



The 2015 Fiscal Forum: Presented by the Colorado Fiscal Institute
Friday January 9th, 2015
Colorado Convention Center

Speakers Bio

Guest Speakers:

Kathy Gebhardt, Executive Director, Children's Voices

Kathy Gebhardt's practice is focused exclusively on advocacy to ensure equal access to public education. After practicing law in private firms for nearly 20 years, she founded Children's Voices, Inc. Kathy has handled complex and class action litigation. She was lead co-counsel in *Giardino v. State of Colorado*, which challenged the funding structure for capital construction in Colorado. The settlement of the case led to the Building Excellent Schools Today (B.E.S.T.) legislation. Kathy was one of the lead attorneys on the *Lobato v. State of Colorado* litigation and is currently one of the lead attorneys on the *Dwyer v. State of Colorado* litigation, challenging the constitutionality of the "negative factor." Kathy works closely with education advocacy and policy groups to help educate the public as to the challenges that must be overcome to achieve access to a quality public education.

Kathy is a member of the Board of Directors for Great Education Colorado, Rural Schools and Community Trust, and Colorado Lawyers Committee. She is a member of the BEST board of directors. Kathy is an adjunct professor at the University of Denver Sturm College of Law. She is a fellow with the National Education Policy Center. Kathy received her law degree from the University of Denver College of Law and her bachelor of arts degree from Lewis and Clark College.

Joseph Grady, Ph.D., Principal, Topos Partnership

The Topos Partnership is a communications strategy and research firm that helps nonprofit communicators and advocates engage more effectively with audiences and create more constructive conversation on critical public interest topics. Topos clients include national organizations, foundations, and consortia, working in a wide range of issue areas. Joseph Grady, Ph.D. is a cognitive linguist with particular expertise in metaphorical language and thought. Before co-founding Topos, Grady taught linguistics at Georgetown University and the University of Maryland, and also spent a number of years as a consultant helping to analyze and develop brand names. He received his Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley, and is Senior Fellow for Public Policy at the Pell Center, Salve Regina University.

Natalie Mullis, Chief Economist, Colorado Legislative Council Staff

Natalie Mullis has been one of the Colorado General Assembly's economists since November 1998 and has served as Chief Economist since February 2009. She holds a Masters of Arts and a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Natalie's primary job responsibilities include forecasting the Colorado economy, forecasting state government revenue, analyzing the fiscal impacts of legislative bills, and educating legislators and the public about the Taxpayer's Bill of Rights, Referendum C, and the state budget. Natalie serves on the steering committee for the National Association of Legislative Fiscal Offices. She served on the board of the Denver Association of Business Economists from 2000 through 2013 and contributes yearly to the University Of Colorado Leeds School Of Business Economic Outlook Forum.

Ellen Nissenbaum, Senior Vice President for Government Affairs, Center on Budget & Policy Priorities

In her 30th year as Senior Vice President for Government Affairs for the Center on Budget & Policy Priorities, Ellen directs the Center's work with federal policymakers and with other national, state, and local organizations on a broad range of policy issues. These include federal budget and tax issues, federal policies concerning Medicaid and health care, federal policies affecting state budgets, and other critical policies.

She is regarded as one of the leading legislative directors among non-profit organizations in Washington and frequently is asked to provide support to a number of organizations and coalitions by providing policy assistance, strategic guidance, and communications planning for their legislative activities.

Ellen is frequently sought out by many journalists at respected news outlets covering legislative and budget developments for her analyses and commentary on congressional developments.

Phyllis Resnick, Lead Economist, Colorado Futures Center, Colorado State University

In addition to her position, Resnick is an independent consultant with a practice that focuses on economic forecasting, revenue and fiscal sustainability studies for state and local governments, and economic impact studies. Her current and past clients include the Governor's Office of State Planning and Budgeting, the region's metropolitan planning organizations, many of Colorado's municipal governments, and the State of Hawaii. Resnick is the former lead economist for the Center for Colorado's Economic Future and for the Colorado Economic Futures Panel, both at the University of Denver. For much of 2012, she traveled throughout Colorado presenting the findings from the Center's award winning fiscal sustainability study and advised the state of Hawaii on issues of fiscal sustainability. In 2007-08 she served as research staff to DU's Strategic Issues Panel exploring changes to the state's constitution. She has led and authored a number of studies looking at state and local tax policy and burdens within Colorado and has spoken nationally on the impact of Colorado's TABOR Amendment and the role of the initiative process in formulating fiscal policy in Colorado.

Resnick completed her master's and doctoral degrees at the CU-Boulder and CU-Denver respectively, and her research explored the effect of tax and expenditure limitations on tax reform efforts in the states.

David Skaggs, Senior Strategic Advisor and Independent Consultant, McKenna Long and Aldridge, LLP

David Skaggs is a lawyer with McKenna, Long & Aldridge, LLP (where he leads the legal team challenging the constitutionality of the Colorado Taxpayer Bill of Rights), an Adjunct Professor at the University of Colorado School of Law, and a member of the Board of Trustees of the American University in Iraq, of Pact, Inc. (an international development NGO), and of the U. S. Association of Former Members of Congress. He is co-Chairman of the Board of the Office of Congressional Ethics and of the U. S. Public Interest Declassification Board. He served as Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education from January, 2007, to September 2009. He served twelve years in Congress (1987-99) as U.S. Representative from the 2nd Congressional District of Colorado (the northwestern Denver suburbs) and three terms in the Colorado House (1981-87), the last two terms as Minority Leader. In Congress, Skaggs served on the House Appropriations Committee and the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; he organized the effort to encourage greater civility and bipartisan cooperation in the House, resulting in what came to be known as the House Bipartisan Retreats. After earning a B.A. in philosophy from Wesleyan University in 1964, he received an LL.B. at the Yale Law School in 1967. Skaggs served on active duty in the U. S. Marine Corps from 1968 to 1971, including time in Vietnam with the 1st Marine Division, and remained active in the Marine Reserves until 1978, attaining the rank of Major. He is married to Laura (née) Locher, and has three adult children, Matthew Babcock, Clare Belcher and Will Driscoll.

David Winkler, Vice President and Director of Research

Since 2007, he has led hundreds of research efforts to meet the diverse needs of PNA's clients and subscribers. Mr. Winkler has extensive expertise turning research into action with a specialization in voter engagement, emerging technology and the changing demographics of American political and civic culture. Previously, he served in a variety of roles for issue advocacy organizations, political campaigns, and ballot measures. He is a contributing author to the book "How the West was Warmed."

CFI staff:

Carol Hedges, Executive Director, Colorado Fiscal Institute

Carol Hedges is the Executive Director of the Colorado Fiscal Institute. Carol has been an important part of the research, policy and advocacy community in Colorado for more than 15 years. She served as policy director for Governor Roy Romer in the late 1990s focusing on human service, education and budget policy. As program officer at the Piton Foundation in Denver, Carol directed the Denver Workforce Initiative, a project of the Annie E. Casey Jobs Initiative. While serving as a senior policy analyst with the Bell Policy Center, Carol authored Ten Years of TABOR, a comprehensive study of the effects of Colorado's

Taxpayers Bill of Rights. Most recently as the Director of the Colorado Fiscal Policy Institute, a project of the Colorado Center on Law and Policy, Carol's work focused on creating an adequate, sustainable and equitable revenue system in Colorado. As a recognized expert on the effects of Colorado's TABOR amendment, Carol has been involved in education efforts on TABOR-like proposals across the country.

Prior to moving to Colorado, Carol served as staff for the Human Service committee and the Agriculture and Natural Resources committee for the National Governors' Association. She started her policy career as policy advisor to Gov. John Carlin of Kansas.

Carol graduated from Emporia State University in Emporia, Kan., and earned a law degree from the University of Kansas.

Chris Stiffler, Economist, Colorado Fiscal Institute

Chris Stiffler is an economist at the Colorado Fiscal Institute. Chris has been working in the public policy and economic research business since May 2012. He obtained his undergraduate degree from the University of Richmond in 2009, after which he spent a year teaching high school Latin before moving to Colorado. He received his masters in economics from the University of Denver. His particular area of interest involves the combined field of psychology and economics, with a particular curiosity in how people's mental quirks influence public policy and the public policy debate.

Chris got his start explaining economics in 2009 writing an explanatory economics column for his small home town newspaper in western Pennsylvania. The column was geared at explaining complicated economic concepts in simple metaphorical terms that everyone could understand and showing how those economic concepts relate to policy discussions. He believes that public policy discussion is much more fruitful when everyone is informed about the economic concepts behind such policy. Combining his joy for teaching, Chris hopes to make Colorado a better informed populous.