

2022 SAFSF POLICY CONVENING: COMMIT TO ACTION

Speaker Bios

Monday – Convening Opening Remarks & Welcome Speakers

Senator Corey Booker, U.S. Senator (D-NJ), was born in 1969 in Washington, D.C., and grew up in Harrington Park, New Jersey. He attended Stanford University on a varsity football scholarship, receiving a B.A. in 1991 and an M.A. in 1992. Booker was a Rhodes Scholar at the University of Oxford, where he earned a graduate degree in history in 1994. He then attended Yale Law School, graduating with a J.D. in 1997. After completing his education, Booker moved into a public housing project in Newark, New Jersey, became a tenant organizer, and founded a nonprofit that provided legal assistance to low-income families. He was elected to the Newark City Council in 1998 and served there until 2002, when he ran unsuccessfully for mayor. The same year, he became a partner at Booker, Rabinowitz, Trenk, Lubetkin, Tully, DiPasquale & Webster. In 2006, Booker ran again for mayor of Newark and was elected with 72% of the vote. He served as mayor until 2013. On October 16, 2013, Booker won a special election to the U.S. Senate after the death of Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D). Booker was re-elected to the U.S. Senate on November 4, 2014.

Dr. Jewel H. Bronaugh, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, was appointed the 16th Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services in 2018 by Governor Ralph Northam. She previously served as the Virginia State Executive Director for the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), appointed by Governor Terry McAuliffe and then-U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, in July 2015. Prior to her FSA appointment, she served as Dean of the College of Agriculture at Virginia State University (VSU) with oversight of Extension, Research and Academic Programs. Previously she was the Associate Administrator for Extension Programs and a 4-H Extension Specialist. In spring 2019, Dr. Bronaugh launched the Virginia Farmer Stress Task Force to raise awareness and coordinate resources to address farmer stress and mental health challenges in Virginia. In the fall of 2020, she helped establish the Virginia Food Access Investment Fund and Program, the first statewide program of its kind to address food access within historically marginalized communities. Dr. Bronaugh received her Ph.D. in Career and Technical Education from Virginia Tech. She is passionate about the advancement of youth leadership in agriculture. Dr. Bronaugh is from Petersburg, Virginia. She is married to Cleavon, a retired United States Army Veteran.

Tuesday - Keynote Speakers

Jonathan Coppess, Assistant Professor and Director, Gardner Agriculture Policy Program at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, author of *THE FAULT LINES OF FARM POLICY: A LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE FARM BILL*. Previously, he served as Chief Counsel for the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, Administrator of the Farm Service Agency at USDA and Legislative Assistant to Senator Ben Nelson. Jonathan grew up on his family's farm in Western Ohio, earned his Bachelors from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio and his Juris Doctor from The George Washington University Law School in Washington, DC.

Reverend Dr. Heber Brown, Founder of Black Church Food Security Network, is a community organizer, beginner farmer, social entrepreneur and Senior Pastor of Pleasant Hope Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland. For nearly two decades, Dr. Brown has demonstrated a deep commitment to and advocacy on a myriad of social justice concerns at every level of government, business, and at the grassroots level as well. He is a catalyst for social change who believes that systemic problems need systemic solutions. Toward that end, in 2015 in the midst of the Baltimore Uprising which sparked after the death of Freddie Gray, he launched the Black Church Food Security Network which combats food apartheid by providing seed funding and support to help congregations begin growing food on church-owned land. The Network also works to partner Black Churches and Black Farmers in the Mid-Atlantic region in an effort to create a community-controlled, alternative food system based on self-sufficiency and Black food and land sovereignty. He earned his B.S. degree in Psychology from Morgan State University, a Master of Divinity degree from Virginia Union University and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Wesley Theological Seminary.

Funder Moderator: **A-dae Romero-Briones (Kiowa/Cochiti), Director of Programs, Native Food and Agriculture Program for First Nations Development Institute**, was born and raised in Cochiti Pueblo, New Mexico and comes from the Toyekoyah/Komalty Family from Hog Creek, Oklahoma on the Kiowa side. Mrs. Romero-Briones works as Director of Programs-Native food and Agricultural Program for First Nations Development Institute and Co-founder/director of the California Tribal Fund. She is formerly the Director of Community Development for Pulama Lana'i. She is also the co-founder and former Executive Director of non-profit for Cochiti Pueblo, New Mexico. Mrs. Romero-Briones worked for the University of Arkansas' Indigenous Food and Agricultural Initiative while she was getting her LLM in Food and Agricultural Law. She wrote extensively about Food Safety, the Produce Safety rule and tribes, and the protection of tribal traditional foods. A U.S. Fulbright Scholar, Ms. Romero-Briones received her Bachelor of Arts in Public Policy from Princeton University, and received a Juris Doctorate from Arizona State University's College of Law, and LLM in Food and Agricultural Law from the University of Arkansas. President Obama recognized A-dae as a White House Champion of Change in Agriculture. She formerly sat on the National Organic Standards Board (2016-2021) and the Sustainable Ag and Food Systems Funders Policy Committee and a steering committee member for the Funders for Regenerative Agriculture. She is a member of the California Foodshed Funders group and board member at the California Institute for Rural Studies.

Tuesday - Plenary Panel Discussion Speakers

Eric Deeble, Policy Director with National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC). Prior to his time at NSAC, he worked as a Senior Policy Advisor for Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) where he covered the agriculture, nutrition, arts, and space portfolios. His commitment to sustainable, equitable, and just food systems comes from his time working as a large animal veterinarian with farmers, ranchers, dairy producers and the people who make sure the food they produce is safe, affordable, and available to everyone in their own community. Prior to his veterinary career, he worked in the not-for-profit sector ensuring safe housing conditions for elderly and disabled persons.

Martin Lemos, Co-Executive Director with National Young Farmers Coalition. The National Young Farmers Coalition is a coalition of farmers and ranchers with a mission to shift power and change policy to equitably resource a new generation of working farmers. Martín farmed for five years in New Mexico, Oregon, and Massachusetts before managing a 50-acre organic vegetable farm in Illinois for four years. He continued his agricultural career as an agronomist, community organizer, and sustainability consultant. As an agronomist for AgDevCo, an impact investment organization, he directed a nationwide on-farm research program in Ghana and supported the deployment of a \$50M SME catalytic fund and two projects in collaboration with the World Bank. He returned to the U.S. to earn an MBA while working full-time within a community organization in the Cypress Hills neighborhood of Brooklyn, NY to establish five new community gardens and organize neighbors to fight against inequitable affordable housing policy. He then worked for a corporate sustainability organization, BSR, to advise companies on supply chain and financing practices to respect human rights principles and work in service of an inclusive and climate-resilient economy. He is a fellow in the inaugural cohort of the Castanea Fellowship.

Lexie Holden, Associate Director of Policy and Government Relations for Intertribal Agricultural Council. Her work centers on uplifting the needs of Native American producers and Tribal communities, ensuring that their voices have a seat at the table in national policy. She also leads the Native Farm Bill Coalition, a group of more than 170 Tribal Nations, as well as Native, Intertribal, and allied organizations, all working to advance the policy priorities of Indian Country through the federal farm bill. She is a citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, a graduate of the University of Chicago, and an alum of the 27th Class of Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellows.

V. Quevedo, Policy Director with La Semilla Food Center, advocates for anti-racist policies that invest in BIPOC farmers and communities, provide living wages and safe workplaces for all food system workers, advance a just transition from extractive industries. At the root of their work is the understanding that Black and Indigenous leadership is necessary for transforming the food system from one dependent on racism and extraction to one that nourishes our communities without harming

people or the earth. They are currently part of the effort to establish an equity and justice-based Healthy Food Financing Initiative in New Mexico to invest in food sovereignty, land access, local food system infrastructure, and a just economic transition.

Sarah Miller, Executive Director and Founder of the American Economic Liberties Project. Recognized by The New York Times as being “central to making the issue [of antitrust] prominent” and “a thorn in Silicon Valley’s side,” she leads the organization’s mission and strategy to advance a policy agenda to broadly distribute economic power and address systemic corporate concentration. Since launching in 2020, Economic Liberties has quickly become a hub for anti-monopoly expertise and advocacy, and has anchored new action-oriented programs focused on protecting states and communities, national security, and entrepreneurs and smaller businesses from corporate power. Sarah has been profiled in The New York Times and The Washingtonian, published articles in Democracy Journal, Buzzfeed, and The Guardian, and is regularly quoted in national media. Sarah is also a regular advisor to policymakers, serving on President Joe Biden’s transition team and, prior to launching Economic Liberties, as the Deputy Director of the Open Markets Institute. During the Obama administration, she worked as an advisor to the leadership of the Treasury Department and the Center for American Progress, and helped launch and lead the Washington Center for Equitable Growth. In addition to her government service and non-profit work, Sarah has served in senior leadership roles on national political campaigns, first as Deputy Economic Policy Director for Hillary Clinton’s 2008 bid and later as Policy Director for Martin O’Malley’s primary run. Sarah graduated from the University of Chicago with honors and originally hails from Muskogee, Oklahoma.

Dãnia Davy, Director of Land Retention and Advocacy at the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, which is the largest and oldest cooperatively-owned organization whose membership includes black farmers, landowners and cooperatives. After double concentrating in Community Health and Africana Studies at Brown University, she earned her J.D. at University of Virginia School of Law. Dãnia has written extensively on heir property, Black land loss, racial disparities in maternal mortality, racial disparities in the criminalization of mothers, and disparities in healthy food access for low-income and communities of color. Dãnia began her legal career as a Skadden Fellow at the NCABL Land Loss Prevention Project implementing a project she designed which provided community education and estate planning services to improve Black farmers' access to legal services in the rural South. She developed the documentary - "Our Land, Our Lives: The North Carolina Black Farmers' Experience" and served on the inaugural North Carolina Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council. She has lectured and facilitated workshops at conferences on the local, state and national level on equity issues facing rural, Black America.

Moderator: **Ellyn Ferguson, Reporter with CQ Roll Call**, has covered Congress, agriculture, and related issues for nearly 30 years in some form or fashion. She joined CQ Roll Call as a policy reporter in 2009 after serving as a Washington-based regional reporter for Gannett-owned papers beyond the Beltway for nearly 20 years. Ellyn grew up mostly in the South and graduated from the University of Florida.

Over the years, she worked for several papers in Florida, including the Miami Herald, before coming to Washington. As a child, she liked mythology because the multi-layered stories people spun sought to explain human nature and the way of the world; she thinks that was good preparation for covering Congress. To Ellyn, covering the federal legislative process is like peeling back the layers of grand and not-so-grand stories about policy, bills and people.

Tuesday – Remarks by Representative Spanberger

Representative Abigail Spanberger

U.S. Representative Abigail Spanberger is proud to represent Virginia's Seventh Congressional District, which is comprised of ten counties throughout Central Virginia. Representative Spanberger began her career in public service, first serving as a federal agent with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service investigating money laundering and narcotics cases, and then serving as a case officer with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). As a CIA officer, she worked at home and abroad to collect vital intelligence, keep our country safe, and work in furtherance of our national security priorities. In the private sector, Representative Spanberger worked with colleges and universities to help them diversify their student bodies and increase graduation rates. Representative Spanberger serves on the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture and the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs. On the House Agriculture Committee, she serves as Chair of the Conservation & Forestry Subcommittee and as a member of the Livestock and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee. And on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Representative Spanberger serves as Vice-Chair of the Europe, Energy, the Environment, & Cyber Subcommittee and as a member of the Asia, the Pacific, Central Asia, & Nonproliferation Subcommittee. Representative Spanberger grew up in Henrico County. She earned her B.A. at the University of Virginia and her MBA at a dual degree program between Purdue University's Krannert School and the GISMA Business School in Hanover, Germany. Representative Spanberger resides in Glen Allen, Henrico County, Virginia with her husband, Adam, and their three children.

Wednesday – Funder Only Strategy Session Facilitators

Mark Muller, Executive Director of Regenerative Agriculture Foundation, came to RAF in March 2020 after spending over 20 years working on related issues including agricultural conservation, Midwest water quality, racial equity in the food system, and effective federal food and agricultural policy. Most recently Mark served as director of the Mississippi River program at the McKnight Foundation, and prior to that he directed the Food & Community Fellows program at the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy. He also spent two years teaching high school in New York City and 18 months volunteering in Honduras and Guatemala. He and his spouse and three children live in south Minneapolis.

Olivia Watkins, Co-Founder and President of Black Farmer Fund, is a social entrepreneur and impact investor. For the past seven years she has financed, developed, and operated environmental and social

projects across the US. She currently serves as a co-founder and President of Black Farmer Fund, a non-profit impact investing organization creating sustainable and equitable food systems by investing in black farmers and food businesses of NY. She also serves as a board member for Soul Fire Farm Institute and just participated in the 2020 SAFSF Cohort. Prior to founding Black Farmer Fund in 2017, Olivia worked in several production roles at Soul Fire Farm Institute and Kahumana Organic Farms, leveraging her environmental biology background to manage and grow environmentally regenerative and socially impactful business operations. Olivia has an MBA from North Carolina State University in Financial Management, and a BA from Barnard College, Columbia University in Environmental Biology. She was also recognized on the 2021 Forbes 30 under 30 Social Impact list and The Grist 50.

Kalila Booker-Cassano, Program Officer with Henry P. Kendall Foundation, manages program strategy, as well as the foundation's grant-making process, and conducts research on key issues and trends. Kalila joined the foundation in 2016 after working as a food educator at Allergic to Salad, a nutrition education nonprofit based in New York City, where she taught after school cooking classes with a focus on seasonal, vegetarian, and culturally diverse food to students of all ages. Kalila previously worked as a research assistant in the Department of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell University, where she provided support on a project that centered on SNAP benefits and the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, as well as a study comparing CSA produce prices to various local supermarkets in the area. Kalila graduated with a B.A. in History and German from Williams College in 2014. She currently serves as a member of the Network Team of Food Solutions New England.

Jen Zuckerman, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Duke World Food Policy Center, comes to the World Food Policy Center after eleven years at the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation. Jen joined the BCBSNC Foundation in June 2006, where for ten years she served as the Senior Program Officer for Healthy Living, focusing on increasing access to safe active environments and on providing sources for healthy, locally sourced food, with a commitment to early childhood development and food systems. In her most recent role with the Foundation, she served as the Director of Strategic Partnerships, which focused on spread and scale of best practice in healthy living initiated in North Carolina as well as bringing resources outside of North Carolina into the state for the benefit of improving the health and well being of North Carolinians. Prior to the Foundation, Jen administered federal and state grants at NC State University's Recreation Resources Service where she worked with parks and recreation agencies across the state to help develop partnerships for the benefit of community health. Jen's has also worked in a cross section of North Carolina nonprofits. She currently serves as the Chair of the Center for Environmental Farming Systems Advisory Board, Vice-Chair of the National Academies of Medicine Early Childhood Innovation Collaborative, co-chair of the Steering Committee of the Sustainable Agriculture and Food System Funders Network and on the Board of Directors of the Triangle Land Conservancy and Jamie Kirk Hahn Foundation. Jen has also served on the Steering Committee for the North Carolina Institute of Medicine Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Task Force and the Statewide Prevention Task Force. She earned her undergraduate and master's degrees from NC State University in Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management.

Wednesday – Funding Farm Bill Advocacy Speakers

Abby Levine, Director of Bolder Advocacy Program with Alliance for Justice. For more than 17 years, she has worked hand in hand with thousands of nonprofits and foundations across the country, providing customized training, coaching, written resources, and technical assistance—all with the goal of supporting organizations to be strategic, bold, courageous, and legally compliant advocates. Abby's expertise focuses on lobbying, election-related activities, ballot measures, grantmaking, and other advocacy strategies for 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) organizations. Previously, Abby served as the Public Policy Analyst at the National Council of Nonprofit Associations and was an associate in the tax department at Squire, Sanders & Dempsey in Cleveland, Ohio. She has a law degree from Case Western Reserve University School of Law and a B.A. from American University. Abby proudly serves on the board of directors of Opportunity Action, The Keegan Theatre, and Friends of Guest House.

Ann Mills, Executive Director of the Agua Fund, a Washington DC-based foundation that supports work to protect the environment, boost civic engagement and help the disadvantaged and underserved. She previously served as the U.S. Department of Agriculture Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment from 2009 to January 20, 2017 where she had responsibility for the Natural Resources Conservation Service. She co-chaired of the federal National Drought Resilience Partnership and represented USDA on the Obama Administration's ecosystem restoration initiatives including those in the Chesapeake Bay Basin, Great Lakes, Mississippi River Basin, and California Bay-Delta. She also served as Secretary Tom Vilsack's designee to the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council and the Natural Resources Damage Assessment Trustee Council for the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. Ann also has held senior positions at American Rivers, and served as chief of staff to Senator Tom Daschle, legislative assistant to then-Representative Richard Durbin and chief of staff to California Lt. Governor Leo McCarthy. She earned a BA in Political Science from Tufts University and a Master of Public Administration from the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin.

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March 7-9 Virtual Hill & USDA Meetings

Day and Time Coming Soon – Hill & USDA Orientation Training Speakers

Sarah Hackney, Coalition Director with National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, has served as the Coalition Director for the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition since 2019. At NSAC she oversees NSAC's strategic direction, fundraising, coalition management, and capacity-building. Previously, she served as NSAC's Grassroots Director for nearly 8 years, working with coalition members and allies to organize grassroots food and farm voices nationwide around federal farm and food policy reform. She has helped empower thousands of grassroots farm and food advocates nationwide over multiple farm bill cycles through lobby days, advocacy training, and nationally coordinated organizing campaigns. Before joining NSAC she led a community-based nonprofit working to improve small farm viability, increase fresh food access, and build leadership in rural communities in Oregon and Washington State. Raised in rural Florida farm country, she grew up helping tend cattle and citrus groves and is an enthusiastic gardener from her home in Washington, DC. Sarah holds a B.A. in Environmental Studies from Dartmouth College.

Kate Fitzgerald, Principal with Fitzgerald - Canepa, Kate Fitzgerald works on policy that links family farms with consumers to achieve better health, economic opportunity, and community sustainability. Based in Texas for 25 years, she has worked in Washington, DC since 2009, concentrating on farm bill policy and helping USDA implement food and farm programs.

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