

# Summit – Highlighted Speakers

Plenary: Public + Private + Non-profits = Powerful Formula for Change



@MarkStrama

## The Honorable Mark Strama, Head of Google Fiber in Austin

Strama formerly represented the north Austin area in the Texas House of Representatives. Strama received Honorable Mentions on *Texas Monthly's* Ten Best Legislators list in three of his five sessions in the House. *Texas Monthly* said, "Strama cares as much about others' success as his own." Prior to running for public office, he founded the first company to enable Americans to fill out a voter registration form on the Internet - 700,000 people used this technology to register to vote in the 2000 election cycle. Earlier, Strama was Director of Programs at Rock the Vote, a non-partisan organization that works with MTV and the music industry to engage young people in the political process. He previously worked for former Texas Governor Ann Richards and Texas State Senator Rodney Ellis. Strama graduated from Brown University with degrees in philosophy and political science.



## Regina Montoya, Co-chair, Dallas Mayor's Poverty Task Force

Montoya is a co-chair of Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings' Task Force on Poverty. Ms. Montoya is currently working on a book about the importance of incorporating Latinos into the economic, political and social fabric of America, and she is a frequent public speaker on a wide range of issues including health care, poverty, diversity and children. In 1993, she served in the White House as an Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. In 1998, she was nominated by the President to serve as a U.S. Representative to the 53rd Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Ms. Montoya is a graduate of Wellesley College and Harvard Law School.



@AnnHilbig

## Ann Hilbig, Vice President of Program Planning and Evaluation, Neighborhood Centers Inc.

In her 30-year tenure with Neighborhood Centers, Hilbig has held a number of positions, joining the executive team in 2001. In the 13 years since, she has worked in every program division of the agency. Her accomplishments include the opening of an elementary charter school; developing models of collaboration for early childhood education; implementing a strength-based approach to community development; revitalizing the work of senior centers; and creating a long term community response to disasters.



@AnnBeesonCPPP

## Ann Beeson, Executive Director, Center for Public Policy Priorities

A renowned social justice lawyer and proud Texan, Beeson joined the Center in 2013. She was previously the Executive Director of U.S. Programs at the Open Society Foundations, where she promoted human rights, justice, and accountability nationwide. Beeson was the national Associate Legal Director of the American Civil Liberties Union, where she worked from 1995-2007. 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. Beeson has been recognized as one of the nation's top lawyers by *American Lawyer Magazine* and the *National Law Journal*. Before joining the Center, she launched HATCH, a new non-profit to involve the creative sector in social change, and co-produced a public media series to inspire more people to get engaged in their communities. Beeson grew up in Dallas, received undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Texas, and served as law clerk to the Honorable Barefoot Sanders, then chief judge of the Northern District of Texas.

## Plenary: The Future of Texas: A Cross-Generational Conversation with Two Texas Leaders



### The Honorable William P. Hobby, Former Texas State Lieutenant Governor

Bill Hobby has devoted his life to public service to his country, his state, and his city--as a naval officer, journalist, parliamentary expert, governmental policymaker, university agent, Lieutenant Governor of Texas, university professor, and Chancellor of the University of Houston System. Subsequent to his military service, he joined the staff of *The Houston Post*, the flagship of his family's communications business. He was President of *The Houston Post* for nearly 21 years when the family sold the paper in 1983. He currently serves as Chairman of the Board of Hobby Communications. From 1995 to 1997 he was Chancellor of the University of Houston System. Currently, he is the Radoslav Tsanoff Professor at Rice University. He serves as a director for The Lyndon Baines Johnson Foundation and the Center for Public Policy Priorities, and is a past director for Southwest Airlines.



@TzintunCris

### Cristina Tzintzún, Executive Director, Workers Defense Project

Workers Defense Project (WDP) is a statewide, membership-based workers' rights organization that is winning better working conditions for Texans. At WDP, Tzintzún has spearheaded efforts to ensure safe and dignified jobs for the nearly 900,000 construction workers that labor in the state. Her work has led to a federal investigation by OSHA into Texas' deadly construction industry, the passage of a statewide wage theft law, and better, safer jobs for thousands of low-wage workers in Austin and Travis County. She has been named "Hero of the New South" by *Southern Living Magazine* and won the national Trabajadora Community Leader award from the National Labor Council for Latin American Advancement. Her work has been covered in the *New York Times*, National Public Radio, Univision, and *USA Today*.



@AnniesListTX

### Patsy Woods Martin, Interim Executive Director, Annie's List

Martin was founder and executive director of I Live Here, I Give Here, the Central Texas Campaign for Philanthropy, a collaboration of individual philanthropists, nonprofit organizations, family foundations, local businesses and religious leaders. Prior to launching I Live Here, I Give Here, Martin served in various leadership roles. In 1992, the Governor of Texas selected her to serve as a Regent at her alma mater, Texas Tech University. From 2002 to 2006, Martin served as vice president of resource development for the United Way Capital Area. Martin currently serves on a number of boards, including the Long Center for the Performing Arts, and the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce. Martin was slated as the incoming board chair for Annie's List, but resigned the board to take the position of interim executive director, in accordance with the group's by-laws. Earlier in her career, Martin was trained and worked as a chemist. A fourth generation rancher in Montague County, Texas, Martin is active in her family ranching and oil business.

## Plenary: Engaging Students, Using Data, and Building Meaningful Futures



@PSJAISD

### Dr. Daniel King, Superintendent, Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD

The PSJA school district serves more than 32,000 students in a tri-city community located in the lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Implementing a comprehensive approach to drop-out prevention and recovery and a systemic scale-up of dual enrollment and Early College High Schools, the PSJA team has increased the district's four-year graduation rate from 62.4% to 90.1%, while decreasing the cohort dropout rate from 18.7% to 3.2% over the past few years (Texas Academic Performance Report). The majority of high school students in this border school district (99% Latino) obtain college credit, with increasing numbers having completed up to two years of college before high school graduation. Under the leadership of Dr. King, PSJA's commitment to dramatically increase educational attainment for Latinos has had significant impact on education policy and practice in Texas.



@FrancesPDeviney

### **Frances Deviney, Ph.D., Associate Director and Program Director, Research and Planning, Center for Public Policy Priorities**

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.

## **Luncheon Plenary: What to Expect in the 2015 Legislative Session**



@DonnaHowardTX

### **The Honorable Donna Howard, Texas State Representative**

A seasoned professional with years of hands-on experience in the areas of public health and public education, State Representative Donna Howard’s policy expertise and leadership skills have earned her a place at the center of the growing effort to champion mainstream values in the Texas legislature. Howard is a native of Austin who graduated from Reagan High School, then went on to earn a Bachelor’s degree in nursing and a Master’s in health education, both from the University of Texas. She worked as a critical care nurse at Brackenridge and Seton hospitals, was the first hospital-based Patient Education Coordinator in Austin, and helped start the Seton Good Health School. She has also served as president of the Texas Nurses’ Association (District 5) and as a Health Education instructor at UT. A recognized expert on public education, Howard was elected to the Eanes ISD board in West Austin, where she served from 1996 to 1999 and was certified as a Master School Trustee by the Texas Association of School Boards. She co-founded the parent organization Advocates for Eanes Schools and helped form the Texas Education Crisis Coalition, a grassroots group of parents, business owners and community leaders working together to tackle the public school finance issue. Married to Austin attorney Derek Howard, Representative Howard is the mother of three adult children and is active in her neighborhood and church communities.

@ChristyHoppe

### **Christy Hoppe, Austin Bureau Chief, Dallas Morning News**

Hoppe has covered the Legislature and state and national politics since arriving in Austin in 1989.



@KirkPWatson

### **The Honorable Kirk Watson, Texas State Senator**

Kirk Watson is State Senator for District 14. He is a lawyer and former Austin Mayor. He is currently a partner with the law firm Husch Blackwell, LLP. In addition, he is former Chair of both the Texas Advisory Board for Environmental Defense and the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce. Senator Watson served on the original Board of Directors for the Lance Armstrong Foundation and is a former member of the Board of Directors for the American Cancer Society, local chapter. Senator Watson has been recognized repeatedly for his legislative work and earned numerous endorsements, awards and recognitions, including “Austinite of the Year” by the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, *Austin Family Magazine’s* “Favorite Local Hero,” the “Best of Austin – Best Citizen” Reader’s Choice Award from the *Austin Chronicle*, and the “Pro Texana – Medal of Service” from Baylor University. Senator Watson is the chair of the Senate Democratic Caucus. He serves on the Senate committees overseeing Business and Commerce, Economic Development, Nominations, Transportation, and he is Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Higher Education. He is married to Liz McDaniel Watson. Kirk and Liz have two boys, Preston and Cooper.

## Closing Plenary – Dare Yourself / Dare Texas!



@ds4si

### **Kenneth Bailey, Sector Organizing and Strategy Lead, Design Studio for Social Intervention**

Kenneth started his activism in the early eighties as a teenager, working in his neighborhood for tenants' rights and decent housing, targeting the St. Louis Housing Authority. He went on to work for COOL, a national campus-based student organizing program, and then moved to Boston where he worked for the Ten Point Coalition, Interaction Institute for Social Change, and Third Sector New England. As a trainer and consultant on community building, Bailey first realized the need for a more “designerly” approach to community work while developing parts of the Boston Community Building Curriculum for The Boston Foundation. This workshop asked community activists and residents to think about creative ways to work with their community assets – existing social relationships, individual's gifts and skills, and untapped local resources. Many community residents remained locked in conventional nonprofit approaches. Bailey realized then that activists needed new tools to redesign approaches for community change, which led him to build a design studio for social activism.

## Visual Artists



@TaftMcWhorter

### **Taft McWhorter, Visual Artist**

A self-taught artist, McWhorter has been selling his contemporary art in Houston for over six years, amassing a dedicated group of over 200 local collectors, with his work being displayed in many private and public collections, including fine restaurants and corporate settings. McWhorter's work is in fine art galleries in Houston and New Orleans and was represented at the 2009 Toronto International Art Fair. McWhorter's art career began to take shape in 2007. With a background in business and youth ministry, he decided to follow his true passion as a professional artist. After spending two and a half years as the business manager of John Palmer Art, in 2009 McWhorter opened a fine art gallery in Houston. During these years, McWhorter continued to paint and develop his own style. In 2010, McWhorter closed the doors of his gallery to focus primarily on his career as an artist. Since then, he has aggressively created and exhibited his work, collaborating with such artists as David Adickes, John Palmer, Allan Rodewald, Van McFarland and Chris Silkwood.



@RekhDatta

### **Rebecca Layton, Visual Artist, Sewn on the Street**

Layton is an Austin-based artist, textile designer, and founder of Rekh & Datta, a “slow clothing” company. Her work is influenced by a combination of handicraft, industrial infrastructure, and abstraction, and often uses all three. Most recently, she spent the past few years in India as a Fulbright Senior Scholar from the US to do research and studio work on block printing design and miniature painting, then to teach art in the foothills of the Himalayas. The work she produced in India—in collaboration with the block printers she met and worked with—was exhibited in Delhi, Mussoorie, Uttarakhand, and at the Anokhi Museum of Hand Printing in Jaipur through December 2013. She has been the recipient of artist residencies at the MacDowell Colony, the Skowhegan School of Art, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Jentel Artist Residency, Künstlerhaus in Salzburg, Austria, and the Wurlitzer Foundation. She holds a BA in English Literature from Barnard College, Columbia University and a MFA in Combined Media from Hunter College. She has taught studio art and art history in New York, Barcelona, and India.

For additional speaker bios, visit [forabettertexas.org/policysummit.html](http://forabettertexas.org/policysummit.html)