

2021 LANGAUGE ACCESS FOR VOTERS SUMMIT

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Day Two

SESSION 1 SPEAKERS & DISCUSSANT

Jason N. Chavez

ELECTION POLICY SPECIALIST
ARIZONA SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE



Jason N. Chavez is an Election Policy Specialist with the Arizona Secretary of State's Office where he works to develop resources and strategies to increase voter access and transparency in statewide elections. Previously, he worked in county government doing voter outreach to the Tohono O'odham Nation, of which he is an enrolled member. Jason received his master's degree from Virginia Tech where he studied and wrote about the arbitrary and political barriers to voting for a project entitled "Inconvenient Voting: Native Americans and the Costs of Early Voting."

Fernando Sánchez

RESEARCHER
CENTER FOR CIVIC DESIGN



Fernando Sánchez is a Civic Researcher and Language Access Lead at the Center for Civic Design. Fernando worked in language access on the university and community level before joining CCD. He designed and taught courses on translation and contributed to research institutes in the University of California system. He holds a PhD from the University of California San Diego. His research interests lie at the intersection of design, language, and community.

Rebecca Stewart

SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATE
DEMOCRACY FUND



Rebecca Stewart is a Senior Communications Associate for the Elections Program at Democracy Fund, an independent foundation working to ensure that our political system can withstand new challenges and deliver on its promise to the American people. Focusing on modern elections and the role of money in politics, Rebecca supports the Elections Program in their mission to ensure that the views and votes of citizens come first in our democracy.

Prior to joining Democracy Fund, Rebecca worked for SKDKnickerbocker with a variety of litigation and political advocacy clients and served in the Obama administration at the Department of Justice as deputy press secretary for the attorney general and media affairs coordinator. Rebecca joined DOJ’s Office of Public Affairs as a press assistant in 2014 and started with DOJ in 2012 as an honors paralegal. Prior to DOJ, she worked in the flagship institution of Meeting Street Academy, an independent school in Charleston, South Carolina, that was developed as a prototype for educational change.

A Virginia native, Rebecca now lives in Washington, D.C. She holds a master’s degree from George Washington University and a bachelor’s degree from College of Charleston.

SESSION 2 SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSANT

Lucy Barefoot

VOTER EDUCATION & OUTREACH SPECIALIST
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE



Lucy Barefoot joined the Office of Secretary of State Elections Division as a Voter Education and Outreach Specialist in 2018. She serves all residents of Washington State but specializes in historically underserved communities such as BIPOC, people with disabilities, limited English speakers, military, and overseas voters, among others. She handles the Elections Division Translations projects such as: voter registration form (available in 23 languages), website, the Multilanguage social media info and the 5 language editions of the printed Washington State Voter’s Pamphlet. She coordinates the WA State Language Access for Voters’ meetings twice a year and works tirelessly to keep the Spanish glossary (with over 1,633 words) up to date to maintain consistency in all written materials.

Enedina Chhim

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MANAGER
ORANGE COUNTY REGISTRAR OF VOTERS



Enedina started with the Orange County Registrar of Voters Office in 2012 and held a variety of support positions through 2015. Following a brief tenure with the County’s Social Services agency, she re-joined the Orange County Registrar of Voters Office as a permanent member of the Election Services team as a Community Program specialist in 2016. In July of 2021 she was promoted to Community Outreach Manager. She holds a bachelor’s and master’s degree from UCLA. As the Community Outreach Manger with the Orange County Registrar of Voters, she oversees the team that is responsible for voter outreach, translation of election materials, and language support services at voting locations.

Heather Creek

STRATEGY & LEARNING MANAGER
DEMOCRACY FUND



Heather is the Strategy and Learning Manager for the Elections Program at Democracy Fund, an independent foundation working to ensure that our political system can withstand new challenges and deliver on its promise to the American people. Heather manages the research agenda, develops, and tracks metrics on the changing field of election administration and policy, and uses that knowledge to inform program strategy.

Heather is a social scientist with experience using data to illuminate key stories and make important decisions about public policy. She joined Democracy Fund in 2020 after managing a survey research team at the Pew Charitable Trusts that provided consulting, research design, and project management for public opinion initiatives across Pew’s diverse portfolio of international and domestic policy programs. Prior to that she was a research officer for Pew’s Election Initiatives project where she led research and authored reports on civic participation, voter registration

reforms, changes in the system of election administration, and innovations in the dissemination of voting information. Previous work in the elections field included staffing the Committee on Elections and Ethics in the Texas House of Representatives and voter outreach and GOTV consulting for political campaigns.

Heather has a Ph.D. and master's degree in Government & Politics from the University of Maryland, where she was also a researcher in the Center for American Politics and Citizenship and taught courses on research methodology, lobbying and interest groups, and the U.S. Congress. Her scholarship focused on the way that federalism shapes policymaking and political incentives in the United States. Her peer reviewed publications have appeared in *Publius: The Journal of Federalism* and the *Policy Studies Journal*. She has a BA in Political Science and a BFA in Ballet from Texas Christian University.

SESSION 3 SPEAKERS & DISCUSSANT

Astrid M. Ochoa

OCHOA CONSULTING
PRINCIPLE CONSULTANT



Astrid M. Ochoa is Principal Consultant and owner of Ochoa Consulting. Ochoa Consulting was founded to support foundations, government, and nonprofits further their missions by building more inclusive democracy strategies and cross-sector networks.

Astrid serves on the California Secretary of State's Voter's Choice Act Taskforce, the Board of Directors for the League of Women Voters of California and the National Advisory Committee for the Center for Inclusive Democracy, USC Sol Price School of Public Policy. She also serves as Adjunct Faculty for the Center of Policy and Governance at the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota.

Astrid is the former Executive Director of Future of California Elections and past Director of State Election Policy and Redistricting at NALEO Educational Fund. Astrid also served as past Co-Chair of the California Language Accessibility Advisory Committee and as a member of the California Secretary of State November 2020 Taskforce.

Astrid holds a master's degree in public affairs and a master's degree in urban and regional planning from the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. She holds a bachelor's degree in international relations and a minor in French language from Pomona College.

Raul Macias

PROGRAM DIRECTOR, DEMOCRACY
HAAS JR. FOUNDATION



Raúl joined the Haas, Jr. Fund in early 2021. Over the past decade, he has helped lead democracy reform efforts for the Brennan Center for Justice and the Voting Rights Project of the ACLU of California. In these positions, he played a leadership role in advancing legislation, litigation, and advocacy on issues from ensuring broader, easier access to voter registration to the successful implementation of the Voters Choice Act reforms enacted by the state in 2016.

A native Californian, Macías started his career as an advocate for long-term care residents and a consumer health advocate. He subsequently served as a researcher with the California Budget & Policy Center, with a focus on state policy and how it affects working families. He received his bachelor's degree from the University of California, Los and Angeles, and his law degree from the University of San Diego School of Law.

Christopher E. Piper

COMMISSIONER OF THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS



Christopher E. “Chris” Piper was appointed Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Elections in January 2018 by Governor Ralph S. Northam. He is a Board member of the National Association of State Election Directors (NASSED), Vice Chair of the Electronic Registration and Information Center (ERIC), Chair of the Election Assistance Commission’s (EAC) Standards Board, an Advisory Board Member of the Election Official Legal Defense Network, and a member of the Bipartisan Policy Center’s (BPC) Election Task Force.

After graduating with a bachelor’s degree in political science from Virginia Commonwealth University, Chris began his career in elections and government ethics as a manager of a large trade association’s federal PAC before leading the Virginia State Board of Elections’ Campaign Finance Division. He then served as a political compliance consultant for a multi-national law firm before he returned to the State Board of Elections to manage the Election Services Division. In 2014, Chris became the Commonwealth’s first executive director of the Virginia Conflict of Interests and Ethics Advisory Council. Today, Chris leads the Department of Elections with a focus on election security and the uniform application of laws, regulations, and policies and defending the integrity of the Commonwealth’s elections at a time when the administration of elections in the country is under more scrutiny than ever before.

Chris is an avid long-distance runner and triathlete who has completed eleven marathons, a half ironman, and is a certified running coach. He mostly enjoys relaxing with his family and two pit bull rescue dogs. Fun fact: Chris spent a lot of his teenage years following the Grateful Dead and other bands around the country. What a long, strange trip it’s been! He currently serves as the co-chair of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association’s immigration committee.

Ebony West

PROGRAM ASSOCIATE, ELECTIONS
DEMOCRACY FUND



Ebony West is a Program Associate at Democracy Fund, an independent foundation working to ensure that our political system can withstand new challenges and deliver on its promise to the American people. In her role, she supports two of the Election Program’s strategies: Pro Voter Reform, which seeks to create a more equitable election system and supports communities defending their voting rights, and Voter-Centric Election Administration, which focuses on equipping local election officials with the data, tools, and connections needed to ensure voters’ voices are heard.

Prior to joining Democracy Fund, Ebony was a Program Associate at Triangle Community Foundation in Durham, NC. While there, she worked to establish and strengthen relationships with nonprofit organizations in the region. In addition, she managed the Community Development program and the Sudden and Urgent Needs Fund. She also oversaw community and nonprofit research for the Foundation and developed opportunities for community learning and convening. Finally, she brings previous experience in civic engagement, grassroots organizing, coalitions, and campaigns working on issues including equitable elections, access to higher education, LGBTQ+ rights, economic and reproductive justice.

Ebony graduated from East Carolina University with a BA in political science and a BS in communications. She also holds a Master of Public Administration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

SESSION 4 SPEAKERS AND DISCUSSANT

Kavitha Rajagopalan

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER
CENTER FOR COMMUNITY MEDIA



Kavitha Rajagopalan is community engagement manager for the Center for Community Media, where she creates spaces to sustain and amplify the work of community media serving immigrants, people of color, and other underserved news audiences across the U.S. She produces CCM's newsletter and special reports, organizes public events, and CCM's social media accounts and other ongoing community spaces. She is the author of Muslims of Metropolis: The Stories of Three Immigrant Families in the West, and her writing has appeared in The New York Times, The Nation, and Atlantic’s CityLab, as well as in edited volumes and academic journals.

Jacobo Licona

DISINFORMATION RESEARCHER
EQUIS LAB



Jacobo Licona is a disinformation researcher for Equis Labs, a research and experimentation hub identifying new ways to reach and engage Latino voters. Prior to working for Equis, Jacobo helped lead research efforts for two presidential campaigns and various campaign committees. He's also provided research and communications support for progressive and Latinx organizations.

Oni Advincula

PROJECT COORDINATOR OF ETHNIC MEDIA INITIATIVES
CENTER FOR COOPERATIVE MEDIA AT MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY



Oni Advincula is the project coordinator of ethnic media initiatives at the Center for Cooperative Media at Montclair State University. He was a correspondent for The Jersey Journal and the communications director and managing editor of the Independent Press Association-New York. His journalism awards include a New York Times Foreign Press Fellowship and a National Health Journalism Fellowship. Oni studied advanced narrative nonfiction at Harvard University and received dual master's degrees in public administration and journalism from Columbia University, where he was awarded a Charles H. Revson Fellowship

Stephanie Román

SENIOR PROGRAM ASSOCIATE, ELECTIONS
DEMOCRACY FUND



Stephanie Román is a Senior Program Associate for Elections at Democracy Fund, an independent foundation working to ensure that our political system can withstand new challenges and deliver on its promise to the American people. Focusing on building trust in elections, Stephanie works with the Elections Program in its efforts to ensure that the views and votes of citizens come first in our democracy.

Prior to joining Democracy Fund, Stephanie was a Policy Advisor with the Policy Analysis Center at UnidosUS, the nation's largest Latino civil rights and advocacy organization. There, she worked on multiple policy issues including civil rights, higher education, and economic security and served as the in-house policy expert and bilingual spokesperson on civil rights and student debt issues. Stephanie started her career as a Fulbright Scholar in Mexico City, Mexico, prior to joining the Institute for Women's Policy Research. In 2017, she served as the William R. Hearst Fellow with the Aspen Institute's Program on Philanthropy and Social Innovation.

A Los Angeles native, Stephanie has a Master of Public Policy degree from the University of Michigan's Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Pomona College.

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