordinator for the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative in East Hollywood, CHLA - Adolescent Medicine Division. Ms. Almaguel earned a B.S. in Home Economics - Nutrition and an M.P.A. from Texas State University.

**Raul R. Alvarez** [@raulalvarez4](#)

Raul R. Alvarez has been an administrator at Austin Independent School District since 2007. He served two terms on the Austin City Council, from 2000 to 2006. Prior jobs include working as Environmental Justice Director for the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club, legal assistant at an environmental/public interest law firm and research assistant for the East Austin Health Center. Raul has a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering from Stanford University and a M.S. in Community and Regional Planning from the University of Texas at Austin.

**Jenna D. Anding, Ph.D. [@JennaAnding](#)**

Dr. Anding has been with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service for more than 15 years, developing education programs on topics that include nutrition, food resource management, food safety and food preservation. She is also the principal investigator for the *Better Living for Texans* (BLT) and *Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities* programs. These programs provide education and skills to SNAP- and SNAP-eligible audiences to help them improve their diets, adopt targeted skills that improve their food security and increase their access to healthier foods.

**Ann Baddour [@TexasAppleseed](#)**

Ann Baddour is director of financial access programs at Texas Appleseed, a public interest law center. She is a statewide leader in the movement to build greater consumer protections into payday and auto title lending in Texas. Ann is a Fulbright Scholar with a Master of Public Affairs Degree from the LBJ School of Public Affairs and a Master's Degree in Middle Eastern Studies from The University of Texas at Austin.

**Katherine Barillas, Ph.D. [@OneVoiceTexas](#)**

Dr. Barillas has over 15 years in the field of child welfare with experience in direct service, policy analysis, advocacy and research. She has a Master's in Social Work and graduated from the University of Houston with a doctorate in political science. Her dissertation examined the role of state capacity in the privatization of state child welfare systems. She is currently the Director of Child Welfare Policy at One Voice Texas. Dr. Barillas has worked with federal, state and local policy makers and been an integral part of the passage of several pieces of important legislation. She has conducted analysis for state and local level research projects and has taught Advanced Social Policy Analysis as an adjunct at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work.

**Don Baylor, Jr.**

As a lead member of the Urban Institute's Policy Advisory Group, Baylor's policy background includes asset building, higher education, and workforce development, while also advising the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. From 2004-2014, he worked at the Center for Public Policy Priorities as a lobbyist, policy analyst, and director of OpportunityTexas. His prior positions include legislative director for the New York ACORN and senior consultant for KPMG's Public Sector Consulting. He holds degrees from Austin High School, Georgetown University, and University of Wisconsin-Madison.

**Lydia Bean [@LydiaBeanTexas](#)**

Dr. Lydia Bean is a Harvard-trained sociologist and author of *The Politics of Evangelical Identity* (Princeton University Press, 2014). As Senior Consultant to the PICO National Network, she guides a Texas strategy to raise civic engagement in low and moderate-income faith communities. PICO is the largest network in the country that develops leadership in congregations to address community problems. This fall, a multi-racial team of 25 faith leaders launched a new PICO organization in Texas.

**Oliver Bernstein** [@oliveroliver](#)

Oliver Bernstein joined the Center for Public Policy Priorities in 2014. A fluent Spanish speaker who has lived and worked along the Texas-Mexico border and nationally, Bernstein brings more than nine years of communications experience to the Center. He most recently directed a grassroots communications strategy for the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal Campaign, which aims to replace coal with clean energy. Bernstein also directed the Sierra Club's national diversity media program from 2006 to 2009, serving as a bilingual on-the-record spokesman and developing Hispanic media outreach plans. As a former board member and board president of American Gateways, which works to ensure that immigrants and refugees have equal access to justice in Texas, Bernstein led a successful re-branding effort and spearheaded plans for their first annual benefit gala.

**Michele Bibby** [@michelebibby1](#)

Michele Alexander Bibby is the owner of MAB Consulting Services, a mental health education and advocacy consulting firm. She is a Certified Peer Specialist and has worked at a State Hospital and a Local Mental Health Authority. Michele delivers mental health education workshops and public speeches, and targets many of her speaking engagements at the African American community due to the intense stigma regarding mental health issues in her cultural community. She has a Bachelor's Degree from UT Austin.

**Kaeley Bobbitt, Ph.D.** [@CFRPIbj](#)

Kaeley Bobbitt earned her Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Sciences at the University of Texas at Austin and is currently a Senior Policy Associate at the Child and Family Research Partnership (CFRP). Her research interests center around the development and well-being of children from low-income families. At CFRP she is a lead researcher on the Texas Home Visiting Program Evaluation and the Estimation of the Cost of Raising Children in Texas projects.

**Andrea Brauer** [@putkids1st](#)

Andrea Brauer is a returning member to the policy team at Texans Care. She worked for Texans Care in 2005 -2006, helping to launch the Partners in CPS Reform group. Prior to joining Texans Care, Andrea spent six years working for the Texas Legislature, helping to improve state agency functioning and crafting bills to enhance services for children and families in Texas. Andrea has worked for several nonprofits and has a background working directly with children in foster care and adoption, children with disabilities, and with adolescents in a school setting. She has a B.A. in Political Science from Loyola University Chicago, and a Master's in Social Welfare from the University of California, Los Angeles. Andrea's current work at Texans Care focuses on early opportunities and education for children.

**Brianna Brown** [@TXOrgProject](#)

Brianna Brown is a Texas native and an alumna of Brown University with degrees in Political Science and Africana Studies. She has worked for Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson in her Dallas district office as a casework manager and on President Obama's re-election campaign in Cleveland, Ohio.

Currently Brianna is the lead health care organizer for the Texas Organizing Project, concentrating her efforts on the organization's field operation to get Dallas County residents activated in the fight for local and statewide solutions to Texas' healthcare crisis.

**Lon Burnam** [@LonBurnam](#)

Texas State Representative Lon Burnam has represented District 90 in Fort Worth since 1997. Burnam's legislative work has focused on consumer issues, anti-discrimination, fair taxation, energy, and the environment. His numerous awards include the Racial Justice and Reconciliation Award from the Tarrant Area Community of Churches; REACH, Inc.'s ADA award for disability advocacy; and the "Millennium Conservation Award" from the Texas Committee on Natural Resources. In 1997, Rep. Burnam was named "Best Public Official" by the Fort Worth Weekly. Prior to serving in the Texas House, Burnam worked as a city planner focusing on efforts to revitalize neighborhoods and create new economic opportunities. Burnam is currently a consultant for organizations promoting civil rights and pluralism.

**Eva DeLuna Castro** [@DeLunaEva](#)

Eva DeLuna Castro joined the Center for Public Policy Priorities in 1998 and focuses on state budget issues. Before coming to the Center, she was an Analyst for the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, researching various policy issues related to state revenue and spending. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in History and Literature, cum laude, from Harvard University in 1988 and a Master of Public Affairs from the LBJ School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin in 1997.

**Perla Cavazos** [@perla\\_tx](#)

Perla Cavazos serves as Legislative Director for State Senator Sylvia R. Garcia (Houston) and works on policy issues related to health and human services, business and commerce, finance, and veterans affairs. She has worked in and around the capitol for 12 years as a policy analyst focused on issues affecting economically disadvantaged communities and vulnerable populations. Perla was born and raised in San Benito, Texas, a small community in the Rio Grande Valley, and has lived in Austin for 17 years. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree with honors from Stanford University and a Master of Public Affairs degree from the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas.

**Celia Cole** [@FeedingTexas](#)

Celia Cole is an expert in food and nutrition policy with experience at the state and federal level. Prior to Feeding Texas, Celia was a senior policy analyst with the Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPP) for 14 years. She also has worked in a policy capacity with the Texas Department of Human Services and for Laurel Consulting Group, in Washington, D.C. Celia is the vice-chair of the Texas Nonprofit Council, and serves on the advisory committees of the Partnership for a Healthy Texas and the Texas Food Policy Roundtable. Celia holds a Bachelor's degree in Art History from Columbia University and a Master's degree from the Institute of Latin American Studies at UT-Austin.

**Elizabeth Colvin**

Elizabeth Colvin directs Insure Central Texas for Foundation Communities. Prior to launching Insure Central Texas in 2013, she managed free tax preparation programs in Austin and Houston and consulted with free tax programs across the country. With a background in labor and employment law, she has spent her career advocating on behalf of low-income communities. She received a J.D. from the University of Texas School of Law and a Bachelor's in Math and History from Rice University.

**Charles M. Cook. Ed.D. [@ACCdistrict](#)**

Dr. Charles M. Cook joined Austin Community College as Provost & Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs on August 1, 2014. As the chief academic officer, he guides and oversees all programs relating to instruction and student services. Previously, Dr. Cook oversaw academic matters for Houston Community College, a multi-college system serving more than 70,000 students (1999-July 2014). He also worked for the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board on planning and policy issues for statewide community and technical college instructional programs and initiatives (1994-1999). Dr. Cook holds a Bachelor's degree in History from the University of Texas at Austin, a Master's degree in U.S. History from the University of Houston, and a Doctorate in Higher Education Administration from the University of Houston.

**Rachel Cooper**

Rachel joined the Center for Public Policy Priorities in 2012 with a focus on food and nutrition programs as well as obesity. Before joining the center, she worked for the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) where she was in charge of research and data analysis and authored reports such as the School Breakfast Scorecard, Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation, and State of the States. Cooper also worked for the Children's Defense Fund (CDF), in their New York office, where she focused on helping families gain access to programs that provide work supports, such as tax credits, Medicaid, SCHIP, and food stamps. Cooper received her Master's in Human Development and Social Policy from Northwestern University.

**John-Michael Cortez [@JMVC\\_ATX](#)**

A life-long resident of Central Texas, John-Michael Vincent Cortez is a graduate of The University of Texas' McCombs School of Business, and received a Master of Science in Community and Regional Planning from UT's School of Architecture. Following stints in corporate consulting and owning a small business, John-Michael has since dedicated his career to community engagement and development. He currently serves as Community Involvement Manager for Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and serves on the board of the Center for Public Policy Priorities. Mr. Cortez's passion for service is evidenced by his leadership roles in dozens of community organizations and efforts. John-Michael was elected by central Texas voters to the Board of Trustees of the Austin Community College District in May 2009, and served as Secretary of the Board from 2010 to 2012.

**Dale Craymer**

Mr. Craymer is TTARA's President and chief spokesperson. He is an expert on state business tax, particularly the franchise, or “margin” tax, as well as the state budget and the economy. He is a frequent advisor to public officials and is often asked to provide expert testimony on fiscal issues. He is a member of Texas’ Business Tax Advisory Committee and the National Taxpayers Conference, and has previously served on the executive Boards of both the National Association of State Budget Officers and the Council of Governor's Policy Advisors. He is an honors graduate of the University of Texas with a B.A. (Plan II) and M.A. in Economics.

**Michelle Dahlenburg** [@michellehope](#)

Michelle Dahlenburg is a performer, applied theatre artist, and audio producer working at the intersection of art and civic, community, and social change. She teaches at Texas State University and is the Artistic Director of Conspire Theatre, which works with women during and after incarceration. She was recently program manager for HATCH and audio producer for the 4 Plus 4 Equals art + mental health project. Michelle has also been a teaching artist/facilitator for the NEA Rural Design Institute, the Annette Strauss Institute for Civic Life, Creative Action, American Theatre Company, Still Point Theatre Collective, and Paramount Theatre.

**Frances Deviney** [@francespdeviney](#)

As a developmental psychologist, advocate, and data nerd, Dr. Frances Deviney believes in daring Texas to be the best for every Texan by expanding opportunity and justice through fact-based policy change. As Associate Director for Research and Planning at the Center for Public Policy Priorities, she combines the strength of results-based advocacy and the power of “data storytelling” to support advocates, practitioners, and decision makers in making innovative and positive changes for all Texans.

**Anne Dunkelberg** [@adunkcPPP](#)

Anne Dunkelberg joined the Center for Public Policy Priorities in 1994. She is one of the state's leading experts in policy and budget issues relating to health care access. In 2007, she was named Consumer Advocate of the Year by Families U.S.A in Washington, D.C. Before coming to the center, she served as Program Director for Acute Care in the Texas Medicaid Director's Office and spent six years with the Texas Research League, where she authored numerous reports on Texas health and human services issues and tracked state health and human services budget issues. She earned dual degrees from The University of Texas at Austin—a Bachelor of Arts (Plan II), magna cum laude, in 1979 and a Master of Public Affairs from the LBJ School of Public Affairs in 1988.

**Jeremy Everett** [@Texas\\_Hunger](#)

Jeremy Everett is the Director of Baylor University’s Texas Hunger Initiative, a project dedicated to developing and implementing strategies to end hunger and reduce poverty through policy, education, research, and community organizing. Jeremy earned a Bachelor’s degree from Samford University, and a Master of Divinity from Baylor University. Jeremy is also a Next Generation Fellow of the UT’s Strauss

Center for International Security and Law and was recently appointed by the U.S. Congress to serve on the National Commission on Hunger.

**Anika Fassia**

At Public Works, Anika conducts trainings, reaches out to potential new allies and works with partners to build support for an effective public sector that is dedicated to equitable opportunities for all Americans. Previously, Anika was a State Policy Fellow at the Michigan League for Public Policy where she became their first lead policy analyst on racial equity, immigration and the corrections budget. Anika holds a M.S.W. emphasizing social policy from the University of Michigan.

**Rachel Brewer Fausett** [@GTFCU\\_Rachel](#)

Rachel Brewer Fausett graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Public Relations from Texas State University – San Marcos. Currently Rachel leads Greater TEXAS Federal Credit Union/Aggieland Credit Union's Business Development programs and is a part of the two-person Marketing team for the credit union's 17 branches across the state of Texas. She is highly involved in public relations and marketing contributions to the credit union movement and enjoys volunteering in her free time.

**Kevin Foster, Ph.D.** [@kevmfos](#)

Dr. Kevin Foster is an educational anthropologist, University of Texas at Austin faculty member, author, and the founding director of the Institute for Community, University and School Partnerships (ICU.S.P), which works with students, conducts research and leads professional development workshops in central Texas schools. Dr. Foster's passion is to bring research, teaching and community service together to improve academic outcomes for African American and other students. He received his Ph.D. and M.A. from the University of Texas at Austin and his B.A. from the College of William and Mary.

**Lynda Frost, , J.D., Ph.D.** [@HoggFoundation](#)

Lynda Frost serves as the Director of Planning and Programs at the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, where she oversees major initiatives and grant programs, leads strategic and operational planning, and manages program staff. She holds an appointment as a clinical associate professor in the LBJ School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin and has legal expertise in human rights, juvenile and criminal justice, and mental health law.

**Eileen Garcia** [@putkids1st](#)

As CEO of Texans Care for Children, Eileen leads an amazingly talented staff of experts in improving outcomes for Texas children and bringing Texans together to develop common policy solutions. She has over 15 years' experience working in the nonprofit sector, primarily in organizations focused on children's issues. Eileen received her law degree with honors from the University of Texas School of Law.

**Mimi Garcia** [@mimig1027](#)

Mimi Garcia is the Texas State Director for Enroll America. She oversees a campaign in Texas that includes three dozen staff, a coalition of over 400 partner organizations, and a network of more than 3,500 volunteers. She is a leading voice on the consumer experience and best practices around Affordable Care Act enrollment and engagement in Texas. Mimi has worked in health advocacy, public investment, and social justice projects for over a decade. She has a Master of Public Policy from the Heller School of Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University, a Master of Arts in organizational leadership from Brandeis University, and a B.A. in sociology from Southwestern University.

**Julieta Garibay** [@dreamelder](#)

Julieta Garibay moved to the U.S. at the age of 12 from Mexico City and lived in Texas for 20 years before moving to Washington, D.C. She holds a Master of Science in Public Health Nursing and a Bachelor's degree in Nursing from the University of Texas, where she graduated with honors. In 2005, she co-founded the University Leadership Initiative (ULI), one of the first undocumented youth-led organizations in the nation. She is also a co-founder of United We Dream and current Deputy Advocacy Director.

**Terri E. Givens, Ph.D.** [@TerriGivens](#)

Terri E. Givens is an associate professor in the Department of Government at the University of Texas at Austin. Her most recent publication is *Legislating Equality: The Politics of Antidiscrimination Policy in Europe* (Oxford University Press, 2014). She is very active in the community and her immigration blog is available at [www.immigrationtexas.org](http://www.immigrationtexas.org). Her website can be found at [www.terrigivens.com](http://www.terrigivens.com) and she is on twitter [@TerriGivens](#).

**Jessica González-Rojas** [@jgonzalez\\_rojas](#)

Jessica González-Rojas is the Executive Director at the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, the only national reproductive justice organization that specifically works to advance reproductive health and rights for Latinas. She has been a leader in progressive movements for over 15 years, successfully breaking down barriers between movements and building a strong Latina grassroots presence. Jessica is an Adjunct Professor of Latino and Latin American Studies at the City University of New York. She holds a Master's degree in Public Administration from New York University's Wagner Graduate School of Public Service and a certificate from the Institute for Not-for-Profit Management at Columbia University's Graduate School of Business.

**Robb Gray** [@CenterOnBudget](#)

Robb Gray is the Director of State Engagement & Partnerships at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities where he works with state and national partners to advance progressive fiscal policies focused on improving the lives of low- and moderate-income families and the communities where they live. Gray joined the Center in May 2007, bringing over 10 years of experience working in state and

federal governments in a variety of advocacy, organizational development, and analytical capacities. Before coming to the Center, Gray worked on contract with numerous non-profit and state labor organizations. Prior to that, he worked for a variety of Oklahoma state and legislative offices, and as an Intelligence Analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency.

**Sherri Greenberg** [@srgreenberg](#)

Sherri Greenberg directs the Center for Politics and Governance at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. Her current teaching and research interests include state and local government finances; online governance, transparency and civic engagement; campaigns and elections; and education and housing. Greenberg served for 10 years in the Texas House of Representatives, completing her final term in January 2001. As a House member, she chaired the Pensions and Investments Committee and the Select Committee on Teacher Health Insurance. She also served on the House Appropriations, Economic Development, Elections, and Science and Technology committees.

**Garrett Groves**

Garrett Groves is the incoming Program Director, Economic Opportunity at the Center for Public Policy Priorities. Garrett has over 10 years of experience in public policy, with a focus on education, workforce and economic development. He was formerly a Senior Policy Analyst at the National Governors Association, where he spearheaded a number of multi-state governors' initiatives on education and training for tomorrow's jobs. Garrett previously worked for the U.S. Department of Labor, where he managed \$25 million in federal funding. Garrett is a graduate of the LBJ School of Public Affairs in Austin. He also holds a Master's degree in counseling psychology, and he has provided psychotherapy and career counseling. He previously led a counseling support team in a wilderness survival program for at-risk youth. Garrett grew up on a farm in western Colorado.

**Joaquin Guerra** [@joaquinhguerra](#)

Joaquín Guerra is the Political Director of the Texas Organizing Project. He is the 2013 winner of the SXSW Social Revolución Mobilizer Award and is the Regional Field Director for Keeping Families Together, the immigration reform campaign sponsored by the Center for Community Change (CCC). He previously served as the Digital Campaign Director for CCC and the Campaign Director for Presente.org, where he managed campaigns that use the Internet to give their members ongoing opportunities to strengthen the political voice of the Latino community.

**Linda Jett Hamilton** [@PreK4SA](#)

Linda Hamilton was selected as the Director of Professional Development for Pre-K 4 SA in May of 2013, where she serves as a direct liaison to seven partner school districts, as well as local private preschools and childcare providers. She and her staff strive to ensure that four-year-olds in San Antonio receive a high-quality education in order to successfully accomplish personal achievement goals and state educational standards. In the past 27 years as an educator, Hamilton has taught Pre-K, Kindergarten, 4th grade and high school, in both special and general education. She served as an Educational Specialist and Consultant for the Education Service Center, Region 20, where she provided

training and supervision for over 400 teacher certification candidates. Prior to joining the Pre-K 4 SA team, Hamilton held the position of Assistant Director of Early Childhood Programs at North East ISD. Hamilton holds a Bachelor of Journalism in Public Relations from The University of Texas at Austin, and a Texas Teaching Certification in both Special Education and Early Childhood Education.

**Ariane Hegewisch** [@IWPRresearch](#)

Ariane Hegewisch is a Study Director at the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR). She is responsible for IWPR's research on workplace discrimination, pay equity and workforce development. She is a member of IWPR's Status of Women in the States team. Ariane has lived in the United States since 2001 and has a B.Sc. in Economics from the London School of Economics and an M.Phil. in Development Studies from the Institute of Developmental Studies, Sussex.

**Melissa Henderson** [@MelissaH](#)

Melissa Henderson leads statewide, postsecondary policy and advocacy work for Educate Texas, including primary responsibility for the work of the nationally-recognized Texas Student Success Council. She brings with her eight years of experience in the Texas House, having served as legislative director for Rep. Patrick Rose, whom she advised on education - both P-12 and postsecondary, where she worked closely with institutions of higher education, House leadership and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. She holds a Bachelor's degree in psychology from Texas A&M University and will complete her Master's degree from the LBJ School for Public Affairs in December, 2014.

**Rep. Harvey Hilderbran** [@RepHilderbran](#)

Harvey Hilderbran was first elected to the Texas House of Representatives in 1988 and was most recently re-elected in 2012 to serve the people of District 53. Rep. Hilderbran currently serves as chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, and sits on the Legislative Audit Committee, the Legislative Budget Board, as well as the House committees on Redistricting, State Affairs, and the Select Committee on Voter Identification and Voter Fraud. In past sessions Hilderbran has served as chairman of the House Committee on Culture, Recreation and Tourism; chairman of the Human Services Committee; and on the Natural Resources Committee. His first public policy assignment was service as a congressional legislative assistant for agriculture and small business issues in Washington D.C. in the mid-1980s. He later served as assistant director of state affairs for the Texas Farm Bureau, where he concentrated on property and water rights.

**David G. Hinojosa** [@MALDEF](#)

David Hinojosa is MALDEF's Southwest Regional Counsel, the premier Latino civil rights law firm. Since joining MALDEF in 2003, David has become a leading litigator and advocate in the area of civil rights, with an emphasis in education. He has spearheaded several education impact cases, including school finance cases in New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas. A graduate of Edgewood High School, David received his B.A. from New Mexico State University, and his J.D. from the University of Texas at Austin.

**Scott Hochberg**

Scott Hochberg served 20 years on the Texas House Committee on Public Education, and chaired the education subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee. He's well respected on both sides of the aisle as an expert on school funding. He was twice named to *Texas Monthly's* Ten Best list, and has been honored by education groups including the Texas PTA and the Equity Center. Mr. Hochberg teaches education policy at Rice University and serves on the boards of several Houston organizations.

**Tiffany Hogue** [@TXOrgProject](#)

Tiffany Hogue is a native Houstonian. She joined Texas Organizing Project in 2013 to direct their statewide healthcare campaign where she oversaw legislative advocacy, grassroots organizing, communications and online operations. Previously, Tiffany worked for SEIU on campaigns to raise standards for low wage service workers like janitors, food service and security officers. Tiffany is currently pursuing a Master's of Public Policy. She lives in Houston with her husband Ryan and three daughters

**Matt Hull** [@TXCDC](#)

Matt Hull is the Executive Director for the Texas Association of Community Development Corporations (TACDC). As the Executive Director, Matt is responsible for creating policies at the state level that benefit the development climate for nonprofit groups working to improve the lives of lower income Texans. Prior to joining TACDC, Matt served as the Executive Director for Habitat for Humanity Texas, the state support organization serving all of the Habitat affiliates across the state.

**Blake Hutson** [@ConsumersUnion](#)

Blake Hutson is a Senior Associate for health reform campaigns in the Southwest office of Consumers Union in Austin, Texas, where he manages the Consumer Reports Health Law Helper project and leads public education efforts and outreach on our health reform campaigns. He started working with Consumers Union in 2008 as part of the organization's "Cover America Tour," traveling the nation for four months via RV and filming stories of real-life experiences with the health care system. Before coming to Consumers Union, Blake lived and worked in the South American country of Guyana. As a volunteer, he assisted local groups in community mobilization and organizational development. Blake has a Bachelor's in marketing from the University of Texas and a Master's in political science and public policy from Texas State University.

**Jose Ibarra** [@EnrollAmerica](#)

Jose Ibarra is the South Texas Organizing Lead for Enroll America, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization focused on one goal: maximizing the number of Americans who are enrolled in and retain health coverage.

**Steven Jackobs** [@CapitalIDEA](#)

Steve has been Executive Director of Capital IDEA since its founding in 1998. Previously he worked for

10 years with the Texas Industrial Areas Foundation and Austin Interfaith on initiatives and public policy of interest to low-income families. He holds a Master's degree in Social and Political Thought from the University of Sussex in England and a Bachelor's degree in Social Studies from Harvard University.

**Richie Jackson** [@TXRestAssoc](#)

Richie Jackson is the CEO of the Texas Restaurant Association. TRA represents the state's \$40.8 billion restaurant industry, which is comprised of 35,000 plus locations and a workforce of over one million employees.

**Lauren Johnson** [@ConspireTheatre](#)

Lauren Johnson is performer and board member for Conspire Theater, a member of the X-offenders Council, Travis County Reentry Planning Council, and serves on the advisory committee of the Prison Justice League. She uses her passion coupled with her personal experiences to advocate for those who come behind her who may not know that they have a voice.

**Mandi Sheridan Kimball** [@ChildrenatRisk](#)

Mandi Sheridan Kimball, Director of Public Policy and Government Affairs, has been advocating for Texas' children since 2004. In January 2006, she became CHILDREN AT RISK's Public Policy Analyst and quickly made her way to Director. She received her Master's in Social Work from the University of Houston and received her Bachelor's degree in Social Work from St. Edwards in Austin, Texas. Social justice is a priority on Mandi's advocacy agenda. Her experience and knowledge of the Texas Legislature has assisted her efforts in achieving quality care and services for Texas' most vulnerable youth in the areas of human trafficking, juvenile justice/mental health, public education, and food insecurity. Mandi is highly active within the community and serves in leadership capacities on multiple local and state coalitions. In 2011, Mandi received the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work Alumni Association's Distinguished Alumni Award.

**Marcia Kinsey**

Marcia Kinsey is a program associate at Public Works, where she conducts trainings and works with partner organizations as they strive to build support for an effective public sector. Before joining Public Works in 2003, Marcia served the United States government as a diplomat in Belize in Central America, and was a public policy analyst for the Texas-based Center for Public Policy Priorities. She has a Bachelor's degree in Economics from St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas.

**Dick Lavine** [@dlavine](#)

Dick Lavine is a Senior Policy Analyst at the Center for Public Policy Priorities, where he focuses on state and local revenue issues. Before coming to the Center in 1994, he was a Senior Researcher at the House Research Organization of the Texas House of Representatives for 10 years. He is a Chartered Financial Analyst, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Travis Central Appraisal District, and a member of the Executive Board of AFSCME Texas Retirees, the statewide union local of retired public

employees. The Equity Center named him the 2011 Champion for Equity for his work to reform our tax system to ensure it can adequately support public education and other public services. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Economics, magna cum laude, from Harvard College in 1969, and a Doctor of Jurisprudence, cum laude, from the University of Pennsylvania in 1975.

**James LeBas**

James LeBas has been the Chief Revenue Estimator for the Comptroller and Director of Financial Analysis for the Texas Tax Reform Commission headed by John Sharp. He is currently an independent lobbyist with clients that include the Texas Oil and Gas Association, the Association of Electric Companies of Texas, and Rackspace Managed Hosting.

**Jennifer Lee** [@jjesunlee](#)

Jennifer Lee joined the Center for Public Policy Priorities in 2013. Before coming to the Center, she was an Education Pioneers Fellow with TNTP and Houston ISD. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in History from Wellesley College in 2007 and a Master of Public Affairs from the LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin in 2013. Before returning to graduate school, Lee was the Associate Editor at the educational publisher Eye On Education.

**Nichole Lopez-Riley** [@uwatx](#)

As the Program Director for United Way for Greater Austin's Target Graduation program, Nichole Lopez-Riley oversees the Middle School Matters and Youth Program Quality Initiatives aimed at ensuring students in our community are on track to graduate from high school with the skills necessary to be successful in college, work and life. Nichole has worked in the non-profit sector in the areas of program design, implementation and management. Her specialties include non-profit management, community-building, and strategic planning. She holds a B.A. in International Relations from Rollins College and a Master of Public Policy from the University of Maryland, College Park.

**Eddie Lucio** [@SenatorLucio](#)

Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr., a native of Brownsville, began his public service in 1971, becoming Cameron County Treasurer and later Cameron County Commissioner. During his career, Senator Lucio's priorities have focused on public and higher education; economic development; access to quality health care; and the needs of children, the elderly, and those with special needs. Senator Lucio has passed hundreds of bills, including those creating the University of Texas Health Science Center-South Texas, a life without parole option in capital murder cases, water and waste-water funding for *colonias*, and self-help programs enabling aspiring home owners to invest sweat equity in the construction of their own homes. His commitment to families and children has resulted in expanded health coverage for children with autism, installing three-point seat belts on new school buses, improving nutrition in schools, and protecting and enhancing health care benefits for families of peace officers killed in the line of duty.

**Nikki Marín Baena** [@Co\\_opTX](#)

Nikki Marín Baena is the Co-Director of Cooperation Texas, focused on creating sustainable jobs through the development, support and promotion of worker-owned cooperatives. Following textile mills with her family throughout Appalachia fueled her interest in international trade policy and its effects on individuals. Her longtime interest in cooperatives includes positions at worker-owned Firestorm Cafe and Books in Asheville, NC and worker and consumer-owned Weaver Street Market in Carrboro, NC. She studied Photography and Urban Planning at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. Nikki currently serves on the Board of Directors of the United States Federation of Worker Cooperatives and the Democracy at Work Institute.

**Danita McAnally** [@AmarilloCollege](#)

Danita McAnally has dedicated 35 years to serving Texas community colleges as both an administrator and a faculty member. She leads Amarillo College in strategic planning, evaluation, assessment, accreditation, and grant development. As a faculty member, she reached the rank of associate professor/department chair in mass communications and speech. She has been a Past President of the Texas Community College Teachers Association (TCCTA) and graduate of Leadership America.

**Dazzie McKelvy**

Dazzie McKelvy brings 25 years of experience developing successful sector strategies and creating lasting change in the workforce market. Her focus is on building collaborative solutions with employers, educators, and community organizations to address workforce need, and improve the lives of individual workers. She has worked with the Texas Employment Commission as a Local Office Supervisor, the Texas Workforce Commission as a regional liaison, and as the State Coordinator for the Job Corps Program. As a founding staff member of Capital IDEA, Dazzie was a major player in driving the tremendously successful project forward. Dazzie is currently the founder and principal of a consulting practice in Austin, Texas - Workforce Matters. She is a board member of the Center for Public Policy Priorities and National Board member for Jeremiah Program.

**Kathy Miller** [@TFN](#)

After serving as the Texas Freedom Network's deputy director from 1996 to 2000, Kathy Miller returned to TFN as president in 2005. During her time at TFN, Kathy has helped TFN become a champion of religious freedom, civil liberties and strong public schools. As spokesperson for TFN and other organizations, Kathy has testified before the Texas Legislature and the U.S. Congress and has appeared on cable news networks such as CNN, MSNBC and the major broadcast networks.

**Shannon Moody** [@JeremiahATX](#)

Shannon Moody serves as Executive Director of Jeremiah Program. She brings more than 20 years of nonprofit experience to her position with expertise in fundraising, strategic planning, and organizational excellence garnered as development director of many Austin nonprofit organizations, including Austin Children's Museum and the Austin Film Society. Moody's community service includes serving on the Board of Directors for Marathon Kids and on the Advisory Board of Stepping Stone

School. She previously served on the governing boards for the Austin Children’s Museum, Planned Parenthood, Austin Heritage Society and SafePlace.

**Stacey Pogue**

Stacey Pogue joined the Center for Public Policy Priorities in 2008. She focuses on health policy issues. Before coming to the center, she did health policy and research work with the Medicaid and CHIP Division of the Health and Human Services Commission and the Texas Department of Insurance. In 2010 and 2011, she was selected to serve as a funded Consumer Representative to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC). Pogue earned a Bachelor of Science in Geography, summa cum laude, from Texas A&M University in 1997 and a Master of Public Affairs from the LBJ School of Public Affairs at The University of Texas at Austin in 2005.

**Janet Realini, M.D., M.P.H. [@jrealini](#)**

Dr. Realini is President and Founder of Healthy Futures of Texas, a non-profit dedicated to reducing teen and unplanned pregnancy. Healthy Futures leads the Texas Women’s Healthcare Coalition, dedicated to ensuring all Texas women access to preventive care, including contraception.

**Shirley Reed, Ed.D. [@STCPR](#)**

Dr. Shirley Reed serves as the founding president of South Texas College. She continues her 40-year career as a community college administrator in three states. She came to the Rio Grande Valley in 1994 with a commitment to building a community college in a region without access to a community college. Under her leadership, South Texas College has seen steady growth in its enrollment starting with 1,058 students in 1993 and over 31,000 for the Fall 2014 semester. The College has instituted dual enrollment programs, drop-out recovery programs and other initiatives with high schools throughout South Texas.

**Jorge Antonio Renaud [@TexasCJC](#)**

Jorge Renaud has written extensively about the nexus of minority issues and criminal justice. His interest in criminal justice extends to juvenile justice, and he has facilitated creative writing workshops for at-risk youth, for youth in detention facilities, and those certified as adults and incarcerated in the Texas prison system. At TCJC Jorge researches and develops administrative and legislative policies at both the state and county levels. He facilitates TCJC’s inmate correspondence program, addressing concerns and requests for information by inmates and their family members. Jorge holds an MSSW from the University of Texas.

**Maria Rodriguez-Farris**

Maria Rodriguez-Farris is the Family Literacy Facilitator for the Ridgemont Early Childhood Center at Fort Bend ISD

**Laura Rosen**

Laura Rosen joined the Center for Public Policy Priorities in 2010. She is a policy analyst and the coordinator of OpportunityTexas, an initiative to move families up the economic ladder. Laura completed her Master of Public Policy from the University of Michigan in 2010 and received a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance from the University of Texas at Austin in 2004. Before returning to graduate school, Laura worked as a relationship manager at Wells Fargo.

**Christina Sanders** [@TXyoungvoters](#)

Christina Sanders is the State Director of the Texas League of Young Voters Education Fund. Prior to joining the Texas League's team, Christina worked in the Texas Legislature as a District Aide and Policy Analyst for a state senator. Previously, Christina worked in public policy as the coordinator for Houston Communities for Safe Indoor Air (HCSIA), where she worked on smoke-free policy change and childhood obesity policy. Christina, a Houston native, received her Bachelor of Political Science and Master of Public Administration in Public Policy degree from Texas Southern University.

**Josette Saxton** [@josettesaxton](#)

Josette Saxton, MSSW, is the Mental Health Policy Associate with Texans Care for Children, a nonprofit organization dedicated to fulfilling the promise of children through improved state policies and programs. She facilitates the Texas Children's Mental Health Forum which regularly brings together stakeholders to identify gaps, opportunities, and policy recommendations aimed at promoting children's mental health. She serves as a public member on several state interagency committees related to children's mental well-being.

**Amy Tripp** [@TX\\_Sunset](#)

Amy has worked as a Policy Analyst at the Sunset Advisory Commission since 2007, evaluating a variety of state agencies and developing recommendations in a range of policy areas, including health and human services, procurement and contracting, and information technology. She is the project manager of the ongoing Department of Family and Protective Services Sunset review. Amy has a Master of Public Affairs from the LBJ School of Public Affairs.

**Atul Varadhachary, M.D., Ph.D.**

Dr. Atul Varadhachary, a member of the CPPP Board, is a Managing Partner at Fannin Innovation Studio, Houston's leading early-stage life sciences development group. Before Fannin, Atul served as President, U.S. Operations, Reliance Life Sciences, as President of Agennix, and as Senior Engagement Manager at McKinsey & Co. Atul serves or has served on the Board of Managers of the Harris Health System, as Adjunct Professor at the Baylor College of Medicine, UT, and Rice University, on the HTC Life Sciences Committee, the BioHouston Advisory Board, the UH Biotechnology Industrial Advisory Committee, as President of IACCGH, and President of Pratham U.S.A one of the largest educational non-profits in the world. Atul received his medical training at the University of Bombay and his Ph.D. in Physiology at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine in Baltimore.

**Chandra Villanueva** [@ChandraKus](#)

Chandra Kring Villanueva joined the Center for Public Policy Priorities in 2010 as a fellow through the Center on Budget and Policies Priorities' State Fiscal Analysis Initiative. She focuses on state pensions and public education finance and policy. She also serves on the Customer Satisfaction Advisory Board for Capital Metro and is an advisory board member for the Center on Children and Families at the Columbia University School of Nursing. Villanueva was the manager of Advocacy and Public Policy with the Women's Prison Association in New York City. Prior to graduate school, she served as a Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow with the Congressional Hunger Center in Arizona and Washington, D.C. Villanueva earned a Master of Public Administration from the New York University Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service in 2007, and a Bachelor of Arts from The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington in 2003.

**Jennifer M. Ware** [@YWDALLASCEO](#)

Jennifer M. Ware was chosen to lead YW in March 2009. Jennifer has drawn on her fundraising and brand expertise to develop a strategic direction that will increase YW's impact on women, families, and the community. She brings more than 20 years of nonprofit management experience, including a decade of executive leadership at two large Dallas nonprofits. Jennifer most recently served as Chief Development Officer for Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas and has also worked with the Dallas Children's Advocacy Center and Baylor Health Care System Foundation. Jennifer is a member of Dallas Assembly and a graduate of Leadership Texas, Leadership Plano Class 22 and holds a B.A. in Psychology from Austin College.

**Jeff Webster** [@TGSLC](#)

Jeff Webster has worked for TG since 1986 and now holds the position of Assistant Vice-President for Research and Analytical Services. Jeff has overseen numerous studies on student loan default, debt burden, and student retention. His area pioneered the use of predictive modeling to improve default prevention efforts and developed the first consumer facing tool to show student debt-to-income ratios by major by institution. His latest research focuses on the efficacy of student loan counseling.

**Linda Werlein**

After having served as Director of Special Programs, and later, Director of Community Services at Kerrville State Hospital in the 1980s and 90s, Linda Werlein is now the Executive Director of Hill Country MHDD Centers, which provides behavioral health services, intellectual/developmental disability services, substance abuse services, and early childhood intervention services for a 19-county, 22,000-square-mile area of the greater Texas Hill Country. Most recently Mrs. Werlein led Hill Country to the successful implementation of 29 projects through the 1115 Transformation Waiver. These projects are designed to enhance access to care, increase the quality and cost-effectiveness of care provided, and improve the health of the patients and families served. Mrs. Werlein has also served as President-Elect and President of the National Association for Rural Mental Health, and currently serves as Chair of the Behavioral Health Committee for the Texas Council of Community Centers, as well as on the Board of Directors at ViaHope.

**Woody Widrow** [@RAISETexas](#)

Woody Widrow is the executive director of RAISE Texas, the first incorporated nonprofit statewide asset-building coalition in the country, providing training and technical assistance in support of increased financial stability of our residents. Woody has over 40 years of experience in housing, community development, and asset building. Before moving to Texas, Woody served as the Vice President of the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, Deputy Director of the National Association for Affordable Housing Lenders, and Executive Director of the National Housing Institute and Editor of SHELTERFORCE.

**Autry Williams-Bowers**

Autry Williams-Bowers has worked in the field of education for twelve years, in the capacities of teacher and instructional support. Autry is the current site director for the Head Start and Early Head Start program at Ridgemont Early Childhood Center. Autry's current position is to ensure compliance with federal performance and state minimum standards for Ridgemont Early Childhood Center as well monitoring of the school readiness of students transitioning from the Head Start program into the public school system. As a former Head Start student, Autry is a testament of benefits of early education and supports the Ridgemont Early Childhood Center belief that poverty is not a destination.

**Pat Wong Ph.D.**

Pat Wong is interested in social policy in general, and family poverty and affordable housing issues in particular. His professional training was in social work, receiving his Ph.D. in Social Welfare from the University of Wisconsin in Madison before he moved to Austin to join the LBJ School of Public Affairs.