



Speaker Biographies



Rachel Bowden

Rachel Bowden serves as the Director of the Regulatory Initiatives Office for the Life and Health Division at the Texas Department of Insurance. In this role, she oversees rulemaking projects, manages emerging market issues, and leads impact assessments of proposed legislation. Rachel joined the department in 2010 and has served in various roles within the Life and Health Division. Rachel holds a BA in Government and Sociology from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master's in Public Affairs from the LBJ School at UT Austin.



Andrew Cates

Andrew Cates is the Owner of Cates Legal Group PLLC where he counsels candidates, PACs and nonprofits in legislative and campaign law. He authored Texas Ethics Laws Annotated, the first and only legal practice guide in Texas on the subject, now in the 9th edition.

Cates is a Founding Member of the State Bar of Texas Legislative & Campaign Law Section, where he spearheaded the nation's first legal specialization in Legislative & Campaign Law and is now one of less than twenty attorneys in the US with the certification.

Cates is a founding faculty member at the Healing Politics Campaign School at Duke University and is one of the primary voices leading the Professional Advocacy Association of Texas.



Commissioner Amanda Crawford

Amanda Crawford was appointed to serve as Texas insurance commissioner by Gov. Greg Abbott in January 2026.

As chief executive of TDI, Crawford oversees the regulation of the \$293.9 billion Texas insurance market, the second largest in the nation and the fifth largest in the world. The agency regulates 3,447 companies and more than 983,411 agents and adjusters.

Crawford started her more than 24 years of public service at the Office of the Attorney General, where she held various roles, including ultimately serving as general counsel and the deputy attorney general for administration. Most recently, she served as the executive director of the Texas Department of Information Resources and the chief information officer for the state of Texas.

Crawford graduated from The University of Texas at Austin and earned her law degree from the University of Houston Law Center.



Catherine Edge

Catherine Edge is AVP of Talent Acquisition & People Operations at National Life Group, where she leads talent acquisition, HR operations, payroll, and workforce strategy. A passionate advocate for building the next generation of insurance talent, Catherine has championed campus recruiting and early-career strategies that connect students with meaningful opportunities across the industry. She serves on the Gamma Iota Sigma Advisory Board, partnering with industry and academic leaders to strengthen the insurance talent pipeline and increase awareness of the diverse career paths the industry offers.

Catherine was recently recognized by CIO Times as a Talent Trailblazer.



Dr. James “Jim” Henson

Dr. Henson directs the [Texas Politics Project](#), a hub of research and public affairs work focused on providing non-partisan resources for understanding Texas government and politics. He co-founded the longest running academic survey of public opinion in Texas with Daron Shaw in 2008. Results from more than a decade of statewide polling for that project are available to the public on the [Texas Politics Project website](#). His writing about Texas politics has appeared in every major Texas media outlet, as well as a variety of publications including *The Washington Post*, *The Hill*, *Texas Monthly*, *The Texas Tribune*, and others. He has produced and hosted the [Second Reading podcast](#) since its founding in 2016, and is the principal author of

the *Texas Politics* textbook published by Soomo Learning and used in introductory Texas government courses across the state, which is now in its 12th edition. He is a frequent resource for news media, researchers, and civic and interest groups.

Henson was appointed to the City of Austin Ethics Review Commission in 2009 by the Austin City Council, and served as chairman of the commission from 2010 to 2012. He is currently a member of the advisory board of The Subiendo Academy in the McCombs School of Business at UT-Austin.



Commissioner John F. King

Georgia Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner John F. King was sworn in as Georgia’s Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner by Governor Brian Kemp on July 1, 2019, becoming the first Hispanic statewide official in state history.

Before his appointment, Commissioner King served in various law enforcement positions, beginning as an Atlanta Police officer in 1985. He culminated as Doraville’s Chief of Police from 2002 to 2019 after working his way up from Detective.

While at the Atlanta Police Department, King received the Chief’s Blue Star for being injured in the line of duty as a result of a criminal attack with a firearm.

In addition to his former roles in the Atlanta and Doraville Police Departments, King served more than forty years in the U.S. Army National Guard. His deployments include tours in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Africa. King served as the commander of the 48th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, and as commander over U.S. Army North Task Force 51. King celebrated his retirement from service in February of 2023.

King received his Bachelor’s of Arts degree in criminal justice and public administration from Brenau University and a Master’s Degree in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College. He was a graduate of class #229 in the FBI National Academy in Quantico, VA.



Commissioner Glen Mulready

Glen Mulready serves as Oklahoma's 13th insurance commissioner. He was recently unopposed in his bid for reelection. He began his second term as insurance commissioner in 2023. A former state legislator and longtime insurance professional, Glen was first elected to the state-wide position in 2019.

His background includes eight years as a state representative, where he quickly became the point person for the House of Representatives on insurance issues. Glen passed legislation that expanded insurance options and resulted in more insurance companies offering services in the state. Seeking to improve the Oklahoma business climate, Glen sponsored the Insurance Business Transfer (IBT) Act, now law and is recognized as one of the most innovative pieces of insurance legislation nationally.

As Commissioner, Glen has brought a business-like, bottom-line approach to budgeting and management of the Insurance Department. He continues to focus on providing a strong and competitive market to give Oklahomans choices when shopping for products to meet their family's needs.

Glen, his wife Sally, and their three grown sons reside in Tulsa, Oklahoma.



Ross Ramsey

Ross Ramsey is a writer, speaker, and consultant, based in Austin. He co-founded The Texas Tribune in 2009 and served as its executive editor until his retirement in 2022, speaking and writing regular columns on politics, government, and public policy. Before joining the Tribune, he was editor and co-owner of Texas Weekly, a newsletter covering state government and the politicians running it. In the mid-1990s, he did a 28-month stint in government with the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. Before that, he reported for the Houston Chronicle, the Dallas Times Herald, worked as a Dallas-based freelancer for regional and national magazines and newspapers, and as a reporter and newscaster for radio stations in Denton and Dallas.



Dr. Belinda Román

Belinda Román, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Economics at St. Mary's University. Before joining St. Mary's Román was Professor of Economics for Palo Alto College in San Antonio.

She is Vice President of the Association for Social Economics and President- Elect. Dr. Román is also Secretary/Treasurer of the San Antonio Business and Economics Society (SABES), a member of the American Economic Association and its Committee on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession and Committee on the Status of Minority Groups in the Economics Profession. Román also holds memberships in the American Society of Hispanic Economists, serving on their Communications Committee, the National Economics Association, the Association for Borderland

Studies, and the International Federation for Feminist Economics.

Her research includes collaborative work with the Brookings Institute-Global Cities Initiative and impact studies for the SABÉR Research Institute, an economic development think tank dedicated to researching regional economies and their development, with a focus on assisting the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.



Dr. David W. Sommer

David Sommer serves as the Charles E. Cheever Chair of Risk Management in the Greehey School of Business at St. Mary's University. He received his Bachelor of Business Administration degree from St. Mary's University, and his M.A. and Ph.D. from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania.

For the 12 years prior to his return to St. Mary's, Dr. Sommer was a faculty member in risk management and insurance at the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business. During his career, Sommer has taught at the undergraduate, MBA, Executive MBA, and Ph.D. levels in the areas of corporate risk management and employee benefits. He has received a number of teaching honors, including

the Terry College Teacher of the Year award, the Greehey School of Business Outstanding Faculty Award, and the St. Mary's University Alumni Association Distinguished Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching.

He is a past president of the American Risk and Insurance Association and the Southern Risk and Insurance Association, and serves on the Board of Directors of the Texas Life and Health Insurance Guaranty Association.

Dr. Sommer's research has been published in a variety of academic and professional journals. He has been ranked among the most prolific and well-cited scholars in his field over the past 30 years. Dr. Sommer is also the co-author of a textbook, *Risk Management and Insurance*.



Deputy Commissioner Jaimie Walker

Jaimie Walker is deputy commissioner of the Texas Department of Insurance's (TDI) Financial Regulation Division.

She's responsible for the division's operations, including oversight of insurer solvency and related consumer protections. The division fulfills its mission through licensing companies, conducting financial analysis, performing on-site examinations, and leading regulatory interventions such as receivership for rehabilitation and/or liquidation.

Jaimie began her career with TDI in 2000 as an examiner trainee in the Examinations Section. After 12 years of holding various positions in the section, including five years as an assistant chief

examiner, she assumed the role of associate commissioner of the Licensing Services Section from 2012 to 2015.

As associate commissioner, Jaimie managed staff responsible for the incorporation and licensing of insurers and preservation of insurer records; the licensing and regulation of insurance agents, agencies, adjusters, title agents, escrow officers, navigators, and others, as well as appointments, renewals and continuing education; and the licensing and registration of independent review organizations, workers comp networks and utilization review agents.

In 2015, Jaimie was named the assistant deputy commissioner of the Financial Regulation Division. She was responsible for creating administrative procedures, being versed in the operations of the division, and serving as a resource about the division's functions to other TDI areas. In 2018, Jaimie became the deputy commissioner of the Financial Regulation Division.

Jaimie has been actively involved in various National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) committees and working groups, including the Accounting Practices and Procedures Task Force, Statutory Accounting Principles Working Group, Invested Assets Task Force, Capital Adequacy Task Force, Surplus Lines Task Force and Reinsurance Task Force. In 2025, the NAIC recognized Jaimie's outstanding service with its Robert Dineen Award, the highest honor for a state regulator.

Jaimie holds a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from Lyon College in Batesville, Arkansas. She has a Certified Financial Examiner's designation from the Society of Financial Examiners (SOFE) and has been an active member since 2000.



Texas Representative Trey Wharton

A seventh generation Texan, Rep. Trey Wharton has dedicated over three decades to serving the Huntsville community in various leadership roles. He proudly served on the Huntsville Independent School Board for eight years, including three years as Board President, where he championed education initiatives and fostered meaningful connections between schools and the community. While serving as a Huntsville School Board Trustee, he also contributed three years of service to the Huntsville Memorial Community Board of Directors where he supported efforts to enhance healthcare services in the region. Trey also served as a board member and, later, as Chair of the Huntsville Walker County Chamber of

Commerce, working to enhance the economic success of businesses in Walker County. Trey has been an active leader within numerous local organizations, including various church committees, Huntsville Boys Baseball, and the YMCA.

After graduating from Huntsville High School, Trey went on to attend Texas Christian University, where he earned a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance. He began his professional career in the banking industry before founding the Wharton Insurance Network in 1991. Through hard work, integrity, and a commitment to excellent customer service, he has built a thriving business that continues to serve individuals and families in Walker County and surrounding areas.

A recipient of the Huntsville Walker County Chamber of Commerce's 2022 Mance Park Lifetime Achievement Award recognizing individuals with long, impactful careers in public service, education, and community leadership, Trey's dedication to his community is matched by his deep commitment to his family and faith. He has been married to JoLynne for 36 years. They have two children and a granddaughter. The Whartons are members of Northside Baptist Church in Huntsville.

Sworn in during the 89th Texas Legislature to represent House District 12, Rep. Wharton serves on the House Committee on Corrections, the House Committee on Insurance, and the House Select Committee on Health Care Affordability. Rep. Wharton also serves on the National Council of Insurance Legislators' Financial Services and Multi-Lines Issues and Property-Casualty Insurance Committees. He is a member of the Republican, Rural, Water, Criminal Justice Reform, Energy, Climate, and Healthcare Affordability Caucuses, and is a member of the Texas Conservative Coalition.

House District 12 is comprised of Grimes, Madison, Robertson, Walker, Washington, and part of Brazos Counties. Trey's strong leadership and lifelong commitment to service make him a steadfast advocate for the values and needs of the people in District 12.