

2024 ELECTIONS SUMMIT



CENTER FOR
DEMOCRACY AND
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Welcome

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC), in partnership with the University of Maryland's Center For Democracy and Civic Engagement (CDCE), is honored to host a series of panels on confidence in elections, election security, serving all voters, challenges for new election officials, and communicating about elections.

“Cutting Through The Noise: Communicating About Elections In A Presidential Election Year” - Communicating effectively about how elections are administered and how voters can participate in the process has become increasingly challenging with the rise of social media and artificial intelligence. Presidential election years can be particularly difficult, with not just that office on the ballot but also other federal offices, state positions, and a litany of local offices and issues. This panel will explore best practices and difficulties election officials face when communicating accurate information with the public and how these officials have already been hard at work implementing plans for the year to come.

“Serving All Voters” – One of the primary jobs of an election official is to help all eligible voters cast a ballot independently and privately to ensure free and fair elections. Our country and communities are diverse and every population has different voting accessibility needs, such as voters with disabilities or those who live in the military or overseas and more. This panel will highlight how election officials can best serve these voters so that all eligible voters can cast a ballot.

“Confidence In Elections And Election Security” – The security of elections and confidence in the elections process go hand in hand. Since 2016, the topic of security has been a focus of every election. This includes cybersecurity as well as the physical security of election officials, their staff, poll workers, and election facilities. This panel will discuss not only the challenges they face but also the training and support that are there to help elections run smoothly through 2024.

“Challenges For New Election Officials” – In recent years there has been significant turnover with election officials retiring or moving on to other opportunities. Even though there are new administrators leading election offices, that does not mean that they do not have the support of others in their offices or in their states. This panel will discuss not only the challenges they face but the training and support that is there to help elections run smoothly though 2024 and beyond.



**U.S. ELECTION
ASSISTANCE COMMISSION**

The **U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC)** was established by the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA). It is an independent, bipartisan commission charged with ensuring secure, accurate and accessible elections by developing guidance to meet HAVA requirements, adopting voluntary voting system guidelines, and serving as a national clearinghouse of information on election administration. The EAC also accredits testing laboratories and certifies voting systems, as well as administers the use of HAVA funds. For more information, visit www.Eac.gov.



**CENTER FOR
DEMOCRACY AND
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

The **Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement (CDCE)** educates, informs, and engages citizens and scholars in order to improve democratic governance. CDCE does so by partnering with organizations to bridge the gap between academic research and practical solutions to problems related to the role of government and its citizens as equal partners. CDCE is working to mobilize the entire UMD community to strengthen democracy and is housed in the **Department of Government and Politics** in the **College of Behavioral and Social Sciences** at the **University of Maryland**.

About the Panels

Welcome and Opening Keynote

10:00–11:00am



Chairwoman Christy McCormick
U.S. Election
Assistance Commission



Antoine Banks
Department Chair of Government
and Politics, University of Maryland

Presentation – Professional Sports Stadiums and Arenas as Polling Places

The COVID-19 pandemic created a variety of challenges for election officials and voters. During the 2020 elections, election officials and 48 MLB, MLS, NBA, NFL, and NHL franchises responded to the urgent need for safe voting by partnering to turn stadiums and arenas into early and Election Day voting centers. The Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement (CDCE), along with scholars at four other universities, explored this unprecedented challenge. Our key findings are:

- Stadium and arena voting is not a partisan issue
- Sports facilities are effective locations for safe and efficient voting
- Voters, election officials, and teams enjoyed the experience



Presenter

Michael Hanmer, CDCE Director and Professor in
the Department of Government and Politics (GVPT)

Dr. Michael Hanmer joined the faculty in the Department of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland in the Fall of 2007. He is currently a Professor in GVPT and Director of the Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement. Dr. Hanmer specializes in American politics, with an emphasis on voting rights, civic engagement, and public opinion, and political methodology. His book, *Discount Voting: Voter Registration Reforms and Their Effects* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), investigates the effects of registration laws on turnout, the composition of the electorate, and party behavior in the United States. He is co-author of *Citizens of the World: Political Engagement and Policy Attitudes of Millennials across the Globe* (Oxford University Press, 2023), *Voting Technology: The Not-So-Simple Act of Casting a Ballot* (Brookings Institution Press, 2008).

Help America Vote Day



Benjamin Hovland, Vice Chair, U.S. Election Assistance Commission

Panel 1 – Cutting Through the Noise: Communicating About Elections in a Presidential Election Year

11:00am - 12:15pm



Moderator

Donald Palmer, Commissioner, U.S. Election Assistance Commission

Commissioner Donald Palmer serves on the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) after being nominated and approved by unanimous consent in 2019. He served as the Chairman of the Commission in 2021. He is currently the Designated Federal Officer for the EAC Board of Advisors. Before the EAC, he served as a Bipartisan Policy Center Fellow, advancing the recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration. Mr. Palmer is a former Secretary of the Virginia State Board of Elections and served as the Commonwealth's Chief Election Official from 2011 to 2014. During that time, Palmer established Virginia as a founding member of the Election Registration Information Center (ERIC), a group of states working together to maintain the accuracy of voter registration rolls. Mr. Palmer has also served as Florida's Director of Elections, where he expanded the Florida voting system state certification program and modernized the state's voting machines. Prior to his work in election administration, he served as a trial attorney with the Voting Section in the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, where he enforced the nation's voting laws. Finally, Palmer is a military veteran, retiring from the U.S. Navy after two decades as an intelligence officer and judge advocate general.



Secretary Gregg Amore, Rhode Island

Secretary of State Gregg M. Amore is a proud lifelong resident of East Providence, where he has been a teacher, coach, and community volunteer for over thirty years. Amore was elected in November of 2022 and sworn into office on January 3, 2023 as the thirtieth Rhode Island Secretary of State. Prior to serving as Secretary of State, Amore taught history, civics, and government courses at East Providence High School for twenty-seven years until becoming the East Providence School District Athletic Administrator in 2017. Amore was elected as a State Representative in 2012 and served the residents of East Providence for ten years.

During his time in office, he served as a Deputy Majority Leader, chairman of the House Committee on Small Business, chairman of the House Finance Subcommittee on Education, and second vice chair of the House Committee on Education. He is widely credited with advancing the House of Representatives' education agenda, which included key education reform legislation related to curriculum and site based management, as well as championing efforts to significantly increase English Language Learner categorical funding, school construction initiatives, the retention and recruitment of teachers of color, and making college more affordable for Rhode Islanders. Amore earned a bachelor's degree in history from Providence College in 1988 and a master's degree in public policy from New England College in 2010.



Jennifer Scutchfield, Kentucky Assistant Secretary of State

Jennifer Schwartz Scutchfield currently serves as Assistant Secretary of State and General Counsel for Michael G. Adams, Kentucky's Secretary of State. Jenni was appointed to the position on January 6, 2020. By statute, in the absence or disability of the Secretary of State, she may conduct the business of the Office.

Jenni has served on the EAC Standards Board, Government Coordinating Counsel Working Groups, Ballot Integrity Task Force, Overseas Voting Initiative and been a member of NASED, NASS and Election Center. Prior to her appointment by the Secretary of State, she served as Assistant Director and General Counsel for the Kentucky State Board of Elections. She previously was the 7th District Council Member in Lexington and was in private law practice. Jenni has worked for non-profits and educational institutions and has served as an Assistant County Attorney. Jenni attended the University of Kentucky where she received both her Bachelors of Arts in Psychology and Juris Doctorate.



Brianna Lennon, County Clerk, Boone County, Missouri

Brianna L. Lennon was elected as Boone County Clerk in November 2018, and sworn into office on December 31st, 2018. The County Clerk is a county-wide official, elected to a four-year term during midterm election years.

Brianna is a graduate of Truman State University and holds a Master's in Public Policy and a law degree, both from the University of Missouri. Prior to her election as Boone County Clerk, Brianna served as an Assistant Attorney General in the Consumer Protection Division of the Missouri Attorney General's Office before joining the Missouri Secretary of State's Office under former Secretary Jason Kander. As the Deputy Director of Elections and first coordinator of the Election Integrity Unit in the Secretary of State's Office, she worked closely with local election authorities across the state to ensure that elections were simple, secure, and accessible for voters.



Heider Garcia, Elections Administrator, Dallas County, Texas

Heider Garcia is the Elections Administrator for Dallas County, Texas, where he oversees planning and execution of an annual budget of USD 15M, serving 1.4 million voters and running almost 450 polling places every year. Prior to that, Heider was a Senior Election Subject Matter Expert for the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. He also served as the Election Administrator in Tarrant County, Texas, for over five (5) years. In 2023, the Texas House of Representatives passed Resolution 1608 Honoring Heider Garcia for his service as Tarrant County elections administrator.

Before working in the public sector, Heider worked in the private sector developing election technology and deploying it around the world. In that role, he was responsible for designing election technology, customizing it to ensure compliance with local legislation and successful deployment and execution of the final products. Heider holds a BS in Computer Engineering, is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP)[®] and a CERA Graduate from the Election Center.

Panel 2 – Serving All Voters

1:30 - 2:45pm



Moderator

Benjamin Hovland, Vice Chair, U.S. Election Assistance Commission

Benjamin Hovland was confirmed by unanimous consent of the United States Senate on January 2, 2019, to serve on the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC). In 2020, Commissioner Hovland served as EAC Chairman and helped lead the agency during an election year with unprecedented challenges. Under his leadership, the EAC administered nearly \$825 million in federal grant money to help election officials respond to the pandemic and enhance election security. During his time as chair, the agency launched National Poll Worker Recruitment Day to address the shortage in poll workers due to the pandemic and the EAC adopted a new version of the Voluntary Voting System Guidelines (VVSG).

Prior to joining the EAC, he served as Acting Chief Counsel for the U.S. Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, and earlier in his career, was the Deputy General Counsel for the Missouri Secretary of State's office.



Secretary Steve Hobbs, Washington

Steve Hobbs is Washington's 16th Secretary of State. He began his tenure in 2021 and was elected by the people of Washington in 2022. Secretary Hobbs leads one of Washington's most diverse state government offices, which is responsible for managing state and local elections, corporation and charity filings, Washington State Library, Washington Talking Book & Braille Library, and Washington State Archives. In addition, his office oversees the Combined Fund Drive for charitable giving by state employees and administers the state's Address Confidentiality Program to help protect survivors of crime. When Secretary Hobbs assumed office, he prioritized greater election security, countering misleading and harmful election disinformation, and expanded voter education and outreach.

In addition, he pledged to preserve Washington's unique and rich history by enhancing the State Archives' and State Library's capacity and ability to store and share state documents and other records. Prior to becoming Secretary of State, Hobbs was the state senator for Washington's 44th legislative district from 2006 to 2021. During his tenure, he served on numerous committees, including the Transportation Committee as chair. Secretary Hobbs enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1987 as a private and rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel with the Washington Army National Guard. He received an associate degree from Everett Community College and bachelor's and master's degrees in political science and public administration, respectively, from the University of Washington.



Monica Evans, Executive Director, District of Columbia Board of Elections

Monica Holman Evans is the Executive Director of the DC Board of Elections (DCBOE) and the Chief Election Official in the District of Columbia. She oversees elections operations and previously served at DCBOE's Senior Policy Advisor. As the Senior Policy Advisor, she provided direct oversight over the Voter Education and Outreach and Election Worker Divisions. Before joining BOE, Ms. Evans was a Supervisory Financial Management Specialist with the Administration of Children and Families (ACF), a division of Health and Human Services.

Ms. Evans also worked at the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) where she served as the Director of Grants Management. She provided oversight responsibilities for the Office of Grants Management and Payments. She worked with EAC officials and grant recipients to encourage sound program administration and to enforce program and financial compliance with the provisions of the Help America Vote Act, Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance, EAC policies, and recipient agreements and plans. Ms. Evans earned a BA from the University of Virginia and a JD from the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law.



Carly Koppes, Clerk and Recorder, Weld County, Colorado

She graduated from Greeley West High School in Greeley, Colorado and attended Aims Community College in Greeley. Carly attended Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado with an emphasis on Political Science and Organizational Leadership. Carly is continuing her education with plans to obtain her law degree. Carly has been working in the Weld County Clerk and Recorder's office for nineteen years starting in June of 2004. Her main department was the Election department, but she has also worked in the Recording and Motor Vehicle departments during her time working for the Clerk and Recorder office. She received her Colorado Election Official Certification from the Colorado Secretary of State in October 2007 and finished up her national designation of Certified Elections/Registration Administrators (CERA) through the Elections Center's Professional Education Program at Auburn University in July of 2014.

Carly is a 2016 graduate of the Leadership Program of the Rockies and in 2019 she received her Public Leadership certification from Pepperdine University through the International Association of Government Officials. Carly was also honored along with the Colorado County Clerks Association to receive the Defender of Democracy Award from The Center for Election Innovation and Research in 2022. Carly is the youngest person to be elected to the position of Weld County Clerk and Recorder. Carly is currently serving as the Past President for the Colorado County Clerks Association.



Sam Novey, Chief Strategist, Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement, University of Maryland

Sam Novey is the Chief Strategist at the University of Maryland Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement and Secretary of the Baltimore City Board of Elections. In addition to his work on numerous civic engagement initiatives, Sam is a co-founder and executive committee member of the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition, the nation's largest non-partisan network and strategy hub working to increase college student voting rates.

Panel 3 – Confidence In Elections And Election Security

2:45 - 4:00 pm



Moderator

Christy McCormick, Commissioner, U.S. Election Assistance Commission

Christy McCormick was nominated by President Barack Obama and confirmed by unanimous consent of the United States Senate on December 16, 2014, to serve on the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC). She has since three times served as Chair of the Commission. Prior to her appointment with the EAC, Commissioner McCormick served as a Senior Trial Attorney in the Voting Section of the Civil Rights Division at the Department of Justice, a position she held from 2006 until joining the Commission. In that role, Ms. McCormick was responsible for investigating and prosecuting violations of federal voting statutes. Ms. McCormick was detailed by the Deputy Attorney General to be Senior Attorney Advisor and Acting Deputy Rule of Law Coordinator at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq from 2009 to 2010, where she worked as the U.S. elections expert overseeing the Iraq national elections (including an extensive election re-count), as well as on numerous U.S. and coalition Rule of Law efforts.

Before joining the Department of Justice, Ms. McCormick served as a Judicial Clerk to the Honorable Elizabeth A. McClanahan in the Court of Appeals of Virginia from 2003 to 2006. Ms. McCormick was an Assistant Attorney General and Assistant to the Solicitor General in the Office of the Attorney General of Virginia from 2001 to 2003. She has worked in elections for almost 30 years, including as a local assistant voter registrar in two states. Ms. McCormick received her B.A. from the University of Buffalo, a J.D. with honors from the George Mason University School of Law (now Antonin Scalia Law School), and also attended the William & Mary School of Law.



Brendan Donahue, Assistant Inspector in Charge, United States Postal Inspection Service (USPIS)

Inspector Donahue serves as an Assistant Inspector in Charge for the Inspection Service's National Headquarters' Criminal Investigations Group. Inspector Donahue began his career as a Postal Inspector in 2012 in the Boston Division, Albany, New York Field Office. As a field Postal Inspector, Inspector Donahue's investigations focused in large part on transnational organized crime, mass marketing fraud, elder financial exploitation, international money laundering, and public corruption. In 2022, Inspector Donahue was promoted to the position of Assistant Inspector in Charge of the National Headquarters' Criminal Investigations Group which has national oversight and strategic direction for a number of investigative programs including the Inspection Service's Mail Fraud Program, Anti-Money Laundering Program, Mail Theft/Identity Theft Program, Child Exploitation Program, and Violent Crimes Program.

Inspector Donahue also provides national oversight of and strategic leadership for the Inspection Service's investigation of election offense allegations pertaining to the U.S. Mail and also the Inspection Service's national security engagements on U.S. elections. Prior to Inspector Donahue's promotion, he served in a number of other positions including as the Inspection Service's Mail Fraud Program Manager and Acting Team Leader for the Inspection Service's Department of Justice (DOJ) Transnational Elder Fraud Strike Force Team, which is embedded at DOJ in its Consumer Protection Branch. Prior to Inspector Donahue's career with the Inspection Service, he served as a police officer in Massachusetts. Inspector Donahue is a graduate of Holy Cross College in Worcester, Massachusetts.



Christina Worrell Adkins, Director of Elections, Texas

Christina Worrell Adkins is the Director of Elections for the Texas Secretary of State. While at the Secretary of State's office, Ms. Adkins previously served as the Legal Director, overseeing the legal and training teams, and has also served as one of the state's appointed voting systems examiners. She has worked extensively with election technology issues and in advising local election officials, candidates, and the general public on Texas Election law. Ms. Adkins has practiced in both civil and criminal law and has previously worked for the Texas Workforce Commission and as the assistant to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. Ms. Adkins graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with a degree in English and Mexican-American Studies. She received her juris doctorate from Southern Methodist University in 2008.



Sherry Poland, Director, Hamilton County Board of Elections, Ohio

Sherry Poland was appointed Director of the Hamilton County Board of Elections in June of 2014. She began her career with the board in March of 2004. Prior to being appointed Director, she served as the board's Operations Administrator. She is responsible for administering all local, state, and federal elections that occur in Hamilton County, along with the day-to-day operations of the board. During Ms. Poland's tenure as Director, the Hamilton County Board of Elections has been recognized nationally for innovation, efficiency, and transparency in elections.

Ms. Poland currently serves as Immediate Past President of the Ohio Association of Election Officials, is a member of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission's (EAC) Local Leadership Council and is a member of the Bipartisan Policy Center's Task Force on Elections. She earned her Certified Election/Registration Administrator certification from Auburn University and her Ohio Registered Election Official certification from The Ohio State University. She is a graduate of Mount St. Joseph University. She and her husband live in Cincinnati and have two daughters.



Mark Earley, Supervisor of Elections, Leon County, Florida

Mark Earley has been working in service of the voters of Leon County for over 30 years. He was first elected Supervisor of Elections in 2016 following the retirement of his mentor, former Supervisor Ion Sancho. Mark is responsible for the conduct of elections in Leon County and works closely with other local, state, and federal agencies to protect the right of every voter to cast their ballot and have it counted accurately and securely. In addition to his elected office, Mark serves as the immediate Past President of the Florida Supervisors of Elections, Inc., the state association for Florida's Supervisors of Elections. In addition, he serves as the Vice-Chair of the association's Cybersecurity Committee and is a member of its Legislative Fast Response Team, where he advocates for legislation that benefits Florida voters.

At the federal level, Mark serves on the Executive Committees of both the Elections Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center (EI-ISAC) and the Local Leadership Council of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC). He also serves as a representative of the Election Center on the United States Postal Service Mailers' Technical Advisory Committee. Mark has earned both state and national certifications in the field of election administration as a Master Florida Certified Elections Professional and a Certified Elections Registration Administrator. He holds a Mechanical Engineering degree from the Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University at Florida State University College of Engineering. During his years of service, Mark has been integral to the development of new election systems, processes, and standards that have become the norm across Florida and the nation, including a lead role in developing a post-election audit system which provides an unprecedented level of transparency, security, and validation for elections. He was inducted into the Election Center's National Hall of Fame in August of 2023.

Panel 4 – Challenges for New Election Officials

4:15 - 5:30 pm



Moderator

Thomas Hicks, Commissioner, U.S. Election Assistance Commission

Thomas Hicks was confirmed by unanimous consent of the United States Senate on December 16, 2014, to serve on the U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC). Mr. Hicks has focused on increasing youth engagement with the voting process and frequently speaks at conferences on issues such as cybersecurity, election official safety, and voter access. Under his leadership, the EAC developed a pocket-sized voter card that serves as a guide on voting rights for voters with disabilities.

Prior to his appointment with the EAC, he served on the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on House Administration from 2003 to 2014. In this role, he was responsible for issues relating to campaign finance, election reform, contested elections, and oversight of both the EAC and the Federal Election Commission. Mr. Hicks recently completed the Election Center and Auburn University's Certified Elections/Registration Administrator (CERA) program. He received his J.D. from the Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law, and his B.A. in Government from Clark University (Worcester, Massachusetts).



Secretary Francisco Aguilar, Nevada

Francisco "Cisco" Aguilar was elected as Nevada Secretary of State in 2022 and assumed office on January 2, 2023. Prior to being elected, Secretary Aguilar served twelve years as General Counsel for Agassi Graf, the management company for Andre Agassi and Stefanie Graf, and the Andre Agassi Foundation for Education. In this role, he was responsible for communications and media, marketing and brand management, strategic partnerships, legal and government affairs. The Secretary also served as Special Counsel to the Chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education, Jim Rogers, and as a lawyer for the parent company of the Las Vegas and Reno NBC affiliates, KSNV Channel 3 and KRNV Channel 4, and 15 other NBC affiliates.

The Secretary combined his expertise in business and sports to launch a sports technology startup company, Blueprint Sports & Entertainment, connecting athletes and brands where they live and play. In recent years, Secretary Aguilar spent a year working at Adidas Global Headquarters in Herzogenaurach, Germany as a member of the Brand Sustainability team through a transatlantic Fellowship with the Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH. Secretary Aguilar graduated from the University of Arizona with a Bachelor of Science degree in finance and accounting, an MBA and Juris Doctor. Secretary Aguilar is a member of the Nevada, California, and Arizona Bars.



Timothy DeCarlo, Registrar of Voters, Waterbury, Connecticut

Timothy T. De Carlo is the Republican Registrar of Voters for the City of Waterbury, the 5th largest city in the state of Connecticut. In his role as Registrar, he administers federal, state, and municipal elections for over 110,000 eligible citizens. He was re-elected to his fifth term as Registrar of Voters in November of 2020. In 2015, Tim was appointed by former Secretary of the State Denise W. Merrill as Connecticut’s local election official to the Standards Board of the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) and served two consecutive terms. In 2021, Tim was appointed to the newly established Local Leadership Council of the EAC, which is comprised of 100 local election officials from all 50 states. In 2022, he was re-appointed to a third nonconsecutive term on the Standards Board by Connecticut Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas.

Tim also serves as the New Haven County Chairman and the Vice Chairman of the Legislative Committee of the Registrar of Voters Association of Connecticut. Tim is currently serving in the temporary role as the Election Monitor for the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut. Tim has a Bachelor of Science in political science from Southern Connecticut State University. He resides in Waterbury, Connecticut.



Alysoun McLaughlin, former Deputy Election Director, Montgomery County, Maryland

Alysoun McLaughlin recently left the Board of Elections for Montgomery County, Maryland, where she served as Deputy Election Director for more than a decade, and as Acting Election Director for the 2022 election cycle. She previously served as the spokesperson and manager of voter outreach and training for the District of Columbia Board of Elections, for a combined 14 years in election administration. Earlier in her career, Alysoun was a lobbyist for state and local government officials on Capitol Hill, and a project manager for election initiatives at the Pew Charitable Trusts. She holds a bachelor’s degree in Political Science from the Johns Hopkins University and a master’s degree in Political Management from the George Washington University.

Closing Remarks

5:30 pm



Chairwoman Christy McCormick, U.S. Election Assistance Commission



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