

SPEAKER BIOS

Randy Alison Aussenberg is a Specialist in Nutrition Assistance Policy in the Library of Congress's Congressional Research Service (CRS). At CRS, she provides objective, non-partisan research, analysis, and legislative support to Congress, regarding USDA's domestic food assistance programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). Before joining CRS, she served in public health and human services policy roles at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Budget Office, Senate Finance Committee, and Baltimore and Pittsburgh local governments. She holds a BA from Columbia University, MPH from Johns Hopkins University, and a JD from the University of Pittsburgh.

Sanah Baig is the Executive Director of the Plant Based Foods Institute (PBFI), a nonprofit accelerating the sustainable and delicious transition to plant-centric food systems. Prior to joining PBFI in June 2025, she served as Senior Policy Advisor for Agriculture and Nutrition at the White House and has worked at USDA across two Presidential administrations. In 2022, Sanah was appointed by President Biden to serve as the Deputy Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics (REE), where she was responsible for ensuring the more than \$4 billion USDA Science enterprise advanced agricultural innovation that simultaneously combatted climate change, nutrition insecurity, and inequity across our agrifood systems. Before her return to public service, Sanah was Chief of Staff of the global nonprofit the Good Food Institute as well as Program Director at the National Association of Counties in Washington, D.C. During the Obama Administration, she was a political appointee at USDA for nearly six years in a variety of capacities including as an advisor to the Secretary of Agriculture. Sanah is a founding board member of the nonprofit Food Policy Pathways and on the advisory board of the nonprofit Plant Futures, both of which reflect her passion for cultivating the next generation of food policy leaders.

Jane Black is a Washington, D.C.-based food journalist who covers food, nutrition and sustainability for national publications including The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and The New Republic. She is also the co-author of the food and nutrition Substack newsletter, Consumed. Her podcast Pressure Cooker, which explored parenthood, feeding kids and how it all became so complicated, won a James Beard award for audio reporting for its two-part report on the history of school lunch.

Tim Blankshain is Director of the Public Sector Vertical at NielsenIQ, where he works with researchers and policymakers across academia, government and nonprofit organizations to examine how consumer purchasing behavior reacts to policy and market changes. Tim's work frequently focuses on nutrition, food additives, food access and nutrition assistance programs.

Dr. Sara Bleich is the inaugural Vice Provost for Special Projects at Harvard University, Professor of Public Health Policy at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and a faculty member at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. With more than 190 peer-reviewed publications, she is a policy expert and researcher who specializes in diet-related diseases, food insecurity, and racial inequality. Prior to this, Dr. Bleich served in the Biden Administration as the Director of Nutrition Security and Health Equity at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service and as the Senior Advisor for COVID-19 in the Office of the Secretary at USDA. As a White House Fellow during the Obama Administration, she worked at USDA as a Senior Policy Adviser for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services and on First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! initiative. Dr. Bleich was elected to the National Academy of Medicine in 2023 and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2025. She holds a B.A. in psychology from Columbia University and a PhD in health policy from Harvard University.

Dr. Andrew (Drew) A. Bremer is the current Director of the NIH Office of Nutrition Research (ONR), part of the Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives (DPCPSI) in the NIH Office of the Director. Since April 2025, he has also been the Acting Director of the NIH Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS) within DPCPSI. Drew is a board-certified internist, pediatrician, and pediatric endocrinologist, and has a Ph.D. in pharmacology. Prior to his appointment as the ONR Director, Drew was the Chief of the Pediatric Growth and Nutrition Branch at the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. Drew's areas of expertise include endocrine disorders, obesity, developmental origins of health and disease, and the role of nutrition in health throughout the life cycle. He earned his B.S. at Yale University, completed his M.D./Ph.D. training at Boston University, his internal medicine and pediatric residencies at the Baylor College of Medicine, his pediatric endocrinology fellowship at the University of California, San Francisco, and subsequently received an M.A.S. degree in clinical research from the University of California, Davis. Drew joined the NIH in 2013 after holding academic positions at the University of California, Davis (2007-2010) and Vanderbilt University (2010-2013).

Tom Brenna, PhD, is Professor of Pediatrics, of Chemistry, and of Human Nutrition at the Dell Medical School and College of Natural Sciences at the University of Texas at Austin, and Professor Emeritus of Human Nutrition, of Food Science, and of Chemistry after 28 years as an active faculty member at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. His group's basic research into the chemical, biochemical, metabolic, genetic and ecological aspects of fatty acids have had a decisive influence on modern knowledge of these key nutrients. Their work has led to modification of the accepted biochemical pathways for endogenous synthesis of long chain polyunsaturated fatty acids (LCPUFA). This work has been in concert with many ongoing contributions to the analytical mass spectrometry of fatty acids and related lipids. He was President of the International Society for the Study of Fatty Acids and Lipids, a member of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, and has been honored with multiple senior research awards by the American Society for Nutrition and the American Oil Chemists Society. He was among nine advisors to the Dept of Health and Human Services on the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Michael Carter Jr. is an 11th-generation farmer in the United States and the 5th generation to steward Carter Farms, a century-old family farm in Orange County, Virginia. With a passion for preserving cultural heritage, vocational and personal excellence through agriculture, Michael conducts workshops on growing and marketing ethnic vegetables, empowering farmers and communities to embrace sustainable and culturally relevant practices. As the founder of Africulture, a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating and expounding upon the principles, practices, plants, and people of African descent that have contributed to agriculture. Michael's work extends beyond farming to the advancement of economic equity and parity in the agricultural sector and every other facet of life. His leadership in this field has earned him recognition and respect across multiple platforms, institutions and organizations. He is the author of the book of the same name, Africulture, to be release May 19, 2026 everywhere you buy books. Having worked in Ghana, Kenya, and Israel as an agronomist and organic agricultural consultant, Michael has developed a global perspective on sustainable agriculture and the importance of cultural understanding in agriculture. His work in these regions has focused on introducing organic farming techniques, building market networks, and supporting the transition of local farms to more sustainable models. A natural educator, Michael also serves as a cliometrician, curriculum developer, and program coordinator for his educational platforms Hen Asem (Our Story) and Africulture. His course, Africulture, presently taught at the University of Virginia, delves into the contributions of Africans and African Americans to global agriculture and the policies that have impeded progress, emphasizing the importance of incorporating practical, solution based ideals to solve the problems in agriculture and throughout the world.

Ricardo Carvajal is a director at Hyman, Phelps & McNamara, PC, a law firm based in Washington DC. His practice focuses on regulation of food (including dietary supplements) by FDA, FTC, and USDA. He advises clients ranging from start-ups to multinational companies at all points in the supply chain, including bulk ingredient manufacturers, distributors of packaged foods, and retailers. He counsels clients on the regulatory status of ingredients and finished products, and provides advice on compliance with labeling and advertising requirements. He also helps clients interpret and comment on the implementation of new requirements, and the application of existing requirements to novel products and technologies. In enforcement matters, he counsels clients on managing inspections, responding to warning letters and other enforcement actions by federal and state regulators, and resolving import detentions. He also helps clients navigate product recalls and related corrective actions. His approach to counseling clients draws on insights gained in his former role as an Associate Chief Counsel for foods at FDA, where he counseled the agency on a variety of rulemaking and enforcement activities and policy initiatives.

Kellie Casavale, PhD, RDN, is the Director of the Agriculture, Food, and Nutrition Evidence Center of Texas A&M AgriLife Research. Dr. Casavale leads the vision and strategy for multi-disciplinary growth and multi-sector collaboration, serving Texas, the US, and other entities world-wide. She began her leadership in 2025, following 20 years of federal service leading cross-organizational scientific collaborations and systematic review programs to inform federal research and policy at the US Department of Agriculture, (USDA), and the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). During her time at the USDA, the systematic review methodologies were founded that are relied on today for the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. At HHS, Casavale led the process for developing the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. She was instrumental in setting standards for prioritizing systematic review questions to inform dietary recommendations. Casavale has directly supported former Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services in their duties to speak before Congress, implement mandates, and engage openly with non-Federal stakeholders. In 2017, Casavale founded the Federal Data Consortium on Pregnancy and Birth to 24 Months to establish scientific collaborations to curate maternal and child health data. She also founded the Human Milk Composition Initiative in the US and Canada. She joined the US Food and Drug Administration in 2018 where she supported multiple maternal and child health programs focused on promoting a healthy diet while limiting exposure to contaminants, including Closer to Zero and Advice About Eating Fish. She also has supported the US delegation of Codex Alimentarius on international standards for infant formula. Casavale earned a Doctorate in Nutrition Science from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Lander University in South Carolina, and is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist (RDN).

Phillip Connor is a Canadian-American researcher who conducts timely research with critical policy impacts. He earned his Ph.D. in sociology from Princeton University and spent nearly a decade at Pew Research Center, producing influential research on global migration and immigrant integration. From 2020 to 2025, Phillip was Senior Demographer at FWD.us, driving data strategy on immigration reform, working alongside a team of scholars from universities across the nation. He is currently a Research Fellow at Princeton University's Center for Migration and Development.

Katya Cronin is an Associate Professor in the Fundamentals of Lawyering Program at the George Washington University Law School. She also serves as an Affiliate Associate Professor with the Global Food Institute in Washington, D.C., and as core faculty with the Institute for Food Safety and Nutrition Security at the GW School of Public Health. In these roles, she engages in cross-disciplinary research, policy initiatives, curriculum design, and community outreach. Prof. Cronin's research resides at the intersection of food safety and nutrition security, agricultural law and policy, health law, and environmental law. Her recent scholarship examines the public health implications of toxic contaminants in food and explores possible regulatory and policy solutions.

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Dr. Joy Dubost is a registered dietitian and former food industry executive with 20+ years of both domestic and global consumer packaged goods and trade association experience. Dr. Dubost owns her own scientific consulting company, NJOY Health & Nutrition, LLC and is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Public Health at the University of South Florida. Her consulting business focuses on food policy and advocacy, scientific strategy, and health communications. Dr. Dubost has served as a national media spokesperson for the Institute of Food Technologists and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and is frequently quoted in local and national publications. Dr. Dubost earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Nutrition and Chemistry from Hood College, a Master's degree in Food Science from the University of Georgia and a Doctorate in Food Science from Pennsylvania State University. She completed her dietetic internship at the University of Michigan Hospitals.

Helena Bottemiller Evich is the founder and editor-in-chief of Food Fix. Most recently, she led coverage of food and agriculture issues at POLITICO for nearly a decade, winning numerous awards for her work, including a George Polk Award for a series on climate change and two James Beard Awards for features on nutrition and science. In 2022, she was a James Beard Award finalist for a deep dive on diet-related diseases and Covid-19. Before launching POLITICO's food policy coverage in 2013, Helena was the Washington correspondent for Food Safety News where she covered deadly foodborne illness outbreaks and the run-up to Congress passing the most significant update to food safety law in a century. Helena is a sought-after speaker and commentator on food issues, appearing on CNN, MSNBC, CBS, BBC and NPR, among others. Her work is widely cited in the media and has also been published in the New York Times, the Columbia Journalism Review and NBC News. Born and raised in Washington state, Helena attended Claremont McKenna College, where she studied government. She now lives in Washington, D.C., with her husband and two kids.

Scott Faber leads EWG's government affairs efforts to reform food, farm, water and chemical safety policies. Faber is also an adjunct professor at Georgetown University Law Center.

Lisa Feldman began her career with Sodexo in 2002 and has since held a variety of leadership roles across the organization. From 2002 to 2017, she served in positions including Research & Development Chef (Transversal Marketing), Executive Chef (Campus), Centralized Menu Manager (Campus & Schools), Director of Culinary & DPP (Schools), and Director of Culinary Development (Culinary Solutions). In 2017, Lisa took on the role of Director of Culinary Systems, leading the Menu Management Team for the Food Platform. Her work culminated in the development of a framework to integrate Sustainable Eating Targets across all Sodexo menus. In recognition of this achievement, she was promoted in 2023 to Senior Director of Menu Systems & CSR. In her current role, Lisa oversees Culinary Systems for Sodexo North America and leads the Sustainable Eating strategy for the NORAM Culinary Offer. Her team is responsible for managing recipe data, menu architecture, and nutrition services, while also supporting ingredient selection and culinary development across all market segments. Collectively, they manage and deliver over 180 menus annually across the organization. A recognized authority in food systems and sustainability, Lisa is frequently invited to contribute to industry publications, conferences, and training programs. Lisa is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America and brings over 30 years of experience in all aspects of food service management. A Certified Research Chef, she specializes in product and concept development. She also serves on the Culinary Advisory Board of the CIA's Healthy Kids Collaborative, is a member of the CIA's Healthy Menus R&D Collaborative and the Food Lab at Google and is a founding board member of the Food for Climate League, a women-led nonprofit focused on food and climate communication.

Dr. Michal Freedhoff was the Assistant Administrator for EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, from 2021-25. She previously served as minority director of oversight for the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works for then-Ranking Member Tom Carper (D-DE). While at EPA, Dr. Freedhoff oversaw the development and implementation of a transformational strategy to comply with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in EPA's pesticide decisions that reversed EPA's 50-year-long failure to address this complex challenge; the faster implementation of farmworker protections for several high-risk organophosphate pesticides; the advancement of human health protections and development of policies for a number of high-profile pesticides; and the exercise of EPA's emergency authority for the first time in almost 40 years to suspend a pesticide registration. Dr. Freedhoff has more than 25 years of government management, regulatory and investigative experience spanning a range of policy areas, including the regulation of chemicals and pesticides, sustainability, automobile efficiency and emissions standards, consumer product and automobile safety, climate change, civilian nuclear safety and homeland security. She was a principal drafter and negotiator of the Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act, a bipartisan effort to reform the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) and the first major environmental legislation signed into law since 1990. She also worked on the 2019 legislation to address per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) contamination; the 2020 American Innovation and Manufacturing (AIM) Act addressing hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs); the 2009 "Cash for Clunkers" program; the fuel economy provisions in the 2007 Energy Independence and Security Act; and a law requiring the creation of an online database of potential consumer product safety defects. Dr. Freedhoff began her congressional service as a science and engineering fellow in the office of Sen. Ed Markey (D-Mass.) and later became his policy director. In those roles, she served as a staff member of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources, Committee on Energy and Commerce, and Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming.

Holly Freishtat is the Senior Director of Feeding Change at the Milken Institute. She is an experienced director, transformative leader and strategist with a 20-year track record developing and implementing food system policies and programs. Holly served as Baltimore City's first Food Policy Director and Chief of Food Policy & Planning where she founded and directed the Baltimore Food Policy Initiative. Holly spent over a decade building an equitable and resilient food environment by creating policies and programs that directly impact health & economic disparities. As a result, Baltimore City has become internationally renowned for innovative food governance and leadership. Holly has received national and international recognition for her public speaking skills and food systems expertise. She has presented at 125 international and national speaking engagements and has been interviewed by CNN, NBC, Huffington Post, Politico and the Associated Press. In addition, Holly has been awarded numerous accolades for her contributions to food systems, including the Mayors Medallion for Meritorious Service Award, Maryland Daily Record's Top 100 women, and the 2016 Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Award. Freishtat has served as a food systems strategist, agricultural marketing director, nutrition educator, and grower. She holds an M.S. in Agriculture, Food, and Environment from the Friedman School of Nutrition Science & Policy at Tufts University, a B.S. in Nutrition from the University of Vermont, and an executive certificate from Carey Business School.

Sarah Gallo is senior vice president federal affairs, at the Consumer Brands Association. In her role, Gallo executes a coordinated approach of advocacy, communications and ally development for the consumer packaged goods industry. Gallo leads all federal lobbying functions of the organization that impact food, beverage, personal care and household products. She has critical responsibilities in the areas of nutrition, consumer transparency, chemicals management and agency modernization. Prior to joining Consumer Brands, Gallo served as Vice President, Agriculture and Environment for the Biotechnology Innovation Organization. There, she led the organization's strategy across agriculture, food systems, energy, and biobased manufacturing. Before that, Sarah held roles at CHS Inc., the National Corn Growers Association and as Agriculture Counsel with the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Small Business. Gallo graduated from Boston University with a Bachelor of Arts in marine biology. She resides in Arlington, Virginia with her husband and two children.

Nancy Glick is Director of Food and Nutrition Policy for the National Consumers League, a position she has held since September 2020. Building on a long career in health and nutrition communications and advocacy, Ms. Glick works to ensure the consumer's voice is heard in championing policies that will achieve more nutritious food choices, improved food safety, transparent and complete food labels, and a more sustainable food system. She also leads NCL's obesity policy initiatives, including spearheading the development of the first Obesity Bill of Rights for the nation. Prior to joining NCL, Ms. Glick worked in the public relations field designing and implementing communications, social marketing, disease awareness, healthcare and nutrition advocacy and public policy programs. From 2009 through mid-2020, she was Director of Health Affairs and Advocacy at the global public relations firm MSL, where she formed strategic alliances with health, medical, consumer and patient groups in the U.S. and built coalitions to advance nutrition and health care issues. Before joining MSL, Ms. Glick served in a variety of executive positions at three other leading public relations agencies – Ruder Finn, Porter/Novelli and Hill and Knowlton, Inc. She was also a press officer at the Food and Drug Administration, where she handled food, cosmetics, drugs and consumer issues and agency announcements about product recalls.

Thomas Gremillion is the Director of Food Policy at the Consumer Federation of America. He oversees the research, analysis, advocacy and media outreach for the group's food policy activities, and monitors food safety activities at USDA, FDA and in Congress, where he advocates for strong food safety protections for consumers. He also coordinates the Safe Food Coalition, a group of consumer, trade union, and foodborne illness victim organizations dedicated to reducing foodborne illness by improving government food inspection programs. Prior to joining CFA in 2015, Gremillion practiced environmental law at Georgetown University Law Center's Institute for Public Representation, where he represented community groups and advocacy organizations in litigation against polluters and government regulators. He also served as an associate attorney at the Southern Environmental Law Center in Chapel Hill, NC, where he specialized in transportation and land use issues. A graduate of Harvard Law School, Gremillion is a member of the D.C. and North Carolina bars. He graduated magna cum laude from the University of South Carolina with a B.S. in mathematics, and served as a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar in Quito, Ecuador, where he received an M.A. in International Relations from La Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar.

Melissa Halas, MA, RDN, CDCES is a nationally recognized registered dietitian, functional nutritionist, and author with over 25 years of experience helping individuals, families, and communities thrive through better nutrition. She is the founder and president of the Non-UPF Program (www.nonupfprogram.org), a science-driven national nonprofit advancing a healthier food system by reducing ultra-processed foods through certification, education, and collaboration with scientists, health advocates, and responsible industry leaders to increase consumption of minimally processed, nutrient-dense foods and advance UPF research. Through her private practice, Melissa's Healthy Living, she provides personalized, root-cause nutrition counseling integrating clinical nutrition, functional medicine principles, and sustainable lifestyle strategies. Her clients have improved metabolic and inflammatory biomarkers, reduced environmental and chemical exposures, and reshaped family food environments by translating complex science into daily action. Melissa has taught functional foods and public nutrition for over 18 years, specializing in phytonutrients, micronutrients, and brain health. She collaborates with food brands and startups to improve ingredient sourcing, reduce additives, and support healthier product innovation. A trained pediatric dietitian, she founded SuperKidsNutrition.com and created the Super Crew®, using media and education to help children build lifelong healthy eating habits.

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Dr. William K. Hallman is a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Human Ecology and a member of the graduate faculties of the Department of Nutritional Sciences and the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Dr. Hallman is an experimental psychologist with expertise in risk perception and risk and science communication. His scholarship focuses on helping people understand and make better-informed decisions about the risks and benefits associated with food, health, technology, and the environment, and on helping scientists and policymakers better engage with the public. He is an elected Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), an elected Fellow of the Society for Risk Analysis (SRA), and a Distinguished Research Fellow of the Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC) of the University of Pennsylvania. He has served as Chair of the Department of Human Ecology, Director of the Rutgers Food Policy Institute, Chair of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA)'s Risk Communication Advisory Committee, and as a member of the Standing Committee on Advancing Science Communication, the Climate Communications Initiative, the Climate Crossroads Advisory Committee, and other committees of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

Kelly Horton oversees the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics' public policy agenda, advocacy efforts and strategic partnerships that promote health and reduce the burden of chronic disease through evidence-based nutrition services and interventions. Her role supports the pursuit of legislative and regulatory policies that expand access to nutrition care. In collaboration with her department staff and member committees, her portfolio of programs includes those that impact consumer protection and licensure and healthcare policy and payment.

John Iselin is an Associate Director of Economic Analysis at the Budget Lab. He is an applied public and labor economist, whose work focuses on topics of taxation and fiscal policy. He conducted research on topics including state tax credits, the migration responses of older adults to tax changes, high-income tax evasion, and the cyclicalities of the social safety net. Prior to starting at the Budget Lab, he worked for the Congressional Budget Office as an associate analyst, as a staff economist at the White House Council of Economic Advisers, as a research fellow at the California Policy Lab, and as a research assistant at the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center. He holds a B.A. in economics from Reed College, an MPP from U.C. Berkeley, and a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Maryland.

Gregory Jaffe is President of Jaffe Policy Consulting, which provides strategic advice on national and international policies and regulations involving agriculture and food, with specific expertise in sustainability, climate, bioeconomy, biotechnology, biofuels, sustainable proteins, biomanufacturing, pesticides, food safety, and food loss and waste. He recently worked as the Senior Advisor for Regulatory Affairs in USDA's Office of the Secretary. Greg was the Department's Chief Regulatory Officer responsible for managing the Department's regulatory agenda, interdepartmental review of all significant regulations, and engagement with EPA and FDA on their regulations and policies that impact USDA programs or stakeholders. Before joining USDA, Greg worked for at the Center for Science in Public Interest, a non-profit consumer organization working on food and nutrition issues. He led CSPI's policy work involving innovative food products and was a member of the senior management team establishing CSPI's program priorities and designing advocacy strategies. He has a B.A. from Wesleyan University and a law degree from Harvard Law School.

Senator Ron Johnson was elected to the U.S. Senate in 2010 after running a successful manufacturing business in Oshkosh, Wisconsin for thirty years. From 2015-2021, he was Chairman of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs and remains a member of it. He currently serves as Chair of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations and is also a member of the Budget, Finance and Aging committees. Ron was re-elected to his third term in the U.S. Senate in 2022, and resides in Oshkosh with his wife Jane. They have three children and four grandchildren.

Stephanie E. Johnson, RDN, is Group Vice President of Government Relations for the National Grocers Association (NGA), where she leads federal and state advocacy for the independent grocery industry. She oversees NGA's government relations department, directing legislative and regulatory strategy, political advocacy and fundraising, grassroots engagement, and strategic communications. Johnson advances a comprehensive policy agenda spanning food and nutrition programs, health care and pharmacy policy, competition and antitrust, tax and labor, supply chain resilience, payments, and emerging regulatory issues. Under her leadership, NGA delivers measurable results in complex and rapidly shifting political environments, strengthening the competitive position of community-based grocers nationwide. A respected voice in Washington, she regularly engages lawmakers, regulators, and national media to elevate the essential role independent grocers play in expanding food access, supporting public health, and sustaining local economies. Previously, Johnson served in the U.S. Senate as a policy advisor covering health, education, labor, and appropriations, contributing to oversight of the federal COVID-19 response and development of major domestic policy initiatives. She began her career leading federal regulatory and legislative strategy across the food, agriculture, and public health sectors. Johnson holds degrees in Food and Nutrition (Dietetics) and Cell Biology & Neuroscience from Montana State University and completed her Registered Dietitian Nutritionist training at Virginia Tech. She brings a distinctive blend of clinical expertise and senior policy leadership to the intersection of nutrition, health care, and the food system.

Wendy Reinhardt Kapsak, MS, RDN is President and CEO of the International Food Information Council (IFIC), a nonprofit 501(c)(3) research and education foundation focused on effectively communicating science-based information about food safety, nutrition, and sustainable food systems, serving the public good. Prior to joining IFIC, Wendy served as the President and CEO of the Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH) (now known as the Foundation for Fresh Produce). At PBH, she guided the Foundation's efforts with hundreds of public and private partners to advance fruit and vegetable consumption for happier, healthier lives. Under her leadership and through a two-year transformation, the organization launched the Have A Plant® Movement in 2019, which today inspires millions of consumers to eat and enjoy more fruits and vegetables every day. From 2012 to 2016, Reinhardt Kapsak held multiple leadership positions in the Food, Nutrition & Health Partnerships as well as Corporate Engagement verticals at what is now known as Bayer Crop Science. While in these roles, her efforts focused on connecting the food, nutrition, culinary, and agriculture communities for greater understanding, collaboration, and innovation. Wendy returned to IFIC after a previous tenure from 2000-2012, including service as Senior Director, Health & Wellness. During this time, she directed food and nutrition communication strategies, including consumer research, opinion leader and media outreach, as well as publications and partnerships, for multiple food safety, nutrition, and agriculture issues. Wendy earned bachelor's and master's degrees in nutrition and exercise science from the University of Missouri, Columbia, and James Madison University, respectively. She completed her dietetic internship at Yale-New Haven Hospital — an affiliate of the Yale University School of Medicine.

Barbara Kowalczyk, PhD, MA, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences and Director of the Institute for Food Safety and Nutrition Security. She also has an appointment in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health and is a fellow with the Sumner M. Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness. Dr. Kowalczyk's research spans a range of topics related to food safety and infectious foodborne disease, including their intersection with nutrition security. She is particularly interested in advancing systems-based approaches to food safety that have a strong focus on disease prevention, consider the connections between human, animal and environmental health, and promote evidence-based decision from farm to fork to physician. She has led multiple innovative, collaborative and large-scale research projects funded by, among others, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, United Kingdom Food and Commonwealth Development Office, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, USAID, USDA and FDA. Prior to joining GW in 2023, Dr. Kowalczyk was faculty at The Ohio State University with appointments in the Department of Food Science and Technology and the Department of Environmental Health Sciences, and directed the Center for Foodborne Illness Research and Prevention (CFI), a non-profit organization she co-founded in 2006. Prior to joining OSU, she was a senior food safety and public health scientist at RTI International and a research assistant professor in the Department of Food, Bioprocessing and Nutrition Science at North Carolina State University. Dr. Kowalczyk received her BA in mathematics from the University of Dayton, her MA in Applied Statistics from the University of Pittsburgh and her PhD in Environmental Health from the University of Cincinnati. She has served on many national committees, including two National Academy of Sciences committees and her current appointment to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) Science Board. Dr. Kowalczyk is an affiliated faculty member of the Global Food Institute at GW.

Liza Lieberman is Vice President of Public Affairs at MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger, promoting the organization's policy priorities and strengthening its role and reputation as an authoritative voice in the anti-hunger field. Prior to this role, she was MAZON's Director of Public Policy, chairing the Hunger Subcommittee of a national interfaith policy coalition. Liza joined the team at MAZON after nearly a decade of experience at HIAS, the global Jewish nonprofit that protects refugees. Her tenure at HIAS spanned various public affairs roles related to advocacy, community engagement, and fundraising. She is a proud volunteer counselor with Crisis Text Line and holds a degree in International Relations from American University.

Emily Broad Leib is a Clinical Professor of Law and Founding Director of the Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic, the nation's first law school clinic devoted to providing legal and policy solutions to the health, economic, and environmental challenges facing our food system. She is also Faculty Director of Harvard Law School Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation. Working directly with clients and communities, Broad Leib champions community-led food system change, reduction in food waste, policies to increase food access and "food is medicine" interventions, and sustainability in food production. Her scholarly work has been published in *California Law Review*, *Wisconsin Law Review*, the *Harvard Law & Policy Review*, the *Food & Drug Law Journal*, and the *Journal of Food Law & Policy*, among others. A recognized leader in the field, Broad Leib's work has been covered by *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Boston Globe*, *The Guardian*, *TIME*, *Politico*, and *The Washington Post*. She received her B.A. from Columbia University and her J.D. from Harvard Law School, cum laude.

David S. Ludwig, MD, PhD, is an endocrinologist and researcher at Boston Children's Hospital, Professor of Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and Professor of Nutrition at Harvard School of Public Health. For more than 25 years, Dr. Ludwig has studied the effects of dietary composition on metabolism, body weight and risk for chronic disease – with a special focus on low-carbohydrate and ketogenic diets. He has made seminal contributions to development of the "carbohydrate-insulin model," an alternative perspective on the cause and treatment of obesity. Described as an "obesity warrior" by *Time Magazine*, Dr. Ludwig has fought for fundamental policy changes to improve the food environment. He has authored more than 250 scientific articles and presently serves as an editor at *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. Dr. Ludwig is author of the #1 New York Times bestseller *Always Hungry?* *Conquer Cravings, Retrain Your Fat Cells, and Lose Weight Permanently*.

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Peter Lurie, M.D., M.P.H. is President of the Center for Science in the Public Interest. CSPI publishes a newsletter, Nutrition Action, and conducts advocacy on Capitol Hill, in the regulatory agencies, in the courts, at the state and local level, and through corporate campaigns. It accepts no donations from government or industry. Previously, Lurie was the Associate Commissioner for Public Health Strategy and Analysis at the Food and Drug Administration, where he worked on antimicrobial resistance, drug shortages, agency transparency, caffeinated beverages, arsenic in rice, expanded access to investigational drugs, and prescription drug abuse. Prior to that, he was Deputy Director of Public Citizen's Health Research Group, where he addressed drug and device issues, coauthored the organization's Worst Pills, Best Pills consumer guide to medications, and led efforts to reduce worker exposure to hexavalent chromium and beryllium. Earlier, as a faculty member at the University of California, San Francisco and the University of Michigan, he studied needle exchange programs, ethical aspects of mother-to-infant HIV transmission studies, and other HIV policy issues domestically and abroad.

Dr. Marty Makary was confirmed on March 25, 2025 by a bipartisan vote of the U.S. Senate as the 27th Commissioner of Food and Drugs. Prior to joining the FDA, Dr. Makary worked at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, where he was a surgical oncologist and chief of Islet Transplant Surgery. After six years on the faculty at JHU, Dr. Makary was named an endowed chair in gastrointestinal surgery, and subsequently promoted to full professor with tenure. He also served as a professor at the Johns Hopkins Carey Business School and founded the Johns Hopkins Center for Surgical Trials and Outcomes Research. Dr. Makary is a widely published writer, having authored more than 300 peer-reviewed articles in medical journals. He is the author of three New York Times bestselling books on health care. Dr. Makary has led cross-disciplinary research on a range of subjects, including cancer care, obesity, frailty and psychologic reserve in older patients, adverse event monitoring, the Orphan Drug Act, antimicrobial resistance, and Alzheimer's. Of particular note, he is the co-developer of the Surgery Checklist used in many operating rooms around the world today. Dr. Makary was the first to perform several novel surgical operations, including the first-in-the-world series of laparoscopic pancreas islet transplant operations. For his pioneering work, Dr. Makary was awarded the Nobility in Science Award from the National Pancreas Foundation. For the last 22 years, he has had an active clinical practice. During the COVID pandemic, he and his Johns Hopkins colleagues conducted landmark antibody studies on natural immunity published in JAMA. Most recently, his research has focused on vulnerable populations in health care. He has served in a leadership position at the World Health Organization Patient Safety Program, and in 2018 was elected to the National Academy of Medicine. Dr. Makary graduated from Bucknell University and earned an M.P.H. from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. He received his M.D. from Thomas Jefferson University and did his surgical residency at Georgetown University, completing sub-specialty surgery training at Johns Hopkins University.

Jerold Mande is CEO of Nourish Science; Adjunct Professor of Nutrition, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health; and a Non-Resident Senior Fellow, Tisch College of Civic Life, Tufts University. Professor Mande has a wealth of expertise and experience in national public health and food policy. He served in senior policymaking positions for three presidents at USDA, FDA, and OSHA helping lead landmark public health initiatives. In 2009, he was appointed by President Obama as USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Food Safety. In 2011, he moved to USDA's Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, where he spent six years working to improve the health outcomes of the nation's \$100 billion investment in 15 nutrition programs. During President Clinton's administration, Mr. Mande was Senior Advisor to the FDA commissioner where he helped shape national policy on nutrition, food safety, and tobacco. He also served on the White House staff as a health policy advisor and was Deputy Assistant Secretary for Occupational Health at the DOL. During the George H.W. Bush administration he led the graphic design of the iconic Nutrition Facts label at FDA, for which he received the Presidential Design Award. Mr. Mande began his career as a legislative assistant for Al Gore in the U.S. House and Senate, managing Gore's health and environment agenda, and helping Gore write the nation's organ donation and transplantation laws. Mr. Mande earned a Master's of Public Health from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a Bachelor of Science in nutritional science from the University of Connecticut. Prior to his current academic appointments, he served on the faculty at the Tufts, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, and Yale School of Medicine.

Scott Marlow is the founder of Long Rows Consulting, providing expert analysis on agricultural risk management, credit, and disaster assistance programs. He has led successful legislative, regulatory, and administrative policy reform efforts, drawing on direct experience serving farm families in financial distress, systems-level analysis of farm financial infrastructure, grassroots engagement and coalition building. Scott served as Senior Advisor to the Administrator and Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs at USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) during the Biden Administration, overseeing over \$20 billion in farmer assistance programs. He led high-stakes initiatives including implementation of the Inflation Reduction Act Section 22006, which provided \$3.1 billion in relief for distressed farm borrowers, and development of innovative models for delivering nearly \$10 billion in disaster assistance under the Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act. He spent a decade operating farm crisis hotlines, providing financial counseling and referrals to farm families in distress. He served as Executive Director and Director of the Farm Sustainability Program at the Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI) in Pittsboro, North Carolina, and has served on multiple Boards of Directors. Scott holds a B.A. in Political Science from Duke University and an M.S. in Crop Science from North Carolina State University, and has basketball loyalties to both.

Maya Maroto directs the Coalition for Metabolic Health's strategy and operations, guiding its policy agenda, partnerships, and public engagement to elevate metabolic health as a national priority. She brings deep experience in building and leading cross-sector coalitions, translating science into policy-relevant action, and aligning diverse stakeholders around shared goals to drive meaningful impact in Washington and beyond. Previously, Maya has held senior leadership roles across government, academia, nonprofits, and the private sector, including serving as Vice President at FoodMinds, where she led strategic initiatives at the intersection of nutrition, health policy, and organizational planning. Her federal experience includes roles at the FDA and the USDA, where she advanced public health nutrition, communications, and stakeholder engagement. Throughout her career, she has focused on advancing evidence-based approaches to nutrition security, population health, and chronic disease prevention. Maya is a Registered Dietitian (RD) and a Certified Ketogenic Nutrition Specialist (CKNS). She holds a B.S. in Nutrition and Food Science from Auburn University, an M.P.H. in Public Health Nutrition from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from Morgan State University. She lives in Maryland and enjoys weightlifting, cheering on her son's high school baseball journey, and making time to recharge at the spa.

Karim D. Marshall is the Director of Climate and Energy Policy at the Consumer Federation of America, where he protects vulnerable and marginalized communities by advocating for policies which advance an affordable and responsible economy. Karim is a seasoned leader with nearly two decades of expertise in environmental law, policy development, and strategic program management across federal, state, and local levels. As the Senior Advisor for Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights at the United States Environmental Protection Agency in the Biden-Harris Administration, Karim drove the integration of equity principles into national programs, ensuring fairness and inclusivity in public service delivery and access to federal resources. With a proven track record of spearheading transformative initiatives, he has built and led national programs, managed multi-billion-dollar real estate portfolios, and authored groundbreaking policies in energy, climate, and environmental justice. Mr. Marshall has represented the U.S. government on the global stage and developed innovative stakeholder engagement frameworks and equity-focused solutions, bridging strategic vision with operational execution. Karim is a third-generation Washingtonian, a graduate of Dartmouth College and the Washington College of Law at American University (WCL). He teaches Environmental Justice at WCL & Howard University's School of Law and is admitted to practice in the District of Columbia and Maryland.

Mduduzi Mbuya is currently Director, Knowledge Leadership, where he is responsible for research and evaluation at the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN). He works with colleagues to generate and use evidence to guide improved program design and implementation and to fill critical gaps in the global evidence. Dr Mbuya has worked for over 25 years on nutrition sensitive programs and policy in LMIC. He holds a BSc in Nutrition from the University of Zimbabwe, a PhD in International Nutrition from Cornell and is currently a Courtesy Assistant Professor at Cornell University's Division of Nutritional Sciences. He also serves on the board of the Zvitambo Institute for Maternal and Child Health Research in Zimbabwe and the Advisory Council of the Micronutrient Forum.

Steve Messeh is the Director of the USDA Center for Faith where he leads the overall mission of the Center as well as providing critical leadership and support to USDA leadership. As a dynamic executive and leader with over a decade of experience driving strategic growth, Steve most recently founded and led a DC-based purpose driven organization whose mission was to identify and meet the greatest needs in the D.C. area, including food security, mentoring for at-risk youth and social entrepreneurship. Within that role, Steve also established and managed multiple pediatric mobile health clinics internationally providing access to healthcare for thousands of children abroad. Prior to that, Steve spent over 7 years as a financial consultant for both KPMG and Deloitte, delivering consulting services to a variety of federal agencies and departments. He holds a Bachelor's of Business Administration in Finance and Information Systems from The George Washington University.

Natalie Mihalek was elected in 2018 to serve the citizens of the 40th Legislative District in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. A native of Allegheny County, Mihalek's commitment to public service began early. A member of the Girl Scouts of America (GSA), she received the GSA Gold Award, Scouting's highest achievement. Upon graduating from South Allegheny High School, she enlisted in the U.S. Navy, where she qualified and served in the Navy's elite nuclear power program, of which only 1 percent of the sailors admitted are women. After her military service, she returned to Allegheny County where she attended the University of Pittsburgh, earning bachelor's and law degrees before beginning her legal career in the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office. There, she worked closely with crime victims and police to prosecute criminal cases and put violent offenders behind bars. In addition to her work in criminal justice, Mihalek also owned a successful small business in Upper St. Clair and was working for a large financial institution at the time of her election. As a state representative, working mother and military veteran, Mihalek said she will be a voice for the thousands of brave men and women who serve or have served this great nation. She aims to fight to end the opioid epidemic; protect citizens from out-of-control taxes and job-killing government regulation; and ensure the kind of future that will give today's children and future generations a reason to stay here and raise their own families. For the 2025-26 Legislative Session, she serves on the Children and Youth, Consumer Protection, Technology and Utilities, Energy and Liquor Control committees. Mihalek and her husband, Jeremy, reside in Peters Township with their three young children.

SPEAKER BIOS

Charlie Misseijer is the national Director of Policy & Legislative Affairs at Moms for Liberty. With a career spanning 25 years in education, law, and public policy, while serving in the traditional school setting, as a university professor, and within a Washington D.C.-based legal advocacy organization, Charlie now works with Moms for Liberty's State Legislative Committees, elected officials, and other allies throughout our nation to support, craft, and employ policies that respect and protect the fundamental rights of parents to know what's best when it comes to their child's education, care and upbringing, while vociferously and strategically opposing policies and practices that seek to usurp those rights. Charlie possesses a BA in History, MA in Public Policy, and a JD. Married for twenty-six years, he has eight children and one grandchild.

Eric Mitchell is the President of the Alliance to End Hunger. In his role, he leads the Alliance's strategic direction, including expanding and mobilizing its network of companies, nonprofit organizations, universities, foundations, and individuals. Prior to the Alliance, Eric served as Director of Global Government Relations for Adtalem Global Education, where he partnered with local government officials, businesses, and civic organizations in the United States and the Caribbean. He also served for six years as the Director of Government Relations at Bread for the World. Eric began his career on Capitol Hill, serving as Policy Advisor to civil rights icon, U.S. Congressman John Lewis (D-GA), and Legislative Assistant to U.S. Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (D-GA). Eric was included in The Root 100 most influential African Americans under the age of 40. He was also recognized as a "Top Lobbyist" from 2014-2019 by The Hill newspaper.

Dr. Rev. Jessica Moerman is a climate and environmental scientist, pastor, educator, and advocate. She serves as the President and CEO of the Evangelical Environmental Network and is a Board Member of the National Association of Evangelicals. Jessica received her Ph.D. in Earth and Atmospheric Sciences from the Georgia Institute of Technology and has held research positions at John Hopkins University, University of Michigan, and the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, where she researched how climate has changed throughout Earth's history. Prior to joining EEN, Jessica was a AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellow at the U.S. Department of Energy. Jessica regularly speaks on issues related to climate change, pollution, children's health, the clean energy transition, environmental stewardship, and the intersection of science and faith. She has appeared on the NBC TODAY Show, Good Morning America, Christian Broadcasting Network, Newsmax, nationally syndicated Christian and secular radio talk shows, and has been featured in Christianity Today, CNN, the Washington Post, and other national news outlets. In 2021, Jessica was named a Yale Public Voices for the Climate Crisis Fellow. Jessica is a co-founding Pastor at her church, which she planted in 2016 with her husband Chris in the Dupont Circle neighborhood of Washington, DC. Jessica is passionate about leading church communities towards positive solutions to safeguard our cities, neighborhoods, and the next generation from the effects of a warming world and life-threatening pollution.

Dariush Mozaffarian is a cardiologist, public health scientist, and Director of the Food is Medicine Institute at Tufts University. He is also Distinguished Professor, Dean Emeritus, and Jean Mayer Professor at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy; Professor of Medicine at Tufts School of Medicine; and attending physician in the Division of Cardiology at Tufts Medical Center. Dr. Mozaffarian's overall goal is to create the science and translation for a food system that is nutritious, equitable, and sustainable. He is globally renowned expert in Food is Medicine and has authored more than 600 scientific publications on nutritional priorities for cardiometabolic health and on evidence-based policy approaches and innovations to advance nutrition security, reduce diet-related diseases, improve health equity, and reduce healthcare costs in the US and globally. He has served in numerous advisory roles, including on the President's Council on Sports, Fitness, and Nutrition, and his work has been featured in an array of media outlets. Thomson Reuters named him as one of the World's Most Influential Scientific Minds. Dr. Mozaffarian received his B.S. in biological sciences from Stanford University, M.D. from Columbia University, and Doctorate in Public Health from Harvard University; with clinical training in internal medicine at Stanford University and in cardiology at the University of Washington. He is married, has three children, and actively trains as a Fourth Degree Black Belt in Taekwondo.

Radha Muthiah is President and CEO of the Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB), an organization that serves as the anchor of the Washington region's charitable food ecosystem by sourcing and supplying the food for 60 million meals annually through 400 partner organizations. The CAFB also partners with hospitals and colleges to pair food with other critical services that improve population health and build greater economic opportunity and upward mobility. Previously, Muthiah served as CEO of the Clean Cooking Alliance, an initiative hosted by the United Nations Foundation. She has also worked at CARE International, ICF International, the American Red Cross, Mercer Management Consulting, and the Council on Foreign Relations. Muthiah serves on several regional and national boards including the Greater Washington Board of Trade, Children's National Hospital, the Federal City Council, the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Virginia Food Banks and the advisory council of the Tufts Food is Medicine Institute. Muthiah holds a BA and an MA in economics from Tufts University and an MBA from Stanford University.

Aaliyah Nedd serves as Director of Government Relations for the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA CLUSA). In this role, she leads NCBA's federal, state, and local outreach and advocacy work to develop, advance and promote cooperative enterprise. Prior to joining NCBA CLUSA, Aaliyah worked on a variety of policy issues at the National Association of Counties (NACo). Most recently she served as the Associate Legislative Director for Agriculture/Rural Affairs and Immigration. Aaliyah holds degrees in International Studies and Russian and is a graduate of the University of Florida.

Anna Nelson was the Deputy Special Envoy for Global Food Security at the U.S. Department of State during the Biden-Harris Administration, where she worked to strengthen global food security through policy leadership, strategic diplomacy, and private sector and civil society collaboration. She served as a civil servant in the Departments of State and Defense for fifteen years, including as Chief of Staff of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency and senior advisor on food and climate to the U.S. Director of Foreign Assistance. She also spent time as a Vice President at The Cohen Group, where she provided strategic advice and business consulting services to corporate clients in the semiconductor, biotechnology, and manufacturing industries. She has a BA from McGill University, a Master's in Public Policy from the University of Maryland at College Park, and a JD from George Washington University. She owns a farm in Maryland.

Kimberly Nesci of Kimberly Nesci Consulting, LLC, has 3 decades of experience in US pesticide regulation and pesticide policy. Prior to starting her own consulting business in 2025, Kimberly served as the Director of the Office of Pest Management Policy (OPMP) in the USDA Office of the Chief Economist. In this senior executive role, Kimberly led the coordination of USDA department-wide policy on pesticides, biotechnology, integrated pest management. Before joining USDA in January 2022, Kimberly held a senior executive position in the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Pesticide Programs, leading the division responsible for evaluating the benefits and costs of pesticides in support of EPA's regulatory approvals. Kimberly also held a number of leadership roles and positions in several divisions across the pesticide program prior to being selected as a member of the Senior Executive Service. These roles included co-leading the divisions responsible for evaluating the environmental fate and effects of pesticides, leading the branch responsible for the safety assessment and approval of pesticide products of biotechnology, and leading teams responsible for the regulatory reevaluation of and review and approval of conventional chemicals. Kimberly also served as a member of the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Management (the JMPM) from 2010 to 2016. Kimberly has a Master's degree in Entomology from the University of Maryland.

David L. Ortega is the Noel W. Stuckman Chair in Food Economics and Policy at Michigan State University. His research focuses on decision-making in agrifood systems and how economic forces shape food and agricultural markets and policy. Dr. Ortega has been invited to testify before the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives Agriculture Committees and has advised the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Reserve Banks, and various state governments on issues ranging from agricultural trade to food prices and supply chains. His research and commentary are regularly featured in outlets such as *The New York Times*, NPR, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *Financial Times*, and CNN.

Dr. Stephen Ostroff retired from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2019 after serving as the food program's chief medical officer, the agency's Chief Scientist, Deputy Commissioner for Foods and Veterinary Medicine and as the Acting FDA Commissioner on two occasions (in 2015-2016 and 2017). Dr. Ostroff also worked at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for two decades on infectious disease surveillance and outbreak investigations, especially management and coordination of complex emerging infectious disease threats. He served as Associate Director for Epidemiologic Science in the National Center for Infectious Diseases (NCID) and Deputy Director of NCID, attaining the rank of Assistant Surgeon General in the US Public Health Service. Post CDC, Dr. Ostroff performed similar work at the Pennsylvania Department of Health running the Bureau of Epidemiology and serving as the Commonwealth's Acting Physician General. Dr. Ostroff currently holds adjunct faculty appointments at the University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health and Penn State School of Medicine.

Stuart Pape helps clients understand and address challenges posed by regulations from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and similar health and safety regulatory bodies worldwide. He regularly appears before the FDA, USDA, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Previously, he held various positions in the Office of the Chief Counsel at the FDA, including as Associate Chief Counsel for Food. He also served as executive assistant to FDA Commissioner Donald Kennedy. Stuart is ranked in Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers in Business, Food and Beverages: Regulatory and Litigation, Tier 1; and included in Super Lawyers, The Best Lawyers in America, FDA, and in Who's Who in America and Who's Who in the World. In 2012, he received the Judge Learned Hand Award from the American Jewish Committee. Additionally, Stuart served for many years as Vice Chair of the Board of Directors of the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation. Stuart is a 1970 graduate of the University of Virginia and a 1973 graduate of its School of Law.

Richa Patel is NSAC's policy specialist focused on climate change and agriculture. She joins NSAC from the U.S. House of Representatives, where she previously led agriculture policy for Rep. Yadira Caraveo, M.D. (D-CO) and Rep. Alma Adams, Ph.D. (D-NC). She worked closely with grassroots organizations in the West and South on a wide range of food and farm issues. As a Hill staffer, her efforts have also included supporting farmers' water and land conservation efforts, responding to historical discrimination in USDA farm lending programs, and elevating resources for rural and farming communities' transition to clean energy. Richa grew up in North Carolina, where she cultivated her enthusiasm for spending as much time outdoors as possible, and holds a B.S. in engineering and a B.S. in political science from North Carolina State University.

SPEAKER BIOS

Dr. Melissa Perry is the Dean of the College of Public Health at George Mason University. Trained as an epidemiologist in public health, she is internationally respected for her work as a scientist, educator, and academic leader. Dr. Perry's research in occupational and environmental epidemiology has been well-funded by both federal agencies and foundations. Prior to coming to Mason, Dr. Perry served as a Professor and Chair of the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health in the Milken School of Public Health at George Washington University from 2011 – 2022. She also held faculty appointments in the Department of Epidemiology and Statistics at the Milken School of Public Health, as well as in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Medicine at the School of Medicine and Health Sciences. In addition, she previously served as the Interim Associate Dean for Research at the Milken School of Public Health. Prior to joining the faculty and leadership at George Washington University, Dr. Perry was a member of the faculty at the Harvard School of Public Health (1999 – 2011) as well as the Medical College of Wisconsin (1995 – 1999). She has published more than 150 frequently cited manuscripts, technical reports, book chapters, commentaries, and book reviews and has presented at over 25 American universities and in over 17 countries. She is a graduate of the Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health where she received both her MHS and ScD degrees. She was awarded a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Vermont where she was recognized as a member of the Phi Beta Kappa organization. She is recently completed an MBA degree at George Mason University.

Robert (Bob) Pezzolesi, MPH, ODHM, is a public health advocate dedicated to building healthier communities by integrating faith-inspired social change with science-based public health policy and practice. He is the co-founder and co-convenor of the Interfaith Public Health Network (IPHN). Much of Bob's work has centered on engaging and mobilizing faith communities and other groups in support of evidence-based public health nutrition policies and alcohol policies. These efforts have included coordinating community engagement strategy (in partnership with the Center for Science in the Public Interest) toward the successful passage of New York City's Sweet Truth Act – the nation's first policy requiring warning labels for chain restaurant menu items with excessive amounts of added sugar. His other policy campaigns have included building support for New York State bills to ban certain harmful chemical food additives and promote transparency for chemical food additives in New York. A member of the United Methodist Church (UMC) since 1991, Bob is a consecrated and commissioned Home Missioner within the denomination.

Angela Rachidi is a senior fellow and the Rowe Scholar in opportunity and mobility studies at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), where she studies poverty and the effects of federal safety-net programs on low-income individuals and families in America. This includes programs that provide cash assistance, food assistance, childcare, and tax credits. Her research primarily focuses on the relationship between employment and poverty, specifically the effectiveness of government programs and policies in increasing employment and long-term family well-being. Before joining AEI, Dr. Rachidi spent almost a decade researching benefit programs, including SNAP and TANF, for low-income populations in New York City as a deputy commissioner in New York City's Department of Social Services. Dr. Rachidi has a PhD in Public Policy from the New School University and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Northern Illinois University.

Jared Rothstein is a research director at POLITICO's AgencyIQ, overseeing the organization's food and chemicals regulatory research. Jared previously worked at the Consumer Brands Association, where he served as an FDA subject matter expert on regulatory matters on behalf of major food, beverage, personal care, and household product brands. Prior to Consumer Brands, he served as the senior manager of regulatory affairs at SOCMA, focusing on EPA chemical and environmental regulations on behalf of specialty chemical manufacturers. Jared also previously worked in association management and consulting at Kellen, advising a variety of clients in the building and construction products sector. He received a Bachelor of Arts in political science from George Washington University and resides in Washington, DC.

Kelly Ryerson works at the intersection of agriculture and health, collaborating with regenerative farmers, scientists and policymakers to transform our food system and protect soil and human health. She is the Co-Executive Director of American Regeneration, the Founder of the educational platform Glyphosate Facts, and a leading organizer in the Make America Healthy Again movement, mobilizing health advocates to push for a regenerative, toxin-free food system. Kelly has contributed to numerous podcasts, publications, and documentaries including the award-winning documentary Common Ground, and she is known as Glyphosate Girl for her writing and media work on pesticides and chronic disease. Kelly has a BA from Dartmouth College, an MBA from the Stanford Graduate School of Business, and completed training in integrative health coaching at Duke Integrative Medicine.

Takeenah Shabazz is Interim Director of Bread for the World's Policy and Research Institute (PRI). Prior to this role, she served as an appointed Senior Policy Advisor at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). Before joining USDA, Takeenah served as Policy Director at Berkeley Food Institute, Senior Program Associate at the Congressional Hunger Center, and Program Associate at D.C. Hunger Solutions. She is also an alum of the 23rd class of the Emerson National Hunger Fellowship and City Year – Seattle/King County. She earned a Master of Public Policy (MPP) degree from UC Berkeley and a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from Georgetown University. She is originally from San Diego, CA and resides in Washington, D.C.

Sarah Sorscher is an experienced advocate with a passion for public health who fights for a safer, healthier, more transparent food system by promoting consumer safeguards with Congress, federal agencies, and state and local governments. As Director of Regulatory Affairs, she manages CSPI's policy work related to food safety and labeling, allergens, food additives, dietary supplements, and other consumer products. Her work includes serving on federal advisory committees, testifying before Congress and federal agencies, offering technical advice to policymakers, and providing commentary to the media on consumer and food safety issues. Prior to joining CSPI, Sarah worked on health and safety issues at Public Citizen and served as a law clerk for the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. She holds a J.D. from the Harvard Law School, an M.P.H. from Harvard School of Public Health, and a B.A. from Amherst College.

Alessandro Terenzoni (he/him) is Vice President of Public Policy at Americans United. He leads Americans United's policy team in its critical work to defend and support church-state separation at the federal and state levels. Before joining Americans United, he spent nearly a decade as Deputy Director of the Office for Civil Rights within the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs. He led the office's civil-rights enforcement and technical-assistance work, ensuring that DOJ grant recipients did not unlawfully discriminate based on race, sex, religion, disability, and other protected bases. Formerly, Alessandro led teams investigating civil rights violations at the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, created one of the first self-help centers in the country for unrepresented litigants at the administrative level for the D.C. Office of Administrative Hearings, and was a housing attorney at DC Legal Aid. Before law school, he was a public-school teacher in Newark, NJ. He serves on the board of the Washington Council of Lawyers, D.C.'s public interest bar association dedicated to expanding access to justice and was a member of the adjunct faculty at the George Washington University Law School for over a decade—teaching Legal Research and Writing, Introduction to Advocacy, and Public Interest Lawyering. Alessandro was also a Wasserstein Fellow at Harvard Law School for the 2022-23 academic year and is an alumnus of the Harvard Kennedy School's Senior Executive Fellows Program. He is a graduate of GW Law and Tufts University.

Philip Wegmann is a national political reporter who covers the White House for RealClearPolitics, a post he has held since 2019. He has reported on two presidencies, and two presidents have yelled at him. He has reported everywhere from Iowa to the Oval Office, and his long-form profiles of presidential candidates, the House Speaker, and Cabinet members drive headlines. His questions in the White House briefing room regularly break news. Wegmann previously worked as a staff writer for the Washington Examiner where his reporting led to a Congressional Ethics Investigation and, at the time, the first official reprimand of a sitting member of Congress in more than a decade. He is a frequent guest on Fox News and has appeared previously on both CNN and MSNBC. His voice has been heard on the BBC and NPR. He graduated with a B.A. in History and Political Philosophy from Hillsdale College. He rides motorcycles. Sometimes quickly.

Susan Weinstock is the CEO of the Consumer Federation of America. Previously, she was vice president of financial resilience programming at AARP, responsible for the overall strategic direction of AARP programs and education competencies to improve the financial security of persons age 50 and older. Prior to AARP, Susan worked at the U.S. Department of the Treasury. As the director of the office of consumer policy, she focused on emerging trends and the growing use of technology and data in the provision of consumer financial products and services. Previously, she directed The Pew Charitable Trusts' Consumer Banking Project, which advocates for policies that protect American consumers and their money. As the lead on Pew's efforts to improve the safety and transparency of consumer banking products, she directed a team of researchers who identified current practices and consumer needs to inform and promote policy solutions. Prior to Pew, Susan was the financial reform campaign director at the Consumer Federation of America, leading media, coalition, public education, and grassroots efforts to promote consumer financial protection in the Dodd-Frank Act. She has more than 20 years of advocacy, communications, research, grassroots and legislative experience working to protect consumers.

Dr. Catherine Woteki is Professor Emerita of Food Science and Human Nutrition at Iowa State University and Distinguished Institute Fellow of the University of Virginia's Biocomplexity Institute. She recently served as a member of President Biden's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology and as chair of the Division of Earth and Life Studies of the National Research Council. She was Chief Scientist and Under Secretary for USDA's Research, Education, and Economics (REE) mission area from 2010 to 2016. In that role, she developed the Office of the Chief Scientist, established the USDA Science Council, instituted the Department's first scientific integrity and open data policies, and was a founding member of the Meeting of Agricultural Chief Scientists held under the auspices of the G-20. Dr. Woteki served as the first Under Secretary for Food Safety at the USDA from 1997 to 2001, where she oversaw the safety of meat, poultry and egg products. Dr. Woteki is a member of the National Academy of Medicine and a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. She has received numerous awards and recognitions including Outstanding Alumna (Mary Washington College, 2009), Henry A. Wallace Award (Iowa State University, 2017), and Ellen Swallow Richards Award (Association of Public and Land Grant Universities, 2017). Prior to joining USDA, Dr. Woteki served as Global Director of Scientific and Regulatory Affairs for Mars, Incorporated, where she managed the company's scientific policy on matters of health, nutrition, and food safety. From 2002 to 2005, she was Dean of Agriculture and also head of the Agricultural Experiment Station at Iowa State University. Dr. Woteki served as the first Under Secretary for Food Safety at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) from 1997 to 2001, where she oversaw the safety of meat, poultry and egg products. Dr. Woteki served in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) as Deputy Associate Director for Science from 1994 to 1996. During that time, she co-authored the Clinton Administration's policy statement, "Science in the National Interest."