



NEW DIRECTIONS FOR DEMOCRATS

DENVER, COLORADO | APRIL 25-26



ppi radically
pragmatic



Welcome to Denver

Thank you for joining us this weekend to launch New Directions for Democrats, a series of candid dialogues aimed at reinvigorating our party with new ideas and voices.

These are anxious times for our country. We are assailed hourly by a belligerent president who treats America's laws, courts and civil liberties with utter contempt and imagines he can rule a free people by royal decrees.

Democrats are duty-bound to fight President Trump's rampant abuses of power. But we must also define what and who we are fighting for.

Last year's election confronts us with a stark reality: We are losing touch with working Americans. We must stop the bleeding and start winning them back.

We believe the new ideas and leadership our party needs won't come from Washington. Our aim is to showcase a new generation of Democratic state and local leaders who are making government work for the working families.

Only by building a new, cross-class coalition that includes more non-college Americans can Democrats make themselves competitive everywhere in the country and create a durable, center-left governing majority.

Democrats can draw inspiration from the "Colorado Way." Since 2004, Colorado has turned from red to purple to blue thanks to the disciplined effort led by key political, civic and business figures to move the state party back into the political mainstream. This paved the way for the ascension of pragmatic Democrats like Gov. Jared Polis, Sens. John Hickenlooper and Michael Bennet and Denver Mayor Mike Johnston.

Our goal over these two days is to highlight new ideas for a more compelling economic offer to working families, sweeping public sector reform, energy and climate realism, cultural moderation and strong U.S. leadership in the global struggle for freedom and democracy.

Even in these difficult times, we believe America's ideals and institutions ultimately will prevail over a strongman cult that falsely claims our democracy has failed. Let's work to make our party ready to lead this truly exceptional nation again.

Sincerely,

Will Marshall
Founder and President, PPI

Lindsay Lewis
Chief Executive Officer, PPI

Friday, April 25, 2025

4:00 - 6:00 PM Opening Reception

*Location: Governor's Residence at the Boettcher Mansion
400 E 8th Ave, Denver, CO 80203*

6:30 - 8:30 PM Dinner & Discussion: Winning Back Middle America

*Location: Grant-Humphreys Mansion
770 Pennsylvania St, Denver, CO 80203*

Saturday, April 26, 2025

8:00 - 8:30 AM Arrival at Retreat Venue

*Location: Space Annex
95 S Cherokee St, Denver, CO 80223*

8:30 - 8:45 AM Welcome and Opening Remarks

8:45 - 9:45 AM Breakfast & Discussion: Listening to Working Americans

What election analysis, polls and focus groups tell us we're doing wrong.

9:45 - 10:45 AM Political Renewal Models from Colorado and the UK

Hearing how Colorado went from a red to purple to blue state and taking a comparative look at the successful party reform efforts of the UK Labour Party.

10:45 - 12:00 PM A New Economic Offer to Working Families

Creative ideas for lowering living costs, fighting inflationary tariffs, restoring fiscal sanity to Washington, building new career pathways for non-college youths, making taxes fairer and rewarding hard work, and cutting tax and regulatory burdens on entrepreneurs and small business.

12:00 - 1:00 PM Lunch

Location: Space Annex Patio

1:00 - 2:00 PM Rebuilding Trust on Immigration, Public Safety and Education

Secure the border and modernize our outdated immigration laws, put more and better trained police in crime-ridden places and hire prosecutors who will put public safety first, tackle the learning crisis in our public schools and fight Republicans' attempt to privatize education.

2:00 - 2:45 PM National Security Agenda for Democrats

A new national security and Defense platform that elevates Democrats and protects liberal democracy.

2:45 - 3:45 PM Reforming Government to Deliver Abundance

Dismantle exclusionary zoning rules that block new and different kinds of housing, follow Colorado's example of full-spectrum energy development and innovation, put America's clean energy transition on a more realistic, politically sustainable pace, and embrace permit reform and lower energy costs in disadvantaged communities.

3:45 - 4:30 PM Farewell Brews

Location: Space Annex Rooftop



Governor Jared Polis | Colorado

Jared Polis is the 43rd Governor of Colorado, elected in 2018 and re-elected in 2022, he is the first openly gay governor in Colorado and U.S. history. Polis is a successful tech entrepreneur, who served a decade in the U.S. Congress and, prior to that, served on the Colorado State Board of Education. Governor Polis currently serves as the Chair of the National Governors Association.



Senator Michael Bennet | Colorado

Michael Bennet is the senior United States Senator representing Colorado, serving since 2009. Prior to his appointment and subsequent election to the U.S. Senate, Bennett served as the Superintendent of Denver Public Schools. Senator Bennett serves on the committees for Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, Finance, Rules and Administration, and the Select Committee on Intelligence.



Senator John Hickenlooper | Colorado

John Hickenlooper is the junior United States Senator representing Colorado, serving since 2021. Prior to his election to the U.S. Senate, Hickenlooper served as the two-term 42nd Governor of Colorado and, before that, served as the Mayor of the City of Denver. Senator Hickenlooper serves on the committees for Energy and Natural Resources, Health Education, Labor and Pensions, Commerce Science and Transportation and Small Business and Entrepreneurship.



Representative Joe Neguse | CO-02, Assistant Democratic Leader

Joe Neguse is the U.S. Representative for Colorado's 2nd Congressional District which encompasses Boulder and the Denver suburbs. Neguse was elected in 2018 and prior to entering Congress, served as Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies. Representative Neguse was elected by the Democratic Caucus as House Assistant Democratic Leader and serves on the Committees on Natural Resources, on Rules, and on Judiciary.



Representative Adam Smith | WA-09, Ranking Member Armed Services Committee

Adam Smith is the U.S. Representative for Washington's 9th Congressional District. Smith has served as the Chair of the House Armed Services Committee and currently serves as the Ranking Member. Smith has served in Congress since 1997 and serves as the Dean of Washington's House Congressional Delegation and is an active and long time member of the New Democrat Coalition.



Representative Marc Veasey | TX-33

Marc Veasey is the U.S. Representative for Texas's 33rd Congressional District covering most of Dallas County. Veasey has served in the U.S. Congress for over a decade, elected in 2013, previously serving as a Representative in the Texas State House. Representative Veasey serves on the committees on Armed Services and Energy and Commerce. He is a member of the New Democrat Coalition and the Congressional Black Caucus.



Representative Lou Correa | CA-46

Lou Correa is the U.S. Representative for California's 46th Congressional District based in Orange County. Prior to being elected to Congress in 2017, Correa served in the California State Senate and Assembly, and the Orange County Board of Supervisors. Congressman Correa serves on the Committee on Homeland Security and Judiciary where he is the Ranking Member on the Subcommittee on Border Security and Enforcement. He is a member of the Blue Dog Coalition, New Democrat Coalition and Congressional Hispanic Caucus.



Representative Brittany Pettersen | CO-07

Brittany Pettersen is the U.S. Representative for Colorado's 7th Congressional District. Pettersen was elected in 2022 and, prior to entering Congress, served in the Colorado Senate and House of Representatives. Representative Pettersen serves on the Committee for Financial Services and is the Vice Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on National Security, Illicit Finance, and International Financial Institutions. She is in the New Democrat Coalition, Problem Solvers Caucus and Congressional YIMBY Caucus.



Representative George Whitesides | CA-27

George Whitesides is the U.S. Representative for California's 27th Congressional District. Prior to being elected in 2024, he was a leader in the space sector serving as NASA Chief of Staff and CEO of Virginia Galactic. Representative Whitesides serves on the Armed Services Committee and the Science, Space and Technology Committee. He is a member of the New Democrat Coalition.



Senator Doug Jones | (fmr.) Alabama

Doug Jones, former Senator for Alabama, transitioned from his role as U.S. Attorney for Alabama's Northern District to the U.S. Senate in 2018. Today, he serves as Counsel at ArentFox Schiff while contributing policy expertise as Distinguished Senior Fellow at The Center for American Progress.



Representative Tim Ryan | (fmr.) OH-17, OH-13 and PPI Senior Fellow

Tim Ryan formerly represented Ohio's 17th and 13th Congressional Districts in Northeast Ohio for nearly two decades before becoming Ohio's Democratic Senate nominee in 2022. First elected to Congress in 2003 after serving in the Ohio State Senate, Ryan now works as a consultant for various industry groups. He also serves as a Senior Fellow at PPI working on the Campaign for Working America.



Representative Ed Perlmutter | (fmr.) CO-07

Ed Perlmutter previously represented Colorado's 7th Congressional District for eight terms, where he became known as a bipartisan bridge builder. In Congress, Ed focused on promoting renewable energy and smart growth policies. Ed is now a partner in Holland & Knight's Denver and Washington, D.C., offices and a member of the Public Policy & Regulation Group.



Representative Carolyn Boudreaux | (fmr.) GA-07

Carolyn Boudreaux brought her academic expertise in public policy to Washington when she won Georgia's 7th Congressional District in 2021. Boudreaux now divides her time between teaching at the University of Georgia and leading the Concord Coalition, a grassroots organization advocating for fiscal responsibility.



Representative Jason Altmire | (fmr.) PA-04

Former Congressman Jason Altmire worked in the health care industry prior to his three terms in Washington. Altmire now serves as President of the Career Education Colleges and Universities, the trade association that represents private career schools.



Mayor Michael Johnston | Denver, CO

Michael Johnston, Mayor of Denver was elected in 2023, and brings his background as Colorado State Senator and education policy expert to city leadership. Mayor Johnston focuses on education reform, environmental initiatives, and addressing Denver's housing challenges.



Mayor Kate Gallego | Phoenix, AZ

Kate Gallego was elected as Phoenix's mayor in 2019, following her service on the Phoenix City Council. Mayor Gallego has prioritized combating the urban heat island effect while tackling police reform, housing accessibility, and workforce development during her administration.



Mayor Kevin Schilling | Burien, WA

Kevin Schilling, Mayor of Burien, stepped into his current role in 2024 after serving as City Councilmember. His political experience includes work as former Representative Derek Kilmer's Political Director, and he recently announced his candidacy for Washington's 33rd Legislative District.



Mayor Sly James | (fmr.) Kansas City, MO

Sly James, former Mayor of Kansas City, led Missouri's largest city from 2011 to 2019. His mayoral priorities included early childhood education, affordable housing, and modernizing the city's transportation and infrastructure systems.



Mayor Steve Benjamin | (fmr.) Columbia, SC

Steve Benjamin has moved between local government and national service, formerly serving Columbia as Mayor and most recently as Director of the White House Office of Public Engagement and Senior Advisor in the Biden administration. Benjamin now leads The Benjamin Firm as President and CEO.



Mayor John Cranley | (fmr.) Cincinnati, OH

John Cranley guided Cincinnati, Ohio's third largest city, from 2013 to 2022 after serving on the City Council. The experienced attorney now practices law at Keating Muething & Klekamp following his tenure in city government.



State Senator Jeff Bridges | CO SD-26

Senator Bridges, elected in 2018 to the Colorado State Senate, previously served in the Colorado House of Representatives. Bridges represents Arapahoe, Denver, and Jefferson counties. He is the Chair of the Joint Budget Committee. Jeff is currently running for Colorado State Treasurer.



State Senator Dylan Roberts | CO SD-32, Majority Caucus Chair

Dylan Roberts was elected to the Colorado State Senate in 2022, previously served in the Colorado House representing the 26th district. Roberts currently serves as the Majority Caucus Chair and prior to his involvement in Colorado politics served as a Deputy District Attorney. During his time in the Colorado legislature Roberts has chaired multiple committees and been a part of and spearheaded over 100 pieces of bipartisan legislation.



State Senator Matthew Ball | CO SD-31

Ball, elected in 2024 to the State Senate, is a lawyer by trade, served in the military as an Army ranger, represents part of Denver county, some of his policy priorities are prioritizing housing affordability, climate policy and mental health. "Practical progressive. As Director of Policy for the City and County of Denver worked in coordination with the local city council to establish a program to combat mental health and addiction called Roads to Recovery.



State Senator Lindsey Daugherty | CO SD-19

Lindsey Daugherty, elected in 2024 to the Colorado State Senate, previously served in the Colorado House of Representatives. Daugherty represents Adams and Jefferson counties, some of her policy priorities center around children and health care.



State Representative Michael Carter | CO HD-36

Michael Carter, elected in 2024 also serves in a simultaneous role as a member of the Aurora Public Schools Board of Education. He represents Adams and Arapahoe counties. Carter is a lawyer by trade and worked as a public defender, some of the issues important to Carter are education and affordable housing.



State Representative Cecelia Espenoza | CO HD-04

Representative Espenoza, elected in 2024, is a lawyer by trade and previously served as an appellate judge. Some of the issues Espenoza is passionate about are housing, immigrant rights and economic opportunity. She represents Denver County.



State Representative Jacque Phillips | CO HD-31

Jacque Phillips, elected in 2024 is a lawyer by trade and represents Adams county. Phillips is passionate about affordable housing, health care access and fostering economic development.



State Representative Manny Rutinel | CO HD-32

Manny Rutinel, elected in 2022, is an economist and environmental lawyer by trade. He represents Adams County. Rutinel is passionate about environmental justice, affordability and civil rights. Rutinel is currently running for Colorado's 8th Congressional District in the US House of Representatives.



State Representative Rebekah Stewart | CO HD-30

Rebekah Stewart, elected in 2024 previously served as a city councilor and therapist by trade. Some of the issues Stewart is passionate about are healthcare, climate reduction, and housing affordability. She represents Jefferson County.



Will Marshall | President

Will Marshall is president and founder of the Progressive Policy Institute (PPI), a catalyst for political change and policy innovation with offices in Washington, D.C., Brussels and the United Kingdom. A veteran policy entrepreneur, Marshall in 1985 helped to found the Democratic Leadership Council, serving as its first policy director.



Lindsay Mark Lewis | Chief Executive Officer

Lindsay Mark Lewis is the Chief Executive Officer and has been a Board Member of PPI since 2010. Besides his involvement in all PPI projects, he focuses on building policy dialogues with Mayors, Governors, House and Senate Members, the Administration and expanding the PPI reach into International policy and idea connections.



Michael Mandel | Vice President and Chief Economist

Dr. Michael Mandel is Vice President and Chief Economist at PPI and senior fellow at the Mack Institute for Innovation Management at the Wharton School. With experience spanning policy, academics, and business, Dr. Mandel has helped lead the public conversation about the economic and business impact of technology for the past two decades.



Diana Moss | Vice President and Director of Competition Policy

Diana Moss is Vice President and Director of Competition Policy at PPI. From 2015-2023, Dr. Moss was President of the American Antitrust Institute. An economist, her work spans the economic, policy, and legal analysis of antitrust enforcement and sector regulation, with industry expertise in digital technology, energy, agriculture, airlines, telecommunications, media, and healthcare.



Ed Gresser | Vice President and Director for Trade and Global Markets

Ed Gresser is Vice President and Director for Trade and Global Markets at PPI. Ed rejoined PPI in 2021, after an earlier tour from 2001-2011. From 2015 to 2021 he served as the Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Trade Policy and Economics at the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR).



Ben Ritz | Vice President of Policy Development & Director of the Center for Funding America's Future

Ben Ritz is the VP of Policy Development and the Director of PPI's Center for Funding America's Future, which develops policy proposals to strengthen public investments in the foundation of our economy, modernize health and retirement programs to reflect an aging society, and transform our tax code to reward work over wealth.



Stuart Malec | Vice President of Public Affairs

Stuart (Stu) Malec is the Vice President of Public Affairs for PPI. In this role, Stu oversees and implements PPI's engagement work with elected officials at the federal, state and local levels of government.



Claire Ainsley | Director of the Project on Center-Left Renewal

Claire Ainsley joined PPI in 2023 as the Director of the Project on Center-Left Renewal. She served as Executive Director for Policy for Opposition Leader Keir Starmer from 2020-2022. Claire also served as the Executive Director of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, where she led JRF's work on the social and political attitudes of people with low incomes.



Alyssa Brown-Ruiz | Editorial and Events Director

Alyssa Brown-Ruiz is the Editorial and Events Director for PPI. Before joining PPI, she worked in various roles at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, most recently as the opinion editor and a page designer.



Rachel Canter | Director of Education Policy

Rachel Canter is the Director of Education Policy for the Reinventing America's Schools project at PPI. In 2008, she founded Mississippi First and served as its Executive Director for over 16 years until joining PPI.



John Michael Dieng | Political Outreach Coordinator

John Michael Dieng is the Political Outreach Coordinator for PPI. Previously, John managed and oversaw office operations for Rep. Don Davis (NC-01).



David Evans | Senior Advisor

David Evans is a Senior Advisor to PPI's Project on Center-Left Renewal. In May 2020 David was appointed General Secretary of the UK Labour Party. Working under the leadership of Keir Starmer, he overhauled the Party's campaigning machinery and oversaw the construction of an effective election winning machine. In October 2025, David stood down as General Secretary and in January 2025 entered the House of Lords as Lord Evans of Sealand.



Andrew Fung | Senior Economic & Technology Policy Analyst

Andrew Fung is a Senior Economic & Technology Policy Analyst with PPI. His work focuses on the intersection of the economy, technology, and innovation. Before joining PPI, Andrew was a part of the Bipartisan Policy Center's Technology Project, where he wrote on issues including AI, 5G, the internet of things, and antitrust regulation.



Mary Guenther | Head of Space Policy

Mary Guenther is the Head of Space Policy at PPI. In this role, Mary focuses on evaluating and developing policy solutions that address how the U.S. government's relationship with space actors should evolve and how to best harness the benefits of space. Prior to joining PPI, Mary served as the Vice President of Space Policy at the Commercial Space Federation (CSF).



Corrine Jeffries | Manager

Corrine Jeffries joined the Progressive Policy Institute in March 2024. Before joining PPI, she interned in the House of Representatives with Congresswoman Suzan DelBene.



Peter Juul | Director of National Security

Peter Juul is the Director of National Security at the PPI. In this role, Peter aims to craft a new foreign policy narrative that reaffirms the vital importance of active American engagement in the world and backs it up with substantive analysis of key issues relating to the defense of America's interests, values, and prosperity.



Jolie Libert | Political Director

Jolie Libert is the Political Director for PPI. Most recently, Jolie worked as the Trips Director for the Midwest Region on the Harris for President Campaign where she led over 300 principal and surrogate trips to Michigan and Wisconsin. Prior to her time on the campaign, she spent three years on the Hill as Representative Derek Kilmer's Director of Operations.



Colin Mortimer | Senior Director of Partnerships

Colin Mortimer is the Senior Director of Partnerships at the Progressive Policy Institute and a Board Member of New Democracy. Before joining PPI, Mortimer was a consultant at Bates White Economic Consulting.



Ian O'Keefe | Communications Director

Ian O'Keefe is the Communications Director for PPI, leading the organization's media strategy and communications efforts. Before joining PPI, Ian was the Communications Director for U.S. Representative Derek Kilmer.



Max Sherrill | Digital Communications Manager

Max Sherrill is Digital Communications Manager at PPI, where he spearheads the organization's digital and social media efforts. He also frequently coordinates trips and delegations to support PPI's robust international program.



Tobin Stone | Deputy Director

Tobin Stone is a Deputy Director at PPI, where he leads grassroots outreach in collaboration with the Center for New Liberalism. He previously worked in Colorado on Senator Bennet's 2022 re-election campaign.



Elan Sykes | Director of Climate and Energy Policy

Elan Sykes is the Director of Energy and Climate Policy at PPI. Elan works on energy deployment, innovation, and decarbonization. Prior to joining PPI, Elan served as a researcher at the Climate Leadership Council where he focused on carbon pricing, global climate policy, and the intersection of climate and trade policies.



Alex Terr | Deputy Press Secretary

Alex Terr is the Deputy Press Secretary for PPI. Prior joining PPI, Alex was a Press Assistant for Senator Tom Carper, where he facilitated many legacy stories to be published as the Senator ran through the tape in his final year in office.



Curtis Valentine | Co-Director of Reinventing America's Schools

Curtis Valentine is Co-Director of the Progressive Policy Institute's Reinventing America's Schools Project. Curtis comes to this position with over 20 years of experience in local, state, federal, and international education policy. Prior to joining the Progressive Policy Institute, Curtis was an International Affairs Fellow with the Council on Foreign Relations.



Alix Ware | Director of Health Care Policy

Alix Ware is the Director of Health Care Policy for the Progressive Policy Institute. Prior to joining PPI, Alix was the Director of Health Policy at the National Alliance for Care at Home where she tracked and prepared materials related to hospice and palliative care regulations, policies, alternative payment models, and data trends.



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