



NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

*The Forum for America's Ideas*

**NCSL Legislative Summit**  
**August 3-6, 2015 – Seattle**  
**Redistricting and Elections Standing Committee**  
**Speaker Bios**

**Monday, August 3, 1:30 – 2:30 pm**

**Oregon's Automatic Voter Registration (and Other Registration Innovations)**

**Paul Gronke** is Professor of Political Science at Reed College. He studies American politics and empirical political theory, with specialties in the U.S. Congress, elections and electoral behavior, and public opinion. Gronke is the founder and Director of the Early Voting Information Center, where he and his team conduct research on early voting and election reform, predominantly in the United States. At Reed, Gronke teaches courses on political behavior, political institutions, and social science research methods. He served as the chair of the Political Science Department from 2001 - 2009 (with a few breaks for leave). Gronke is an avid runner and a political junkie.

**Commissioner Christy McCormick** is the chair of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, a federal agency charged with providing assistance to local and state election officials and setting voluntary elections technology standards. Commissioner McCormick graduated from George Mason University School of Law in 1999. She served as a Judicial Law Clerk for the Seventh Circuit from 1999-2001. She then became the Assistant Attorney General and the Assistant to the Solicitor General for the Virginia Attorney General's Office from 2001-2003. Ms. McCormick clerked for the Honorable Elizabeth A. McClanahan until 2006, when she joined the Department of Justice as a Senior Trial Attorney. In this role she investigated and prosecuted violations of the federal voting statutes, including the Voting Rights Act and National Voter Registration Act.

Ms. McCormick also served as the Deputy Attorney General to the Senior Attorney Advisor in the US Embassy in Baghdad, where she worked on the Iraq national elections and rule of law matters. She was a U.S. elections expert during Iraq's 2010 elections, and provided assistance and advice to the Independent High Electoral Commission.

**David Becker** directs The Pew Charitable Trusts' Election Initiatives. He supervises work in election administration, including research and reform efforts to improve military and overseas voting; assess election performance through better data; use technology to provide voters with information they need to cast a ballot; and upgrade voter registration systems. In this role, Mr. Becker testifies before state legislatures and other government entities, presents at relevant conferences, serves as a media resource, and identifies and implements partnerships. Before joining The Pew Charitable Trusts Mr. Becker served as a senior trial attorney in the Voting Section of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, where he led investigations into violations of federal voting laws regarding redistricting, minority-language voter rights, and voter intimidation. Becker received his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of California, Berkeley.

**Jim Williams** is the director of elections in the Oregon Secretary of State's Office. Williams ensures that uniform election standards are carried out across Oregon. He's also in charge of the state initiative and referendum process and oversees campaign finance reporting. With 21 years of experience in elections, Mr. Williams understands the administration of voting from both the public and private sector perspectives. He came to the secretary of state's office in 2013 from Norman, Okla., where he served as executive secretary of the Cleveland County Election Board. Previously, he worked for the Denver Elections Division as well as Automated Elections Services, a New Mexico company that provides elections system support. A nationally certified Elections/Registration Administrator (CERA), Williams earned his bachelor's in mass communications and journalism from Southern Nazarene University in Oklahoma.

**Monday, August 3, 2:40 – 3:45 pm**

### **Funding Campaigns: What Have the Courts Said?**

**Lisa Soronen** is the executive director of the State and Local Legal Center. Prior to joining the SLLC, Lisa worked for the National School Boards Association, the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, and clerked for the Wisconsin Court of Appeals. She earned her J.D. at the University of Wisconsin Law School and is a graduate of Central Michigan University. Ms. Soronen frequently works with NCSL by tracking cases before the U.S. Supreme Court and writing about them for NCSL's constituents.

**Jessica Karls-Ruplinger** is the deputy director of the Wisconsin Legislative Council, a nonpartisan legislative service agency serving the Wisconsin Legislature. She staffs the Assembly committees on Judiciary; Constitution and Ethics; and Campaign and Elections; and the joint committee on Employment Relations. She responds to legislative inquiries relating to elections, campaign finance, judiciary, labor and employment, and legislative procedure. Ms. Karls-Ruplinger is the staff vice-chair for NCSL's Redistricting and Elections Standing Committee, and regularly provides her expertise to NCSL on elections and related topics.

**Eric Wang** is special counsel at Wiley Rein LLP in Washington, D.C. Wang specializes in the regulation of political activity under federal and state laws governing campaign finance, lobbying, tax, and government ethics. He has served previously as interim general counsel at one of the largest national political non-profit organizations, Americans for Prosperity, and as counsel to a commissioner at the Federal Election Commission (FEC). In that capacity he advised on more than 1,000 agency enforcement actions and advisory opinions, and authored and negotiated substantial portions of rulemakings. Wang is frequently published on political law issues in *USA Today*, *Roll Call*, *The Hill*, *Politico*, and *The Washington Times* and serves as a pro bono adviser to the Center for Competitive Politics.

**Daniel Weiner** serves as senior counsel for the Brennan Center for Justice's Democracy Program, where his work focuses on money in politics. Prior to joining the Brennan Center, Weiner served as senior counsel to Commissioner Ellen L. Weintraub at the Federal Election Commission (FEC), including during her term as chair of the commission in 2013. In this role, Weiner assisted the commissioner with her duties in managing the agency, and advised her on a broad array of issues relating to the First Amendment, the Federal Election Campaign Act and the Administrative Procedure Act. Before his service at the FEC, Weiner was an associate in the Washington, D.C. office of Jenner & Block, LLP. At Jenner, Weiner counseled a wide variety of clients and litigated cases at

the trial and appellate levels, including as a member of the firm's election law and redistricting practice group. He also maintained an active *pro bono* practice focused particularly on LGBT rights. Weiner received his J.D. degree *cum laude* from Harvard Law School in 2005. He was an executive editor for the Harvard Civil Rights – Civil Liberties Law Review and an editor for the Harvard Journal of Law & Gender. After law school, Weiner clerked for the Honorable Diana E. Murphy on the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. He graduated *magna cum laude* from Brown University in 2001.

**Monday, August 3, 4:00 – 5:00 pm**

**When the Voters Decide: The Role of Ballot Measures in Making Law**

**Jennie Drage Bowser** is a freelance writer and political consultant based in Portland, Ore. Prior to that, she worked for 15 years in the Legislative Management program at the National Conference of State Legislatures. She focuses on the areas of initiative and referendum, elections administration, campaign finance reform, and term limits. She has authored numerous magazine articles and book chapters on these subjects, and staffed NCSL's Initiative & Referendum Reform and Elections Reform Task Forces. She speaks frequently on these issues to legislatures and other groups, and is a trusted source for the local and national media.

Prior to joining NCSL, Jennie taught English as a second language at the Universities of Colorado and Kansas, and worked for the Miami-based Leadership Center of the Americas, a program funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development that provided training in leadership and democratic action skills for college students from Latin America and the Caribbean. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science and Latin American studies and a master's degree in linguistics, both from the University of Kansas.

**Senator Joe Fain** represents the 47th Legislative District in the Washington State Senate. A fourth-generation Washingtonian, Fain has been serving South King County residents for more than a decade. Fain was first elected to the state Senate in 2010 and was re-elected to a second term in 2014. He serves as vice chair of the Transportation Committee and is a member of the Early Learning and K-12 Education, Financial Institutions & Insurance and Rules Committees. Fain also serves as chair of the Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program Committee and is the Senate Majority Floor Leader. During his time in the Senate he has sponsored legislation to improve the initiative and referendum process as well as statewide campaign finance reform. Fain earned his juris doctorate and master of business administration degrees from Seattle University after graduating from the University of Washington with a bachelor's degree in political science.

**Tyrone Reitman** is the executive director of Healthy Democracy, the nonprofit organization that manages Citizens' Initiative Reviews. His background is in political reform work, advocating for increased transparency and accountability in government and politics. Reitman has also worked for and volunteered with a number of ballot initiative campaigns, acquiring a firsthand understanding of Oregon's initiative process. Mr. Reitman graduated with a Master's of Public Administration from the University of Oregon. His studies focused on political reform and decision making in volunteer-based organizations. In his time off, he enjoys spending time with his wife and son, rock climbing around Oregon, and barbecuing for his friends.

**Tuesday, August 4, 9:45 – 10:45 am**

**U.S. Census Bureau: Update on the Reengineering of the 2020 U.S. Census and the Redistricting Data Program**

**Debra Levine** has served as the executive director to the New York State Legislative Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment since 1986, completing three decades of state legislative and Congressional redistricting. In this position she is responsible for the acquisition, development and implementation of a Geographic Information System (GIS) specifically designed to perform and complete the redistricting process. Ms. Levine currently serves as the state Senate's official liaison to the U.S. Commerce Department's Bureau of the Census, the U.S. Department of Justice and the NCSL for all census and redistricting related issues. She is presently serving on the NCSL's Executive Committee, as well as serving as a vice chair of NCSL's Redistricting and Elections Standing Committee.

**James Whitehorne** currently serves as the Chief of the U.S. Census Bureau's Redistricting & Voting Rights Data Office. He joined the Census Bureau in April of 2006 and earned an individual Bronze Medal for superior federal service in 2012. Prior to working for the Census Bureau, Mr. Whitehorne worked for five years for the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice. Mr. Whitehorne holds an undergraduate degree in Geography with a specialty in Geographic Information Systems from the Pennsylvania State University where he is currently pursuing a master's degree in Geographic Information Systems.

**Lisa Blumerman** is the U.S. Census Bureau's Associate Director for the Decennial Census Programs. She provides executive leadership and direction for the 2020 Census, the American Community Survey and for the Census Bureau's Geographic Programs. Ms. Blumerman has worked at the Census Bureau since 1997. She is a recipient of the Arthur S. Flemming Award for exceptional achievement in federal government service. The U.S. Department of Commerce has honored her contributions by awarding her a silver and two bronze medals for distinguished service in the federal government. She holds a master's degree in demography from Georgetown University and a bachelor's degree in sociology with a concentration in population studies from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

**Tuesday, August 4, 11:00 am – 12:15 pm**

**Redistricting: A Mid-Decade Review**

**Senator Daniel Ivey-Soto** represents the northeast area of Albuquerque in the 15th District of the New Mexico state Senate. In 2000, Senator Ivey-Soto was general counsel to his state political party when New Mexico's electoral votes were decided by a 237 statewide vote margin. Since then he has served as New Mexico's election director, as a member of the drafting committee for the Uniform Military and Overseas Voters Act, and currently is the executive director for the state's association of county clerks. In the Senate, he is the vice chair of the Rules Committee.

**Senator John Murante** represents District 49 in the Nebraska Legislature. He chairs the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, which is responsible for hearing bills on redistricting, elections, campaign finance, and other government and military-related legislation. He is on the Executive Board, which governs the Legislative Council, and also the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee.

**Jeff Wice** is chief of staff and counsel to the New York Assembly Assistant Speaker and has over 35 years of experience working in redistricting, voting rights and census law. He is considered a national expert on redistricting. Mr. Wice has assisted many state legislative leaders, members of Congress, and other state and local government officials on redistricting and voting rights matters across the nation. Mr. Wice has been a contributor to the NCSL “Redistricting Law Handbook” for the 1990, 2000, and 2010 editions and has served in several NCSL leadership positions, including service on the national Executive Committee and as a staff chair of the Elections and Redistricting Committee.

**James F. (Ted) Booth** has been employed by the Joint Legislative Committee on Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review of the State of Mississippi since 1984, and has also served as the staff counsel to the Joint Reapportionment Committee since 1998. He has made many contributions to NCSL’s work on redistricting and elections during his career. Currently he serves as the staff co-chair of NCSL’s Redistricting and Elections Standing Committee. Mr. Booth holds a B.A. in History and a J.D. from Tulane University. He also received a master’s degree in Management from the J. L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management, Northwestern University.

**Tuesday August 4, 12:15 – 1:30 pm**

**Increasing Independents: Looking at the Rise of Unaffiliated Voters**

**Michael Dimock** is president of Pew Research Center. A survey researcher and political scientist by training, he oversees the center’s overall operations and research agenda, including research on politics, religion, demographics, media, technology and international issues.

Dr. Dimock has worked at Pew Research Center for more than a decade. He was first hired by the center’s founding director, Andrew Kohut, in 2000, became associate director for research in 2004 and then succeeded Kohut as director of the center’s political polling unit in 2012. He has been the co-author of several of the center’s landmark research reports, including its studies of long-term trends in American political and social values and its polling reports from the last several presidential cycles. In 2014, he oversaw the execution and analysis of the largest U.S. political survey that Pew Research Center has conducted, an in-depth examination of the nature and scope of political polarization within the American public.

He is a frequent commentator on public opinion polling for major media organizations. A regular election night analyst on NPR, he has appeared as a survey analyst on PBS NewsHour, Fox News, NBC, CBS, CNN, C-SPAN and MSNBC, among other broadcast outlets. Dimock has published scholarly articles on public opinion, voting behavior and survey methodology, and presented numerous times at American Association for Public Opinion Research conferences.

He received his Ph.D. in political science from the University of California-San Diego and his B.A. in political science from the University of Houston. Before joining the Pew Research Center, he was a political science professor at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, N.C.

**Tuesday, August 4, 1:45 – 2:45 pm**

**Early Voting, Absentee Voting and Voting by Mail: Is Giving Voter More Options a Good Idea?**

**Representative William (Bill) Denny** represents District 64 in the Mississippi House of Representatives. He was first elected to the chamber in 1987 and currently serves as House Republican Floor Leader. Representative Denny retired as Senior Vice President of Southeastern Operations of a multi-national banking company after thirty years. He has been involved with redistricting in Mississippi for three cycles and currently serves as the chair of the House Apportionment and Elections Committee and the Joint Committee on Legislative Reapportionment and Congressional Redistricting. Representative Denny has been a frequent contributor to NCSL's work on redistricting and elections and currently serves as the legislative co-chair of NCSL's Redistricting and Elections Standing Committee.

**Assemblyman Gordon Johnson** represents the 37th Legislative District in the New Jersey Assembly. He was first elected to the New Jersey General Assembly in 2001, after serving as sheriff in Bergen County, and served as Majority Conference Leader during the 215th Legislature. Asm. Johnson received his bachelor of science degree in social science from St. Thomas Aquinas College, and his master of arts in administration and supervision from Seton Hall University. A major in the United States Army Reserve, he works as a law enforcement consultant. In the Assembly, he chairs the Commerce and Economic Development Committee, and is the vice chair for the Judiciary Committee.

**Charles Stewart III** is the Kenan Sahin Distinguished Professor of Political Science at MIT, where he has taught since 1985, and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His research and teaching areas include congressional politics, elections, and American political development. Since 2001, Professor Stewart has been a member of the Caltech/MIT Voting Technology Project, a leading research efforts that applies scientific analysis to questions about election technology, election administration, and election reform. He is currently the MIT director of the project.

Professor Stewart is an established leader in the analysis of the performance of election systems and the quantitative assessment of election performance. Working with The Pew Charitable Trusts, he helped develop Pew's Elections Performance Index. Professor Stewart also provided advice to the Presidential Commission on Election Administration. His research on measuring the performance of elections and polling place operations is funded by Pew, the Democracy Fund, and the Hewlett Foundation. He recently published *The Measure of American Elections* (2014, with Barry C. Burden). Professor Stewart received his B.A. in political science from Emory University, and S.M. and Ph.D. from Stanford University.

**Frank Strigari** is chief legal counsel for the Ohio Senate. In that capacity, Mr. Strigari supervises the administrative legal affairs of the entire Ohio Senate, in addition to directly advising the Senate President and majority caucus members on various legal and policy-related issues. One of Mr. Strigari's primary areas of expertise is election law. Since joining the Ohio Senate in 2012, Mr. Strigari was directly involved with assisting the Senate during its passage of nine significant pieces of legislation which now govern how elections are run in the Buckeye State. Mr. Strigari also has extensive experience in constitutional litigation involving challenges to state laws in both state and federal courts. Mr. Strigari received his undergraduate degree from Indiana University, and his law degree from the Chicago-Kent College of Law.

**Tuesday, August 4, 3:30 – 5:00 pm**

**Internet Voting: Do Security Concerns Preclude Voting Over the Web?**

**Wendy Underhill** is program manager for elections policy with the Legislative Management program at the National Conference of State Legislatures. She has been with NCSL for five years, specializing in research and analysis on elections issues, such as online voter registration, voter ID, voting technology, early voting, election metrics and more. Ms. Underhill publishes The Canvass, NCSL's elections newsletter. The Canvass summarizes complex election issues and trends for busy state legislators, legislative staff and all others with an interest in election policy. She is also NCSL's expert on statewide ballot measures and the initiative and referendum process, and is getting an on-the-job crash course in redistricting and campaign finance as well.

**Representative Sam Hunt** represents the 22nd District in the Washington House of Representatives. He chairs the Government Operations and Elections Committee, and serves on the Education Committee, the Appropriations Committee, and the Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government.

Representative Hunt has worked as director of legislative affairs for the Washington Department of Information Services, as a public school teacher in Pasco and Montesano, as Governor Booth Gardner's special assistant for K-12 Education, as staff director for the Senate Majority Leader, and on the staff of the U. S. Senate Committee on Appropriations under Senator Warren G. Magnuson. He received his degree and teaching certificate from Washington State University, and took post-graduate studies at Washington State University and the University of Oregon.

**Senator Bill Coley** is serving his first full term in the Ohio Senate, representing the majority of Butler County in the 4<sup>th</sup> Ohio Senate District. Prior to his appointment to the Senate, Senator Coley was elected to four terms in the Ohio House of Representatives where his background in finance led him to be named Chairman of the House Financial Institutions, Housing and Urban Development Committee. Currently he is the chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Government Oversight and Reform as well as the vice-chair of the Senate Finance Committee. He is also a member of the Constitutional Modernization Commission.

In addition to his legislative duties, Senator Coley works as a commercial litigation attorney with the firm Strauss and Troy and is licensed to practice in Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. Coley received his bachelor's degree in finance from the University of Dayton and his law degree from the Cleveland-Marshall College of Law. A licensed pilot, he and his wife Carolyn live in Liberty Township.

**Josh Benaloh** is senior cryptographer at Microsoft Research where he works on data security, privacy, and verifiable election technologies. He earned an S.B. from M.I.T. and M.S., M. Phil., and Ph. D. degrees from Yale University, where his 1987 doctoral dissertation introduced a new paradigm for verifiable secret-ballot elections. Dr. Benaloh serves as a director of the International Association for Cryptologic Research and chairs the Citizen Oversight Panel for Sound Transit which is investing nearly \$1 billion annually on improvements to the Seattle-area transit infrastructure.

**Merle King** is an associate professor emeritus of Information Systems and the executive director for the Center for Election Systems at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Ga. An active researcher in election administration, he is the 2005 recipient of the National Association of Secretaries of State Medallion Award for his work in Georgia elections. Together with his colleagues at the Center, Mr. King has led the development one of the nation's best resources for election administration support. The Center for Election Systems provides voting systems technical support to the Georgia Office of the Secretary of State and to the 159 county election supervisors in Georgia. He is an active national consultant on voting and election systems and works with the U.S. Election Assistance Commissioner as the moderator of its roundtable series.

**Katy Owens Hubler** is a senior policy specialist at the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), focusing on election administration and issues relating to election technology in all 50 states. Previous to joining NCSL she worked for the Denver Elections Division for several years, and served as the assistant program coordinator to the Carter Center's 2011 Election Observation Mission in Tunisia. Ms. Owens Hubler received her M.A. in Political Science at the University of Colorado – Denver and her B.A. in International Affairs from Lewis and Clark College, in Portland, Ore.