

Powering Pluralism Network: Religious Freedom Cohort Members



Majid Alsayegh
Council Member
Muslim Jewish Advisory Council

Majid Alsayegh is a principal of Alta Management, LLC, which provides real estate development and project management services for large capital projects in both the public and private sectors. He chairs both the Board of Trustees of Delaware Valley University and the Board of Directors of the Dialogue Institute, which promotes intrareligious, interreligious, and intercultural dialogue and engagement around the world through the support of scholarship, training, and action.



Chelsea Langston Bombino
Program Officer
The Fetzer Institute

Chelsea Langston Bombino joined The Fetzer Institute after spending three years as the director of Sacred Sector and Institutional Religious Freedom Alliance at the Center for Public Justice (CPJ) in Washington, DC. She also served as the director of strategic engagement for the Institutional Religious Freedom Alliance from 2015-17, and as acting CEO for the Center for Public Justice during summer 2020.



Thomas Borchert
Professor of Religion
University of Vermont

Thomas Borchert is Professor of Religion at the University of Vermont, where he teaches on religion, nationalism, and law in Asia and the United States. He has conducted research and published on minority Buddhists in Southwest China, monks and politics in Thailand and aspects of race, religion, and Buddhism in Singapore. He is the author of "Educating Monks: Minority Buddhism on China's Southwest Border" (University of Hawai'i Press, 2017).



Stanley Carlson-Thies

Senior Director and Founder

Institutional Religious Freedom Alliance, a division of the Center for Public Justice

Stanley Carlson-Thies is founder and senior director of the Institutional Religious Freedom Alliance, which promotes the religious freedoms that enable faith-based organizations to make their uncommon contributions to the common good. He served on the initial staff of President Bush's White House faith-based office (2001-2002) and in 2009-2010 on the church-state taskforce of President Obama's faith-based Advisory Council. He has hosted, since 2002, a monthly nonpartisan and multi-faith gathering of religious freedom advocates and leaders of faith-based organizations, the Coalition to Preserve Religious Freedom, which monitors and educates Congress and the executive branch.



Elizabeth Clark

Associate Director – International Center for Law and Religion Studies

Brigham Young University

As Associate Director of the BYU International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Elizabeth Clark helps further the Center's goals of ensuring religious freedom for everyone everywhere. She has written and edited over 40 chapters and articles and several books on law and religion issues. Professor Clark has convened and spoken at over 100 conferences throughout the world on topics relating to religious freedom and has testified before the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, and at meetings of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. She has headed up law reform projects and the drafting of legal analyses of pending legislation affecting religious freedom in over a dozen countries.



Chris Crawford

Senior Program Associate

Democracy Fund

Chris Crawford manages the Faith in Democracy portfolio at Democracy Fund, a private foundation based in Washington, D.C. This portfolio focuses on empowering faith leaders and their communities to promote pluralism and belonging in the United States.



Omayma El Ella
Project Associate, Just and Inclusive Society Project
Democracy Fund

Omayma El Ella is the Project Associate for the Just and Inclusive Society Project at Democracy Fund, an independent foundation working to ensure that our political system is able to withstand new challenges and deliver on its promise to the American people. Omayma supports the Just and Inclusive Society Project in its mission to protect vulnerable and impacted communities facing the brunt of racism and hate. Omayma supports strategy development and grantmaking, and provides expertise and guidance to grantees and more.



Robin Fretwell Wilson
Director, Institute of Government and Public Affairs
University of Illinois

Robin Fretwell Wilson is the Director of the Institute of Government and Public Affairs for the University of Illinois System, of which the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is a part, as well as the Mildred Van Voorhis Jones Chair in Law at the University of Illinois College of Law. Professor Wilson co-directs the College of Law's Epstein Health Law and Policy Program and co-directs and founded its Family Law and Policy Program. She specializes in family law and health law, and her research and teaching interests also include biomedical ethics, law and religion, children and violence, and law and science.



Alison Gill
Vice President for Legal & Policy
American Atheists

Alison Gill, Vice President for Legal & Policy at American Atheists, manages the organization's federal and state advocacy for religious equality and litigation activities to protect the separation of religion and government. Alison is a nationally recognized expert on civil rights law and state advocacy. American Atheists is a national civil rights organization that works to achieve religious equality for all Americans by protecting what Thomas Jefferson called the "wall of separation" between government and religion created by the First Amendment.



Cherie Harder

President

The Trinity Forum

Cherie Harder serves as President of the Trinity Forum. Prior to joining the Trinity Forum in 2008, Ms. Harder served in the White House as Special Assistant to the President and Director of Policy and Projects for First Lady Laura Bush. Earlier in her career, she served as Policy Advisor to Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, advising the Leader on domestic social issues and serving as liaison and outreach director to outside groups. From 2001 to 2005, she was Senior Counselor to the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), where she helped the Chairman design and launch the *We the People* initiative to enhance the teaching, study, and understanding of American history.



Michael A. Helfand

Vice Dean for Faculty and Research, Professor of Law, & Interim Director of the Nootbaar Institute for Law, Religion, and Ethics

Pepperdine Caruso School of Law

Dr. Michael (Avi) Helfand is Professor of Law and Vice Dean for Faculty and Research at Pepperdine Caruso School of Law as well as Interim Director of Pepperdine Law's Nootbaar Institute on Law, Religion and Ethics. In addition, Dr. Helfand is a Visiting Professor and Oscar M. Ruebhausen Distinguished Fellow at Yale Law School and a Senior Research Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America.



Khyati Y. Joshi

Professor of Education

Peter Sammartino School of Education – Fairleigh Dickinson University

Khyati Y. Joshi is a public intellectual whose social science research and community connections inform policymakers, educators, and everyday people about race, religion, and immigration in 21st century America. Her most recent book is *White Christian Privilege: The Illusion of Religious Equality in America* (NYU Press, 2020).



Giselle Klapper
Senior Staff Attorney
The Sikh Coalition

Giselle Klapper is a Senior Staff Attorney at the Sikh Coalition, the largest Sikh civil rights organization in the United States. The Sikh Coalition provides free legal assistance to Sikhs who experience discrimination on the basis of their Sikh beliefs and/or identity, educates the broader community about Sikhs and diversity, and fosters civic engagement amongst Sikh Americans.



Terry Kylo
Pastor, Executive Director
Paths to Understanding

The Rev. Terry Kylo is a Lutheran pastor serving as the executive director of Paths to Understanding: Bridging Bias and Building Unity. He is the founder of Neighbors in Faith, answering Islamophobia building the beloved community. NIF is a program of Paths to Understanding. Terry has learned that when we forget how to recognize other humans, we lose part of our own humanity. Terry believes we do not have to live this way. Terry's leadership has been recognized by Faith Action Network, The Muslim Association of Puget Sound and Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.



Andrew Lewis
Associate Professor – Political Science Department
The University of Cincinnati

Andrew Lewis is Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Cincinnati who researches the intersection of law, politics, and religion in the U.S. He is the author of *The Rights Turn in Conservative Christian Politics: How Abortion Transformed the Culture Wars* (Cambridge, 2017), which was the recipient of the American Political Science Association's Hubert Morken Award in 2018 for the best book on religion and politics. He is currently writing a book on religious freedom and the culture wars.



Mohamed Magid

Imam

ADAMS Center

Imam Mohamed Magid is the Executive Religious Director of All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS) Center in Sterling, Virginia. He is the Chairman of International Interfaith Peace Corps (IIPC) and the former President of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA). He is also the Chairman of Muflehun, which focuses on prevention of violence and hate. He serves on the advisory board of the Peaceful Families Project and as Co-President of Religions for Peace. He is also the Co-Founder of the Multifaith Neighborhood Network which focuses on building bridges between Muslim, Evangelical Christian, and Jewish communities.



Keisha E McKenzie

Senior Vice President of Programs

Auburn Seminary

Dr. Keisha E. McKenzie is Senior Vice President for Programs at Auburn, a multifaith center that catalyzes leaders of faith and moral courage, cultivates faith communities and social justice movements, and drives for social impact with partners through research, narrative change, and mass action. Educated in the UK, Jamaica, and West Texas, Keisha has worked across the US as a communication, digital, and development strategist, faith organizer, board member, and speaker.



Gregory Mitchell

Co-chair, IRF Roundtable & Founder, The Mitchell Firm

Greg Mitchell serves as the Managing Co-Chair of the International Religious Freedom Roundtable in Washington, D.C. He also founded the Mitchell Firm, which has been working to advance international religious freedom since 2010.



Elizabeth Reiner Platt

Director – Law, Rights, and Religion Project
Columbia Law School

Elizabeth Reiner Platt is the Director of the Law, Rights, and Religion Project (LRRP). LRRP is a law and policy think tank based at Columbia Law School that promotes social justice, freedom of religion, and religious plurality. We believe that the right to free exercise of religion protects all religious beliefs and communities, including the non-religious; requires respect for religious plurality and equality principles; and must be balanced against other liberty and equality rights where they are in conflict.



Maggie Siddiqi

Senior Director, Faith and Progressive Policy Initiative
Center for American Progress

Maggie M. Siddiqi is the senior director of the Faith and Progressive Policy Initiative at the Center for American Progress, a multi-issue nonpartisan think tank based in DC. Her role is focused on advancing a progressive vision of religious liberty and engaging a network of religious leaders on work across CAP's 18 policy areas. She has experience working in interfaith dialogue, capacity building for religious nonprofits, and public policy. She earned her master's in Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations and a graduate certificate in Islamic chaplaincy from Hartford Seminary.



Chris Stewart

Chief Grants Officer
Templeton Religion Trust

Chris Stewart has been an officer at Templeton Religion Trust in Nassau, The Bahamas, for 8 years, where he is now the Chief Grants Officer. Prior to his work with Templeton Religion Trust, Chris was a philosophy professor at Houghton College in New York.



Julie Sulc
Senior Program Officer
Pew Charitable Trusts

Julie is a senior program officer at the Pew Charitable Trusts overseeing Pew's work in religion. While at Pew she has managed a diverse portfolio of grants including support for interdisciplinary research on religion, major public television documentaries on religion, a large initiative that examined the role of religious organizations in America's social welfare system, as well as for projects exploring the ways religion influences public life in the United States and around the world.



Stephanie Summers
Chief Executive Officer
Center for Public Justice

Stephanie Summers is the CEO of the Center for Public Justice. Ms. Summers is a co-author with *Washington Post* columnist Michael J. Gerson and Katie Thompson of *Unleashing Opportunity: Why Escaping Poverty Requires a Shared Vision of Justice* (Falls City Press). A frequent speaker and moderator, she has written on the role of Christian think tanks and for publications including *Comment* and *Q Ideas*.



Knox Thames
Senior Fellow
Institute for Global Engagement

Knox Thames served as the State Department Special Advisor for Religious Minorities under both the Obama and Trump administrations. After 20 years as a civil servant, he is writing a book on 21st-century strategies to combat religious persecution.

Asma Uddin
Fellow
Inclusive America Project

Asma Uddin is the author of *When Islam Is Not a Religion: Inside America's Fight for Religious Freedom* (2010) and *The Politics of Vulnerability: How to Heal Muslim-Christian Relations in a Post*



Michael Wear

Founder

Public Square Strategies, LLC

Michael Wear is a leading strategist, speaker, and practitioner at the intersection of faith, politics, and public life. He has advised a president, as well as some of the nation's leading foundations, non-profits, and public leaders, on some of the thorniest issues and exciting opportunities that define American life today. Today, Michael is also the founder of Public Square Strategies LLC, a sought-after firm that helps religious organizations, political organizations, businesses, and others effectively navigate the rapidly changing American religious and political landscape.



Travis Wussow

Vice President for Public Policy and General Counsel

Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention (ERLC)

Travis Wussow is Vice President for Public Policy and General Counsel at the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention (ERLC). Travis led the ERLC's first international office located in the Middle East prior to joining the Washington, DC, office.

