

ADVANCING JUSTICE 2020



Faculty Biographies

Marlene Biener, deputy general counsel, Association of Prosecuting Attorneys



Marlene Biener works for the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys as a deputy general counsel and has a rich background in litigation. She previously worked for the Office of the Attorney General for the State of New Jersey as a deputy attorney general, where she represented the New Jersey Division of Child Protection & Permanency. Biener has also worked as a law clerk for the Honorable Wayne J. Forrest, J.S.C. She graduated from Seton Hall University School of Law in May 2013. She is admitted to practice law in the states of New York and New Jersey and is a member of the New Jersey State Bar Association.

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Sarah Brown, group director, NCSL Criminal Justice Program



Sarah Brown is the group director of NCSL's Criminal Justice Program. She manages NCSL's criminal justice work and provides research and assistance to state legislatures. Brown has authored NCSL reports on the mental health needs of juvenile offenders, and minority youth and disproportionate minority contact. She is a regular contributor to NCSL's State Legislatures magazine and has written NCSL guidebooks on juvenile justice and victims' rights laws in the states. Before joining NCSL, Brown worked for a U.S. senator in Washington, D.C. She received her Bachelor of Arts from the University of Colorado and earned her Juris Doctor from the University of Denver College of Law. She has been admitted to practice law in Colorado.

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David Carroll, executive director, Sixth Amendment Center



David Carroll is a nationally recognized expert on the standards and methods for the delivery of right to counsel services, with more than 20 years of providing technical assistance to policymakers at the federal, state and local levels. He has led numerous research and evaluation projects, authored several papers and reports, and has testified on right to counsel issues before a number of state legislatures and the U.S. Congress. His work has brought him to all but two of the nation's 50 states.

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Juan Cartagena, president and general counsel, LatinoJustice



As a public speaker, El Diario columnist, Rutgers University lecturer, and constitutional rights attorney, Juan Cartagena focuses extensively on Puerto Rican and Latino rights issues, including the community effects of mass incarceration. Cartagena is a graduate of Dartmouth College and Columbia University School of Law and is the recipient of multiple recognitions, including Dartmouth College's Martin Luther King, Jr. Social Justice Award, and the U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute's Cesar Chavez Community Service Award.

Cartagena lives in and represents New Jersey, having previously served as a Municipal Court Judge in Hoboken and as General Counsel to the Hispanic Bar Association of New Jersey.

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Illinois Senator Cristina Castro



Senator Cristina Castro represents the 22nd District in Illinois, which includes all or part of 10 different communities located within Cook and Kane County. She is a second-generation Mexican American and lifelong district resident who is committed to her community and to public service. She is a member of the Latino Caucus and serves as chair of Government Accountability/Pensions and Revenue. She is vice chair of Veterans Affairs and is also a member of Appropriations I, Commerce and Economic Development, Committee of the Whole, Energy and Public Utilities, Labor, Opioid Crisis Abatement Special Committee, and Transportation.

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Amanda Essex, senior policy specialist, NCSL Criminal Justice Program



Amanda Essex is a senior policy specialist in the Criminal Justice Program at NCSL. She has worked at NCSL since May 2013 as a member of both the Transportation and Criminal Justice programs. Amanda conducts research, writes, and presents on a range of topics, including sentencing and corrections, community supervision, and front-end justice policy. She received her Bachelor of Arts cum laude in political science from Colorado State University. Amanda earned her Juris Doctor from the University of Denver Sturm College of Law and is admitted to practice law in Colorado.

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Susan Parnas Frederick, senior federal affairs counsel, NCSL



Susan Parnas Frederick joined NCSL in 2000 and is currently senior federal affairs counsel. She staffs NCSL's Law, Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. She works to promote NCSL's policy positions in the areas of criminal and civil justice before the U.S. Congress and federal agencies. Before coming to NCSL, she was a senior legislative counsel at the National League of Cities and an attorney in private practice in Alexandria, Va. She received her Juris Doctor from the American University College of Law.

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Adam Gelb, president & CEO, Council on Criminal Justice



Adam Gelb has been working for a more just and effective criminal justice system throughout a 32-year career as a journalist, congressional aide, senior state government official, and nonprofit executive. Before launching the Council, Gelb led the Pew Charitable Trusts' criminal justice work, helping 35 states adopt sentencing and corrections reforms. He has staffed the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, led development of public safety initiatives for governors in Georgia and Maryland, and covered crime as a reporter in Atlanta.

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J.J. Gentry, staff vice chair, NCSL Executive Committee



J.J. Gentry has worked for the South Carolina Legislature since 2001, serving with the House Education and Public Works Committee, the Senate Judiciary Committee, and the Senate Ethics Committee. His current responsibilities include acting as a consultant to legislators and legislative staff, monitoring the ethical conduct of legislators and legislative staff, conducting research, drafting legislation, facilitating hearings and meetings, and handling constituent and media relations. He has served in various NCSL leadership positions.

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Greg Glod, criminal justice fellow, Americans for Prosperity



Greg Glod is the Criminal Justice Fellow for Americans for Prosperity. Based in Washington, DC, he is an attorney who began his legal career as a Law Clerk for the Honorable Judge Laura S. Kiessling on the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County, Maryland. He subsequently practiced at a litigation firm in Annapolis, Maryland before joining Right on Crime and the Texas Public Policy Foundation in 2015 where he was the director of state initiatives for their criminal justice reform efforts. In 2010, he graduated from The Pennsylvania State University with Bachelor of Arts degrees in Crime, Law, and Justice and Political Science. In 2013, Glod received his Juris Doctor from the University of Maryland School of Law.

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Nancy Hammer, vice president of regulatory and judicial engagement, Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)



Nancy Hammer is the vice president of regulatory & judicial engagement in the government affairs department of SHRM. She joined SHRM in January 2006 and oversees SHRM policy engagement with the executive branch. In this role, Nancy advocates SHRM membership views in order to shape federal rulemaking and influence regulatory proposals affecting the human resources profession. In addition, Nancy directs SHRM's intervention in court cases that raise critical issues for the human resources profession to ensure the viewpoint is considered. Prior to joining SHRM, Nancy spent five years as legislative counsel for Senator Bob Kerrey (D-Ne). Nancy also served as director of the International Division and policy counsel for the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children.

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Erin Haney, national policy director, REFORM Alliance



Erin is the national policy director of REFORM Alliance. She has spent 10 years as an attorney protecting the rights of indigent clients at all levels of the justice system. As a death penalty attorney, Haney worked with clients and witnesses, often for years at a time, to develop a social history and reframe the narrative around her clients' actions and life in an effort to persuade the courts to reassess the punishment of death. She has committed her life to helping the most marginalized and adheres strongly to the philosophy that no one should be judged solely by their very worst moment.

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Elizabeth Henneke, executive director, Lone Star Justice Initiative



Elizabeth A. Henneke serves on the Juvenile Council for the State Bar of Texas, the Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice, OJJDP Subcommittee on LGBTQ Issues, the Collaborative Council for the Judicial Commission on Mental Health, as an advisor to the Texas Judicial Council Subcommittee on Juvenile Justice, and the Board of Directors for the Campaign for Youth Justice. She graduated from Yale University and the University of Texas School of Law. Henneke has been a clinical instructor for the University of Texas' National Security & Human Rights Clinic and was the inaugural Audrey Irmis Clinical Teaching Fellow at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law.

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Colorado Representative Leslie Herod



Representative Leslie Herod represents the 8th district in the Colorado General Assembly. She is the chair of the Finance committee, the vice chair of the House Judiciary Committee and vice chair of the Committee on Legal Services. She also chairs the Colorado Black Democratic Legislative Caucus and the Arts Caucus. Herod was elected in 2016 as the first LGBTQ African American in the General Assembly and since that time has focused her work on criminal justice reform, mental health and substance abuse, renewable energy, youth homelessness and civil rights protections.

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Oklahoma Senator Darcy Jech



Senator Darcy Jech represents the 26th district in the Oklahoma Legislature. He chairs the Appropriations Subcommittee on Natural Resources, is the vice chair of the Judiciary Committee, and is a member of the Appropriations, Energy, Public Safety, and Rules committees. Before his 2014 election, he served as a member of the Kingfisher City Council, Kingfisher Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, the Kingfisher Hospital Board, the Kingfisher Educational Foundation Board, the Kingfisher Industrial Foundation Board, and Central Oklahoma Red Cross Board.

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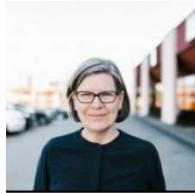
Hawaii Senator Donna Kim, chair of board of directors, National Foundation for Women Legislators



Senator Donna Kim represents the 14th district in the Hawaii Legislature. She is the chair of the Higher Education Committee, the vice chair of the Education Committee, and a member of the Judiciary Committee. She received her undergraduate degree from Washington State University. Kim has previously served on the Honolulu City Council and in the Hawaii House of Representatives.

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Bettie Kirkland, CEO, Project Return Inc.



Bettie Kirkland leads Project Return, a Tennessee nonprofit that's solely dedicated to the successful new beginnings of people after incarceration. Bettie is an attorney and previously practiced law in Kansas City, Missouri; she is also a former Peace Corps Volunteer, and served on the island of Guadalcanal. Bettie has been leading Project Return since 2011 and is currently pursuing her MBA at Vanderbilt University. Project Return is a Stand Together Catalyst organization known for its high impact, high volume, and entrepreneurial approach.

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Alex Kreit, co-director, Center for Law and Social Justice at Thomas Jefferson School of Law



Alex Kreit is a professor of law and the co-director of the Center for Criminal Law and Policy at Thomas Jefferson School of Law. He is a leading expert in the field of illegal drug and marijuana law. Kreit continues to practice law as a member of the Appellate Defenders Inc. panel, representing indigent defendants in state criminal appeals by court appointment. The center aims to bridge the gap between academic research and policy realities by providing a space where academics, government leaders and other stakeholders can engage and collaborate on examining issues of interest and concern.

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Ronald J. Lampard, senior director, Criminal Justice Task Force and Civil Justice Task Force, ALEC



Ronnie Lampard serves as the senior director of the Civil and Criminal Justice Task Forces at the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). During his time at ALEC, he has testified before and provided written testimony to state legislative committees and conducted issue briefings in various states on donor disclosure, administrative law, and criminal justice. Before coming to ALEC, he served on the United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary as a legal fellow. Previously, he was a prosecutor in New Orleans. He received his Juris Doctorate from Loyola University of New Orleans, his graduate degree in political science from American University, and his undergraduate degree from Tulane University in May of 2006.

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South Carolina Senator Gerald Malloy, vice chair, NCSL Law, Criminal Justice and Public Safety (LCJPS) Committee



Senator Malloy represents the 29th district in the South Carolina Legislature. He serves on the Banking and Insurance, Education, Judiciary, Legislative Oversight, Rules and Transportation committees. Malloy is an attorney and serves as president of the South Carolina Trial Lawyers Association. He is also on the Judicial Qualifications Committee of the South Carolina Bar Association, is a member of the South Carolina Bar Association and is the chairman of the Public Defenders Board of Darlington County Bar Association. He is a vice chair of NCSL's LCJPS Committee.

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Nebraska Senator John McCollister



Senator John McCollister was elected to the Nebraska Legislature in 2014, representing the 20th district. From 1979 to 2008, McCollister served five terms on the board of the Metropolitan Utilities District in Omaha, a public utility that provides gas and water to the Omaha area. He currently serves on the Banking, Commerce and Insurance Committee, the Revenue Committee and the Legislatures Planning Committee. He served on the Justice Reinvestment Oversight Committee as a result of the passage of LB605 in 2015.

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Taryn Merkl, senior counsel, Law Enforcement Leaders



Prior to joining Law Enforcement Leaders to Reduce Crime and Incarceration as senior counsel, Taryn A. Merkl served for over 16 years in the Criminal Division in the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York, including as deputy chief of the Criminal Division, and as chief of the Civil Rights and Organized Crime & Gangs Sections. She also served as a founding co-chair of the Brooklyn Human Trafficking Task Force for six years. Merkl holds a Bachelor of Art in political science and Russian with honors from the University of Michigan and a Juris Doctor from Columbia Law School, where she was the editor in chief of the Columbia Human Rights Law Review and A Jailhouse Lawyer's Manual (fifth edition).

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Georgia Representative Billy Mitchell, president-elect, National Black Caucus of State Legislators



Representative Billy Mitchell was first elected in 2002 and represents the 88th district in the Georgia General Assembly. He is a member of the Regulated Industries, Banks and Banking, and Health committees. He was previously mayor pro tem of Stone Mountain and a member of the Stone Mountain City Council. He received his undergraduate degree from Rutgers University and a professional degree from Atlanta Law School.

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Michael Nail, commissioner, Georgia Department of Community Supervision



Michael W. Nail is the commissioner of the Georgia Department of Community Supervision. In this role, he is responsible for leading the day-to-day operations of one of the nation's largest community supervision agencies. Before being appointed the first commissioner of the Georgia Department of Community Supervision, he held multiple senior and executive leadership roles with the Georgia Department of Corrections and the State Board of Pardons and Paroles, including director of probation training, director of probation, Corrections Division director, and executive director of the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles. With over 29 years of experience, Michael is nationally recognized as a thought leader in the fields of corrections and community supervision.

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Daniel Nichanian, founding editor, The Appeal: Political Report



Daniel Nichanian is a senior fellow at the Justice Collaborative and the editor of The Appeal: Political Report, which covers the local politics of criminal justice reform and mass incarceration. He researches and writes on criminal justice, prosecutors, local elections, and voting rights. His research and writings have appeared in Philosophy & Rhetoric, Syndicate Theology, The Appeal, The New York Times, The Atlantic, Democracy, FiveThirtyEight, Daily Kos Elections, The New York Daily News, The Daily Beast, and Vox.

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Maryland Delegate Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk



Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk represents the 21st district in the Maryland General Assembly. She is co-chair of the Maryland Health Insurance Coverage Protection Commission, chair of the Public Health and Minority Health Disparities Subcommittee, and vice chair of the Health and Government Operations Committee. She is a member of the Joint Committee on Behavioral Health and Opioid Use Disorders, the Government Operations and Health Facilities Subcommittee, the Rules and Executive Nominations Committee, and the Legislative Policy Committee. Peña-Melnyk is an attorney. She received her undergraduate degree from Buffalo State College (NY) and a law degree from University at Buffalo School of Law, State University of New York.

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New Jersey Senator Nellie Pou, president-elect, National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators



Senator Nellie Pou represents the 35th district in the New Jersey Legislature. She previously served in the New Jersey General Assembly from 1997-2012. She holds the dual distinctions of being the first woman and the first Latina to represent the 35th District. She is a veteran of the City of Paterson's municipal administration, having served in various capacities for over three decades, including as Director of Human Resources. She is the chair of the Commerce Committee and vice chair of the Judiciary Committee. Pou has chaired the bicameral New Jersey Legislative Latino Caucus since 2006.

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Vikrant Reddy, senior fellow for criminal justice, Stand Together



Vikrant P. Reddy is a senior fellow at the Charles Koch Institute. Reddy previously served as a senior policy analyst at the Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF), where he managed the launch of TPPF's national Right on Crime initiative in 2010. He has also worked as a research assistant at the Cato Institute, as a judicial clerk to the Honorable Gina M. Benavides in Texas, and as an attorney in private practice. He is a member of the State Bar of Texas, and he serves on the Executive Committee of the Criminal Law Practice Group of the Federalist Society. He is also an appointee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Texas State Advisory Committee. Reddy graduated from the University of Texas at Austin and earned his law degree at the Southern Methodist University School of Law in Dallas.

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Oklahoma Senator Wayne Shaw



Senator Wayne Shaw represents the 3rd district in the Oklahoma Legislature. He is the chair of the Public Safety committee and vice chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Natural Resources and Regulatory Services. Shaw is a member of the Appropriations, Business, Commerce & Tourism, and Education committees. Shaw has served as a pastor most of his life. He served as the senior pastor at First Christian Church in Grove for fifteen years before being elected to the Senate in 2012. Shaw has helped to build six chapels in Oklahoma prisons through the Oklahoma Prison Chapel Program. He has a degree in Secondary Education from Lamar University with an emphasis in math and history. He also received a master's degree from Lincoln University and a Doctorate from Fuller Theological Seminary.

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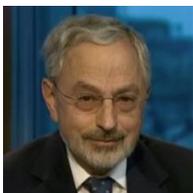
Darpana M. Sheth, senior attorney, Institute for Justice



Darpana Sheth is a senior attorney with the Institute for Justice. She joined the Institute in 2010 and litigates cutting-edge constitutional cases to protect property rights, economic liberty, and other individual liberties in federal court. She also serves as director of the Institute's National Initiative to End Forfeiture Abuse.

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David B. Smith, attorney, David B. Smith, PLLC



David Smith is regarded as the foremost expert in the country on asset forfeiture law and practice. He is the author of the leading two-volume legal treatise on forfeiture. He has testified before congressional committees on forfeiture, restitution, and money laundering legislation. Smith has regularly counseled the U.S. Senate and House Judiciary Committees on forfeiture legislation and was heavily involved in drafting the Civil Asset Forfeiture Reform Act of 2000. He has also assisted the federal advisory committees in writing the procedural rules governing criminal and civil forfeiture proceedings.

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Lisa Soronen, executive director, State and Local Legal Center (SLLC)



Lisa Soronen is the executive director of SLLC. She files amicus curiae briefs to the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of members of the Big Seven (National Governors Association, NCSL, Council of State Governments, National League of Cities, United States Conference of Mayors, National Association of Counties, and International City/County Management Association) in cases affecting state and local government. Prior to joining the SLLC, Soronen worked for the National School Boards Association, the Wisconsin Association of School Boards and clerked for the Wisconsin Court of Appeals. She earned her Juris Doctor at the University of Wisconsin Law School and is a graduate of Central Michigan University.

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Tim Stay, CEO, The Other Side Academy



Tim Stay was formerly the CEO and a co-founder of Unitus Labs. He started and ran Marketing Ally, which became one of the top 50 call centers in the nation and had over 1,110 employees. Stay started and later sold FreeServers.com to About.com. He was a co-founder of Bizcradle, a business incubator that launched such technology companies as SenForce, which sold to Novell. He was former CEO of Perfect Search Corporation, an innovative search engine and software development company. Stay holds a civil engineering degree and also has an M.B.A. and an M.A. in International Studies, with a focus on economic development in developing countries, all from Brigham Young University.

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Aly Tamboura, manager, Criminal Justice Reform Program, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative (CZI)



Aly Tamboura is a manager in the Criminal Justice Reform Program at the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. He joined the organization in 2017 after working as a software engineer. Having spent over a decade of his life incarcerated, Tamboura brings both his firsthand experience with the criminal justice system and his strong technical skills to CZI to help advance critical reforms in the space.

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Deborah Taylor Tate, co-chair, National Judicial Opioid Task Force



Deborah Taylor Tate is the director of the Tennessee Administrative Office of the Courts. Prior to her current position, she was twice nominated by President George W. Bush and unanimously approved by the U.S. Senate to serve as a Federal Communications Commissioner. She began her professional career in Tennessee state government, serving as assistant legal counsel and senior policy advisor to two former Tennessee governors: Don Sundquist and Senator Lamar Alexander. She also has experience as both chairman and director of the Tennessee Regulatory Authority.

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John Tilley, former secretary, Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet



An attorney, five-term state legislator, former Kentucky Justice Cabinet Secretary, and current Senior Fellow at the Council on Criminal Justice, Tilley has spent nearly three decades working for a more fair, just, and effective criminal justice system. As the former head of the Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, Tilley oversaw more than 7,000 employees and five major departments, including Corrections, Criminal Justice Training, Public Advocacy, Juvenile Justice, and the Kentucky State Police. During his tenure, Tilley led a transformative overhaul of Corrections' Reentry and Probation and Parole divisions, resulting in more effective supervision and reentry, lowering recidivism and connecting individuals to transportation, stable housing, treatment and jobs. At Juvenile Justice, Tilley demanded focused implementation of reforms he previously championed as a legislator. As a result, juvenile populations decreased significantly, and facilities were closed; saving costs and achieving better outcomes for both children and public safety. Prior to his appointment, Tilley served well into a fifth term in the Kentucky House of Representatives, chairing the House Judiciary Committee from 2009 to 2015. During his time, Tilley sponsored landmark legislation to strengthen public safety, while controlling corrections costs and increasing drug treatment. Tilley also sponsored sweeping legislation on opioids and pill mills, dating violence, stalking and sexual assault, synthetic drugs, juvenile justice and internet crimes against children.

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Lars Trautman, resident senior fellow, R Street Institute



Lars Trautman is a resident senior fellow of Criminal Justice & Civil Liberties with R Street Institute. He focuses his research primarily on reforms that affect our nation's jails and the front end of the criminal justice system. Previously, Trautman served as counsel for the Homeland Security Committee in the U.S. House of Representatives, worked at the Republican National Committee and served as an assistant district attorney in Essex County, Massachusetts. Trautman received his bachelor's degree in political science from Johns Hopkins University, his master's in international studies from the peace and conflict department of Uppsala University and a Juris Doctor from the University of Virginia School of Law.

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Montana Representative Barry Usher, vice chair, NCSL Law, Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee



Representative Barry Usher represents the 40th district in the Montana Legislature. He chairs the Law and Justice Interim Committee and is the vice chair of the House Judiciary Committee. Usher is a member of the Legislative Administration and Human Services committees. He is a vice chair of NCSL's Law, Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee.

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Kansas Representative Ponka-We Victors, chair, National Caucus of Native American State Legislators



Representative Ponka-We Victors represents the 103rd district in the Kansas Legislature. She is a member of the Joint Committee on State-Tribal Relations, the Transportation and Public Safety Budget Committee, and the Transportation committee. Victors is a proud member of the Tohono O'odham Nation of Arizona and is from the Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma. Before entering politics, she was involved in the nonprofit sector. She received her undergraduate degree from Newman University and a Masters of Public Administration from Wichita State University.

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Brianna Walden, associate director of criminal justice, Stand Together



Brianna Walden is the associate director of criminal justice at Stand Together and manages the criminal justice reform grants portfolio at the Charles Koch Institute. Her work focuses on advancing grants, strategic partnerships, policy reforms, and public dialogue that breaks the barriers preventing people from realizing their potential. Previously she co-founded a non-profit which identifies local needs and equips men and women to take action to serve in their communities. Walden received her B.A. in political economy from Hillsdale College, graduating summa cum laude. She is an alumnae of the Koch Associate Program.

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Julie Warren, director of state initiatives, Right on Crime



Julie Warren is a graduate of Marshall University and of Regent University School of Law. She also attended Georgetown Law Center as a visiting student. While in law school, she clerked for the Senate Judiciary Committee. Warren served four years at the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. After a few years as a civil defense litigator, Warren returned to public service and began her work in the Office of the West Virginia Attorney General where she primarily served as an appellate advocate for the State of West Virginia and as legislative counsel to the Attorney General.

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Hawaii Representative Kyle Yamashita, chair, National Asian Pacific American Caucus of State Legislators



Representative Kyle Yamashita represents the 12th district in the Hawaii Legislature. He is a member of the Economic Development and Business, Finance, and Labor and Public Employment committees. Yamashita was born and lives in Pukalani, Hawaii. He attended Leeward Community College. He is a member of the Parent Teacher Student Association at King Kekaulike High School and a scoutmaster for Pukalani Troop 75. He was elected to the Hawaii State House of Representatives in 2007.

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This event has been made possible through support from Stand Together.

