

About the Democracy Funders Network

The Democracy Funders Network (DFN) is a community for donors who want to learn together, build and strengthen relationships, and ultimately identify opportunities for coordination and collaboration. We convene and connect funders, curate programs, develop informational materials, and advise donors on their democracy investments. DFN serves new and existing funders in the democracy field.

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Democracy Funders Network (DFN)

Stakeholder(s):

Philanthropists

Donor Advisors

Democracy Funders Network Team

RACHEL PRITZKER :

CHAIR ~ Rachel Pritzker is President and Founder of the Pritzker Innovation Fund, which supports the development and advancement of paradigm-shifting ideas to address the world's most wicked problems. The Fund is primarily focused on U.S. Democracy and Climate and Energy. She is chair of the Democracy Funders Network and is co-founder of Patriots & Pragmatists, a network and convening space through which civic leaders and influencers debate, envision, and realize a brighter future for American democracy. Rachel is chair of the board of the Breakthrough Institute and is a board member of the Energy for Growth Hub. Rachel is also a board member of Third Way, a national think tank that champions modern center-left ideas. Rachel attended Brown University, where she majored in Latin American studies.

MIKE BERKOWITZ :

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ~ Mike Berkowitz is Executive Director of the Democracy Funders Network and co-founder of Patriots & Pragmatists, a cross-ideological network and convening space through which civic leaders and influencers debate, envision, and realize a brighter future for American democracy. Mike is also Co-Founder and Principal of Third Plateau, a full-service social impact consulting firm, where he leads the firm's Democracy practice and works across its Philanthropic Management and Jewish Community Impact portfolios. Mike is an experienced facilitator, strategist, philanthropic advisor, and grantmaker. He specializes in weaving networks, curating philanthropic learning, and developing strategies for addressing complex challenges. A native of New York City, Mike lives with his family in Berkeley, California. He enjoys spy thrillers and a good meal in a new city and is in awe of anyone who can speak more than one language.

EMILY THIELMANN :

DEPUTY DIRECTOR ~ Emily Thielmann is Deputy Director of the Democracy Funders Network, where she supports network programming and resource development and works to advise funders looking to get oriented or invest in the democracy space. Emily is also a Senior Director at Third Plateau, where she leads strategy and network building projects with social change-oriented organizations across the country. Her background is in public systems reform, youth and community engagement, and network management. Emily grew up living in

the Soviet Union, Virginia, and Brazil. She holds a B.A. in Philosophy from Vassar College. She has a Master's in Public Policy and Management from the Muskie School of Public Service at the University of Southern Maine. She lives with her husband and daughter in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

RACHEL KLEINFELD :

SENIOR ADVISOR ~ Dr. Rachel Kleinfeld is a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. She is a leading expert on how troubled democracies facing violence, polarization, and other forms of failure can improve. Her work internationally and within the United States includes service on the National Task Force on Election Crises and on the boards of the National Endowment for Democracy, Freedom House, and States United for Democracy, as well as the advisory board of Protect Democracy. She previously served on the Foreign Affairs Policy Board, which advised Secretary of State Hillary Clinton quarterly, and co-founded the Truman National Security Project, which she led for its first decade, for which Time Magazine named her one of the top 40 political leaders under 40 in America. Rachel has written three books and numerous articles; her TED talk on violence in democracies has been translated into 17 languages and viewed more than a million times. She attended Yale University where she was a Truman Scholar and received her M. Phil and D. Phil from Oxford, where she was a Rhodes Scholar. She is not expert in her husband and two young, fierce daughters.

ARI EISENSTADT :

SENIOR RESEARCHER ~ Ari Eisenstadt is a Senior Researcher at the Democracy Funders Network, where he supports the network in its learning and resource curation. Ari is also a Senior Researcher at Third Plateau, where he leads research and evaluation work within and across projects, and supports the firm's clients with strategy and operations. Ari has a varied background. As a participant in the Coro Fellows Program in Public Affairs, Ari collaborated with various clients in the St. Louis area on projects varying from reviewing web platforms to generating disposition plans for vacant land. Ari has a B.A. in Physics from Washington University and has worked with particle physics data from the Large Hadron Collider. Ari lives in Berkeley, California.

CARLY STRAUS :

PROGRAM DIRECTOR ~ Carly Straus is Program Director at the Democracy Funders Network, where she supports network programming, operations, and communications. She is also a Senior Associate at Third Plateau, where she supports a number of the firm's complex network and coalition projects. Carly

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Stakeholders (continued)

joined Third Plateau with a background in philanthropy, public health, and community development, and holds a B.A. in Peace and Conflict Studies from U.C. Berkeley. She grew up splitting time between the Bay Area and Arizona, and currently lives in Oakland.

HILLARY HOOKE :

PROGRAM ASSOCIATE ~ Hillary Hooke is a Program Associate for the Democracy Funders Network. Hillary supports individuals, nonprofits and funders within the democracy field through research and project management She began her non-profit career as an advocate for survivors of intimate partner violence in her home state of Maine - accompanying survivors to court dates, coordinating community responses to high risk DV cases, and working with local schools to provide advocacy and education to children ages 4-18yrs. More recently, Hillary managed the foster and volunteer programs at the Humane Society of Memphis and Shelby County. Hillary earned a B.A. in English Literature from Bowdoin College, which is where she developed her love of all things Arctic as a student worker at the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum. Like her father and grandparents, Hillary is Mi'kmaq from the Sipekne'katik (Shubenacadie) Band of Mi'kmaq. She spends most of her free time crocheting and exploring her new city of Reno, NV.

SYDNEY SIMPSON :

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT ~ Sydney Simpson is the Administrative Assistant for both the Democracy Funders Network and Third Plateau, where she coordinates, communicates, and

conducts projects on behalf of the DFN team. She recently graduated from the University of South Carolina with a degree in political science and criminal justice. She currently lives in Hawaii with her husband and dog, Archie.

DFN Affiliates

BAY AREA DEMOCRACY FUNDERS :

Founded in 2012, the Bay Area Democracy Funders (BADF) is a network of experts, funders, and friends who identify and amplify the most critical challenges to democracy and identify philanthropic opportunities for foundations and individual donors to support a more functional and representative democracy. BADF is comprised of Bay Area funders, senior advisors, trustees and program officers with deep experience funding groups that bolster democratic norms and reforms through individual grantmaking, private and community foundations, and donor-advised funds. In partnership with DFN, BADF engages a broad group of Bay Area funders and advocates to the sector and leverages new resources to the democracy field through regular programs and meetings.

Pam Allen :

CO-CHAIR BADF | Lisa and Douglas Goldman Fund

Jack Mahoney :

CO-CHAIR BADF | Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Vision

Democracy works

Mission

To identify opportunities for coordination and collaboration

Values

Principles:

DFN's work is guided by four key operating principles:

Engagement:

We provide learning and engagement opportunities for individual philanthropists and donor advisors (not just institutional foundation professionals) who are motivated to support democracy work.

Learning

Cross-Ideology:

We are cross-ideological, helping to disrupt hyperpolarization and to maintain a cross-ideological commitment to fundamental democratic norms, values, and institutions.

Relationships:

We elevate authentic relationship building as a key component of effective long-term field building.

Partnership:

We are partnership-oriented and aim to animate, rather than divert attention from, aligned and effective donor networks.

U.S. Democracy

Help donors better understand and respond to the long-term challenges facing U.S. democracy

Stakeholder(s)

Donors

FOCUS AREAS ~ DFN takes a big-picture view of the challenges facing American democracy and the approaches to solving them. We do not believe there is a silver bullet that will enable American democracy to thrive over the next fifty years and beyond. On the contrary, many approaches will likely play a role in fixing what ails us. We help donors better understand and respond to the long-term challenges facing U.S. democracy, with a programmatic focus in six primary areas:

1. Polarization

Enable individuals and groups to live alongside one another and work together across lines of difference

TOXIC POLARIZATION ~ America is hyper-polarized, with politicians on the right and the left abandoning democratic moderating norms like forbearance for win-at-all-cost tactics, and the American public sorted into increasingly oppositional tribal groups. How do we help heal the deep divides that have formed in order to repair, rebuild, and sustain a democracy that allows individuals and groups to live alongside one another and work together across lines of difference?

2. Authoritarianism

Combat authoritarian populism

AUTHORITARIAN POPULISM ~ Authoritarian populism is on the rise around the globe, with populist figures in countries big and small, rich and poor, undermining the rule of law, quashing dissent, attacking the media, and questioning the legitimacy and loyalty of their opponents as they profess to speak for “the people” to the exclusion of vulnerable groups or those with different views. What is this phenomenon? What is causing it? And how do we combat it?

3. Culture & Learning

Build a vibrant civic culture and ensure citizens understand and participate in the practice of American democracy

CIVIC CULTURE & LEARNING ~ The civic fabric of the United States is unraveling amidst growing social isolation, deteriorating civic institutions, mistrust of experts and elites, and insufficient civic education. What cultural forces at the individual and communal level drive fragmentation? How can we build a vibrant civic culture that is relevant to the twenty-first century? And how can we ensure citizens understand and participate in the practice of American democracy?

4. Multiethnicity

Realize a truly inclusive multiethnic democracy

INCLUSIVE MULTIETHNIC DEMOCRACY ~ The United States is an unprecedented experiment in large-scale multiethnic democracy. As the country further diversifies and more Americans acquire rights that were once restricted to a privileged few, democracy faces a new set of challenges and opportunities. What stands in the way of realizing a truly inclusive multiethnic democracy, and how can we get there?

5. Politics

Create greater representation, fairness, participation, transparency, and predictability in the American political system

DEMOCRACY REFORM ~ Across the country reformers are working on structural and policy reforms aimed at creating greater representation, fairness, participation, transparency, and predictability in the American political system. While many of the underlying challenges democracy reforms aim to address are embedded in DFN's other focus areas, reform work itself constitutes distinct area of focus. What is happening in the reform space at the federal, state, and local levels? What kinds of reforms are being tested, and what are the anticipated (and potential unanticipated) consequences of these policies?

6. Information

Harness the opportunities digital technologies offer

THE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT ~ The world has been permanently transformed by the new ways information can be accessed and shared. How do we both harness the opportunities digital technologies offer, such as new opportunities for interpersonal connection, greater transparency and information-sharing, and a higher degree of collective action, while also protecting democracy from the growing threats of misinformation and disinformation, fragmentation of news and information, social manipulation, and loneliness, anxiety, and depression?

Administrative Information

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