

Beat: Health

## **PRES. BIDEN ANNOUNCES KEY APPOINTMENTS TO THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE**

### **INTELLECTUAL DISABLED PEOPLE**

Paris, Washington DC, 13.03.2022, 01:58 Time

**USPA NEWS** - Today, President Biden announces his intent to appoint the following individuals to serve as members on the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities, in line with his effective inclusive approach of American Democracy:

- Shawn Aleong
- Paul Aronsohn
- Paul Boskind
- Eva Bunnell
- James T. Brett
- Hillary Dunn Stanisz
- Kara Jones
- Nicole Jorwic
- Cathy Kanefsky
- M. Brent Leonhard
- Joseph M. Macbeth
- Gabriel Martinez
- Lucy Meyer
- Tia Nelis
- Santa Perez
- Nick Perry
- James Trout
- Wendy Strauss
- Liz Weintraub
- Jordyn Zimmerman

The President's Committee on People with Intellectual Disabilities serves as a federal advisor to the President and the Secretary of Health and Human Services on matters relating to persons with intellectual disabilities. The Committee has 21 citizens members who serve two-year terms. Individuals appointed to this Committee reflect the diversity of America and include people with intellectual disabilities and their family members, researchers, service providers and other professionals, community and business representatives, and systems advocates.

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- Shawn Aleong, Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities
- Shawn Aleong is a young African American man with cerebral palsy and an intellectual disability, as well as a disability and civil rights activist. He is a sophomore at Temple University, where he studies Legal Studies, Real Estate, and Finance. Aleong serves as Senior Advisor to Temple Student Government and sits on the Board of Advisers for Temple's Institute on Disabilities. He is also an intern at Disability Rights Pennsylvania and a member of the NAACP. Previously, he was a member of Philadelphia's Police Advisory Commission and the Board of Directors for The Arc of Philadelphia, an organization that advocates for the rights of people with disabilities.
- Paul Aronsohn, Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities
- Paul Aronsohn currently serves as New Jersey's statewide Ombudsman for Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities and Their Families – a position to which he was appointed by Governor Phil Murphy in April 2018. As such, he serves as the administration's lead advocate and ally for New Jersey residents in need of critical services and supports ranging from early childhood through adulthood. Aronsohn has held positions in both the public and private sectors, serving as Mayor of Ridgewood, NJ as well as

at the U.S. Department of State during the Clinton Administration. Aronsohn's understanding and passion for disability issues is rooted in his family experience. He learned so much from his siblings, including his sister Patti, who lived her life with disabilities as well as with enormous strength, courage, grace, and beauty. He also learned from their mother, Margot, who was his sister's primary caregiver.

- Paul Boskind, Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities
- Paul Boskind, PhD is a licensed psychologist and Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Deer Oaks, a Behavioral Health Organization. Boskind is a Person with Disability, as he is legally blind. His doctoral program focused on clinical and school psychology, and his doctoral dissertation was on adjustment to physical disabilities with a focus on adjustment to blindness. He has worked with the disabled population at Helen Keller Services for the Blind, the Epilepsy Foundation, and the Lighthouse for the Blind. Boskind is experienced in working with persons with intellectual disabilities across the age span and in various settings, including day treatment programs, group homes, sheltered workshops, and school settings. He serves on the Leadership Council of the Foundation Fighting Blindness, the Advisory Council of the San Antonio Lighthouse for the Blind, and the Disability Rights Working Group at the Berkeley Center on Comparative Equality and Anti-Discrimination Law at UC Berkeley School of Law.

Eva Bunnell, Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities

- Eva Bunnell is a proud, former federal staffer. She served in the congressional office of Representative John B. Larson (CT-01), rising to District Director, and most recently as a Senior Partnership Specialist and Congressional & Tribal Regional Lead, New York Census Region, for the 2020 Census. During her time as a federal employee, she won the John Joseph Moakley Award for Exemplary Public Service and the U.S. Census Bureau's 2020 Bronze Award-Congressional Team. She has also served as Director of Government Relations for the Connecticut Children's Medical Center and as a family advocate for families who have children with special needs. Bunnell currently serves as President of the Board of Directors for The Michael Bolton Charities. Bunnell is most proud of being partner to her husband, Charles, and mom to four children. Her first child, who passed away at the age of 26, was born with a serious brain disease that left her profoundly disabled and medically fragile. Her beautiful daughter, Jacinta, was then-Senator Christopher J. Dodd's inspiration for the federal Family and Medical Leave Act.

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- Hillary Dunn Stanisz, Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities
- Hillary Dunn Stanisz has an older brother with Angelman Syndrome, and, as a result of this experience, she has devoted her career and volunteer activities to assisting individuals with disabilities and their families. Dunn Stanisz is a Senior Attorney at the Disability Law Center, the Protection and Advocacy agency for Massachusetts, where she focuses on advocating for appropriate community supports and services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and conducting abuse and neglect investigations. For several years, Dunn Stanisz served on the Massachusetts Developmental Disabilities Council. Currently, she serves on the Steering Committee for The Arc of Massachusetts and as Co-President of the Board of Directors for the Massachusetts Sibling Support Network. Dunn Stanisz is a graduate of Northeastern University School of Law and Tufts University.

James T. Brett has served as the President and Chief Executive Officer of The New England Council, the nation's oldest non-partisan regional business association, since 1996. Brett is a disability rights advocate, serving as Chairman of both the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Intellectual Disability and the Disabled Persons Protection Commission. He also serves as Vice Chairman on the National Council on Disability. Previously, Brett was President of the Board of Directors of the Massachusetts Association for Mental Health. He was inducted to the Massachusetts Special Olympics Hall of Fame and bestowed The Edward M. Kennedy Leadership Award by Disability Law Center. University of Massachusetts Boston established the James T. Brett Chair, the nation's only endowed chair in disability and workforce development.

- Kara Jones, Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities
- Kara Jones is a member of many self-advocacy groups. These include Project ACTION!, a regional coalition of self-advocates and self-advocacy groups from the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia, and People on the Go of Maryland, a statewide advocacy group made up of people with intellectual and/or development disabilities. Jones is also involved in Expectations Matter: My Life, My Plan, My Choice, which is a Person-Centered Planning Training program for people with disabilities and family members.
- Nicole Jorwic, Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities
- Nicole Jorwic is the Chief of Advocacy and Campaigns at Caring Across Generations. Before joining Caring Across, Jorwic was Senior Director of Public Policy and Senior Executive Officer of State Advocacy at The Arc of the United States. Before coming to DC to work on Federal Advocacy, she served as Senior Policy Advisor and Manager of the Employment First Initiative in Illinois. Prior to that appointment, Jorwic was the CEO/President of the Institute on Public Policy for People with Disabilities. She is also an accomplished special education attorney and an advocate for students with disabilities and their families. Jorwic is most importantly a sibling—her brother Chris is 32 and has autism.

Cathy Kanefsky, Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities

• Cathy Kanefsky's personal experiences fuel her passion for serving mission-driven organizations. Kanefsky and her husband, Carl, have three sons. Thirty-year-old twins Sam and Adam were born four months early and live with significant physical and intellectual disabilities, including autism. Their 28-year-old son, Stephen, and his wife, Alexandra, are both special education teachers. After 14 years in leadership roles at the March of Dimes, Kanefsky built and led national field operations for Autism Speaks. Following five years as Chief Development Officer at A.I. duPont Hospital for Children, she now serves as the President and CEO of the Food Bank of Delaware. Her determination to help those seeking a better future is the foundation for enhancing job training and employment opportunities at the Food Bank – for all people – including those with intellectual disabilities.

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M. Brent Leonhard, Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities

M. Brent Leonhard is an Attorney in the Office of Legal Counsel for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. He has spent his career advocating for the advancement and expansion of the rights of tribal nations and citizens. In 2011, Leonhard was appointed to Attorney General Eric Holder's Federal/Tribal Domestic Violence Taskforce. In 2015, he was appointed to the U.S. Sentencing Commission's Tribal Issues Advisory Group. As a parent of an Autistic child, he is intimately familiar with the structural and systemic problems and frustrations those with intellectual or developmental disabilities face. Leonhard is intent on advocating for significant improvements to federal law and policy in this area.

Joseph M. Macbeth, Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Joseph M. Macbeth is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals and the first employee hired by the organization in 2011. While working in New York, Macbeth partnered with the State University of New York to assist more than 500 direct support professionals in advancing their college education through the "Disability Studies Certificate". He is a guest faculty at the National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities and currently sits on the College of Direct Support's National Advisory Board. In 2016, Macbeth was appointed by as a Member of the Advisory Council for the New York State Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs. In 2019, he was appointed by the Administration for Community Living as a member of the National Quality Forum's Committee on Person-Centered Planning and has been recognized by the National Historic Recognition Project for significant national contributions in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Gabriel Martinez, Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Gabriel "Gabe" Martinez is currently Project Co-Coordinator at the University of Arizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities, where he has worked as a peer navigator and office assistant for two years. He is a 2016 graduate of the Sonoran Center's Project SEARCH, an employment preparation program. Martinez is a regular speaker and trainer for webinars, course guest lectures, high school classroom presentations, medical student education at the UArizona College of Medicine-Tucson, as well as a co-coordinator of a Native youth focused transition and employment program called the Finds Their Way: Communities for Youth Transition. He works as a peer navigator on multiple projects, including the Transition AHEAD Roundtable, a comprehensive youth-to-adult transition program. Martinez serves on the leadership group for Self-Advocacy Solutions and represents the Sonoran Center on the Association of University Centers on Disabilities' Council on Leadership in Advocacy.

Lucy Meyer, Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Lucy Meyer is an international advocate for young people with disabilities. She has worked closely with Special Olympic, Best Buddies, and UNICEF. She was born with cerebral palsy as a result of oxygen deprivation for five minutes at birth. Doctors originally indicated that Lucy might never be able to sit up or swallow, but she proudly states that the doctors were wrong. Since 2013, she has worked tirelessly to make sure that young people with disabilities, wherever they are around the world, receive quality health and education and experience the joy of sport and participation in society. Her advocacy for the acceptance and inclusion of young people with disabilities has taken her to the United Nations, U.S. Congress, as well as meetings with ministers and officials throughout the world.

Tia Nelis, Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Tia Nelis currently serves as Coordinator of Self-Advocate Engagement at TASH, an international advocacy association of people with disabilities, their family members, other advocates, and people who work in the disability field. In this role, she supports the Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center. Nelis previously served as Director of Policy and Advocacy. Nelis has drawn on her experience as a person with a disability to promote and demonstrate the benefits of empowering people with disabilities to effectively advocate for themselves.

Santa Perez, Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Santa Perez is a published author, mother, and self-advocate living with cerebral palsy in Las Vegas, Nevada. She currently serves as Chair of the Nevada Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities and sits on numerous councils and committees, including the Executive Board of National Association of Council on Developmental Disabilities. Perez is also the Founding Member and President Emeritus of People First Nevada. She recently published her first book, *Sitting at Eye Level: My Life as an Advocate, a Professional, a*

Woman, a Mom and a Person with a Significant Disability. She earned her B.A. in Psychology from Cal State Northridge. She is a proud mother to her son, Noah.

Nick Perry, Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Nick Perry is a sibling of a young man with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), and he's also been a foster father to children with disabilities. Perry has over 25 years of cumulative experience in the disability field, ranging from disability policy and implementation to corporate disability inclusion strategy. Currently, he is the Disability Inclusion subject matter expert for the Boeing company. Additionally, he is the Chairman of the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities as appointed by Gov. Kemp and leads the Georgia Sibling Connection, a support and social group for siblings of individuals with disabilities.

James Trout, Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities

James Trout was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome when he was 15 years old and subsequently diagnosed with Dysthymic Disorder at the age of 25. He received his B.A. from American University in Political Science and his M.S. from George Mason University in Transportation Policy, Operation, and Logistics. For the last three years, Trout has worked as an analyst for SourceAmerica, a nonprofit dedicated to increasing employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. Previously, he was a policy fellow for the nonprofit RespectAbility. In this role, he traveled to Iowa and New Hampshire to speak with Presidential candidates about their plans to improve job prospects for persons with disabilities.

Wendy Strauss, Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Wendy Strauss has over 40 years of experience working in the human service field. She recently retired after serving 23 years as the Executive Director of the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens, which seeks to improve the lives of Delawareans of all ages through advice and advocacy. Throughout her career, Strauss has worked for and with individuals with disabilities and their families to positively impact their lives through legislation, policies, and procedures. She was born and raised in Delaware and received her A.A. from Delaware Technical and Community College and her B.S. from the University of Wilmington.

Liz Weintraub, Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Liz Weintraub is a disability policy advocate and a full-time member of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities' policy team. She also hosts "Tuesdays With Liz: Disability Policy for All," a video series highlighting current issues in disability policy. Previously, Weintraub served as a fellow for Senator Casey of Pennsylvania, working on disability policy. She has also worked for the Council on Quality & Leadership and is an alumnus of the LEND training program at the Center for Leadership in Disability at Georgia State University. In 2018, she testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee about her personal experience as a woman with disabilities.

Jordyn Zimmerman, Member, President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Jordyn Zimmerman is a recent graduate from Boston College, where she earned her Masters of Education. Before graduate school, she interned at the National Disability Rights Network and completed her bachelor's degree in Education Policy at Ohio University. As a nonspeaking autistic student who was denied access to effective augmentative communication until she was 18, Zimmerman has personal experience challenging the educational status quo, which is featured in the 2021 documentary, This Is Not About Me. Zimmerman also serves on the board of CommunicationFIRST and is passionate about ensuring every student is able to access effective communication and exercise their right to a truly inclusive education..../ Source : The White House

#### **Article online:**

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-20188/pres-biden-announces-key-appointments-to-the-presidents-committee.html>

#### **Editorial office and responsibility:**

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSIV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Jedi Foster, Rahma Sophia RACHDI

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