

SPEAKERS



RACHEL HOPE ANDERSON

Principal | Hope & Consulting

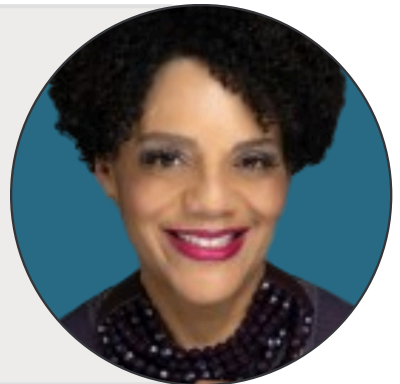
Rachel Hope Anderson is Principal of Hope & Consulting, helping civic, faith, and philanthropic leaders find common ground. She previously led faith advocacy at the Center for Responsible Lending and founded the Families Valued initiative to support policies like paid leave and maternal health. Committed to democratic pluralism, Rachel helps those with deep differences work together for the common good. A Wisconsin native, she now lives in Maryland with her multi-generational family.



CHRISTIE ANGEL

Managing Partner-Midwest Office | BroadView Talent Partners

Christie Angel is a seasoned leader with 30+ years of experience spanning public, private, and nonprofit sectors. As Managing Partner at BroadView Talent Partners, she specializes in executive leadership development, onboarding, and organizational alignment. Formerly CEO of YWCA Columbus, she led a major brand transformation and has held senior government and public affairs roles, including Deputy Chief of Staff to Columbus Mayor Michael B. Coleman. Christie holds an MBA and B.S. from Franklin University.



LAURA A. BISCHOFF

Reporter | Gannett/USA Today Network

Laura Bischoff is an award-winning journalist who has covered Ohio politics and state government for two decades. Named Ohio's best investigative journalist by the Associated Press in 2020, she also led the team that won the 2024 Scripps Howard Award for Local/Regional Investigative Reporting for exposing conditions inside Ohio's juvenile prisons. She is a graduate of the University of Michigan.



ROBERT BLIZZARD

Founder/CEO | UpONE Insights

Robert Blizzard, founder and CEO of UpONE Insights, is a leading Republican pollster with two decades of experience advising presidential campaigns, U.S. Senate and gubernatorial races, congressional candidates, and state legislative caucuses nationwide. He has also guided corporate research for Fortune 500 companies and national associations on messaging, brand, and crisis management. A Clemson University graduate, Blizzard previously spent nearly 20 years at Public Opinion Strategies before launching his own firm.



BRITTANY BOULTON

Vice President | Groundwork Ohio

As Vice President of Groundwork Ohio, Brittany Boulton drives advocacy and engagement efforts to make Ohio the best place to be a young child. With more than 15 years of leadership in housing, health, and early childhood policy, she has led statewide coalitions, advanced maternal and infant health initiatives, and mentored rising leaders. A first-generation college graduate, Brittany lives in Columbus with her husband and three young children, and she enjoys running, gardening, and Girl Scouts.



ELISABETH WRIGHT BURAK

Senior Fellow | Georgetown University's Center for Children & Families

Elisabeth Wright Burak is a Senior Fellow at Georgetown University's Center for Children and Families with more than 20 years of experience in policies supporting low-income families. She leads projects on Medicaid's role in child development and maternal health, providing expertise to state and national leaders. She previously directed health policy at Arkansas Advocates for Children & Families and worked in state government. Elisabeth holds master's degrees in public policy and social work from the University of Michigan.



VANESSA BUTLER

Senior Director of Community Relations | Groundwork Ohio

Vanessa Butler is Senior Director of Community Relations at Groundwork Ohio, where she advances key partnerships through strategic engagement. She previously served at The Center for Healthy Families and has held roles as a policy associate at Groundwork Ohio, civil fellow with Ohio State's Student Legal Services, and deputy auditor in the Franklin County Auditor's Office. Vanessa holds a J.D. from Capital University Law School and a B.A. from Denison University.



CAITLIN FELDMAN

Senior Director of Policy | Groundwork Ohio

Caitlin Feldman is Senior Director of Policy at Groundwork Ohio, advancing maternal and child health and early childhood trauma prevention. A licensed social worker and music therapist, she brings clinical and advocacy experience to her policy work, including leadership in infant and early childhood mental health and the Safe Babies program. Caitlin holds degrees from Ohio University and Cleveland State University and serves on the board of Cultivate in Columbus.



LYNANNE GUTIERREZ

President & CEO | Groundwork Ohio

As President & CEO of Groundwork Ohio, Lynanne Gutierrez leads statewide efforts to advance early learning and healthy development from prenatal to age five. She has strengthened the organization's advocacy, expanded partnerships, and pioneered projects addressing racial and rural equity. Appointed to Ohio's Early Childhood Advisory Council, she is recognized statewide as an early childhood expert. Lynanne lives in Columbus with her husband and three children and enjoys reading and quilting.



SHANNON JONES

Owner/Strategist | On Key Strategies

Shannon Jones is a trusted strategist and policy expert with more than 30 years of experience shaping public policy and building influence. A former Ohio legislator and Senate leader, she advanced bipartisan initiatives in maternal and infant health and fiscal policy. She later transformed Groundwork Ohio into a nationally recognized early childhood advocacy organization. Now a Warren County Commissioner and On Key Strategies founder, Shannon helps organizations navigate complex policy landscapes and drive lasting change.



LAURA HANCOCK

Reporter | Cleveland.com and The Plain Dealer

Laura Hancock covers politics, K-12 schools, higher education, and child care for cleveland.com and The Plain Dealer. With more than 20 years of reporting experience, she previously worked in Wyoming and Utah before moving to Ohio in 2017 to launch Capitol Letter, a daily policy and politics newsletter. She is a University of Utah graduate in mass communication and political science.



MICHAEL HARTLEY

President | Swing State Strategies

Michael Hartley is President of Swing State Strategies, where he draws on over 20 years of experience in politics, policy, and public affairs. Previously, he served as Vice President of Government Relations for the Columbus Chamber of Commerce and was a leading political operative in Ohio for more than a decade. He earned his degree from Baldwin-Wallace University and lives in Circleville with his wife and two children.



KAREN KASLER

Bureau Chief | Statehouse News Bureau

Karen Kasler is Bureau Chief of the Statehouse News Bureau and an award-winning Ohio journalist. She has covered major elections, debates, and statewide issues for decades, producing features for NPR and "Marketplace," and appearing regularly on Ohio media programs. A past president of the Ohio Associated Press and Emmy nominee, she has taught journalism at Capital University and serves as a frequent moderator and commentator on Ohio politics and policy.



SARA LOKEN

Managing Director of Communications | Groundwork Ohio

Sara Loken is Managing Director of Communications at Groundwork Ohio, where she leads statewide strategies to raise awareness for early learning and child development. With more than 25 years of nonprofit leadership, including a decade directing brand and communications at Community Shelter Board, she brings deep expertise in media strategy, digital engagement, and advocacy communications. Sara serves as board president for Partnerships for Authentic Learning and Leadership and lives in Columbus with her partner and blended family.



JOSEPH O'HERN

Director, Coalition & Campaign | First Five Years Fund

Joseph O'Hern is Director of Coalition & Campaign at the First Five Years Fund, coordinating advocacy and legislative priorities. A veteran political strategist, Joe has led campaigns in more than a dozen states, from electing Sherrod Brown to raising \$15 million for a historic Mississippi Senate race. He began his career organizing for President Obama's Iowa caucus campaign. Originally from Iowa, Joe studied at the University of Iowa and has more than 15 years of national campaign experience.



AARON PICKRELL

Managing Partner | Remington Road Group

Aaron Pickrell is Managing Partner of Remington Road Group, a Columbus-based public affairs firm serving clients nationwide. With more than two decades in politics and government, he has advised presidents, governors, and members of Congress. He managed Ted Strickland's gubernatorial campaigns, held senior roles in the Obama and Biden campaigns, and co-founded Remington Road in 2011. Named one of Politico's "50 Politicos to Watch," Aaron lives in Bexley with his wife and two daughters.

