

Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort | Honolulu, HI | March 24-26, 2022**BIOGRAPHIES****Jackson Brainerd**, program principal, Fiscal Affairs Program, NCSL

Jackson Brainerd is a program principal with NCSL's Fiscal Affairs Program, which provides state legislators and staff with outreach and policy analysis on a wide range of state fiscal issues. In this capacity, he oversees state tax and economic development policy and has authored many articles and publications on these subjects. He also staffs NCSL's Task Force on State and Local Taxation and its Budgets and Revenue Standing Committee. Jackson graduated from Colorado College with a bachelor's degree in political science.

Jeff Chapman, director, State Fiscal Health, The Pew Charitable Trusts

Jeff Chapman directs Pew's state fiscal health initiative. Through cutting-edge research and customized technical assistance, he and his team help states maintain a balanced budget, prepare for downturns, invest in long-term economic growth, and strengthen local governments. Chapman provides strategic direction, including leading the development of additional innovative solutions for improving fiscal management.

Before coming to Pew, Chapman was research director for the Washington State Budget & Policy Center and was a member of the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors in Washington. Previously, he was an economist with the Economic Policy Institute. Chapman has over 15 years of experience working to improve state and local fiscal and economic policy.

Chapman holds a bachelor's degree in American studies from Oregon State University and a master's degree in public policy from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

Ben Husch, federal affairs advisor, State-Federal Relations, NCSL

Ben Husch serves as the federal affairs advisor for Natural Resources and Infrastructure for NCSL. In this role, he leads NCSL's lobbying and advocacy work on transportation, environment, energy and agriculture issues before both Congress and the administration. He joined NCSL in March 2012 after nearly four years with the National Association of State Budget Officers. He has a master's in public policy from Rutgers University and bachelor's in economics from Wake Forest University.

Emily Maher, senior policy specialist, Fiscal Affairs Program, NCSL

Emily Maher is a senior policy specialist with the Fiscal Affairs Program at NCSL, where she specializes in states budgets, federal stimulus funds, state and local relations and economic development topics. She is a staff liaison to NCSL's Labor and Economic Development Standing Committee and to the Pennsylvania General Assembly. Maher previously served as a nonpartisan policy analyst for the city of Philadelphia. She received her bachelor's degree in political science and international service from American University's School of Public Affairs, where she is also currently pursuing a master's degree in public administration and policy.

Greg Mennis, director, Strengthening Public Sector Retirement Systems, The Pew Charitable Trusts

Greg Mennis directs Pew's work on public sector retirement systems. The project provides cutting-edge research on pension and retiree health promises and helps states and cities undertake evidence-based pension and retiree health care reforms.

Before joining Pew, he was assistant secretary for fiscal policy in the Massachusetts Executive Office for Administration and Finance, where he was responsible for retirement benefits policy, long-term fiscal planning, and the state's Pay for Success financing program. In that role, Mennis led the development of Massachusetts' pension reform legislation and created the state's first long-term fiscal policy framework. He also worked in corporate finance and strategy at Citigroup and J.P. Morgan and as the chief financial officer and executive vice president of corporate development for a market-leading provider of retirement services technology.

Mennis holds a bachelor's degree in finance and public communications from Syracuse University and a master's in public administration from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

Austin Reid, senior legislative director, State-Federal Relations, NCSL

As senior legislative director for education policy, Austin Reid oversees NCSL's federal education policy work, which includes staffing the NCSL Standing Committee on Education and representing NCSL's education interests before Congress and the administration. Prior to joining NCSL, Reid worked in the U.S. Senate and at the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching. He began his career as a high school teacher and has a master's in Education Policy from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Curt Stedron, director, Legislative Training Institute, NCSL

Curt Stedron is the director of NCSL's Legislative Training Institute. He is a West Point graduate who spent 20 years as an award-winning educator and state champion speech and debate coach. Stedron is also a successful entrepreneur, and his company, New Century Modern, has built over 50 custom homes in the Denver area.

Mark Vitner, managing director and senior economist, Wells Fargo Corporate and Investment Banking, Wells Fargo & Company

Mark Vitner is a managing director and senior economist for Wells Fargo's Corporate and Investment Bank, where he is responsible for tracking U.S. and regional economic conditions. He writes for the department's weekly and monthly economic reports and produces regular publications on residential and commercial construction, regional economies and issues affecting small business.

Vitner joined a Wells Fargo predecessor institution in 1993. His commentary has been featured in the New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg and many other publications. He makes frequent guest appearances on CNBC and many other major networks.

Originally from Atlanta, Vitner earned his bachelor's in business administration in economics from the University of Georgia and a master's in business administration from the University of Florida. He has completed further graduate work in economics at the University of Florida.

Bob Zahradnik, principal officer, Fiscal and Economic Policy, The Pew Charitable Trusts

Robert Zahradnik develops innovative engagement strategies, manages partnerships and ensures that the work of all projects across Pew's government performance portfolio is coordinated and collaborative. Zahradnik has extensive experience in state and local fiscal health.

Before joining Pew, Zahradnik worked for the District of Columbia as a manager in the Office of Budget and Planning and then as director of research in the Office of Revenue Analysis, where he managed a research agenda that covered tax, budget and economic policies and practices. He also served as a senior policy analyst with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Zahradnik holds a bachelor's degree in communications from Pennsylvania State University and a master's in public administration from George Washington University.