



National Lieutenant Governors Association

SPEAKERS BIO BOOK
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Sarasota, Florida
April 8-10, 2026

Deputy Secretary Stephen Vaden, U.S. Department of Agriculture



Judge Stephen Alexander Vaden was appointed as the Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture on July 7, 2025. Alongside Secretary Brooke L. Rollins, Deputy Secretary Vaden leads the Department's operations and implements policies that support America's food and farm systems.

A native of Union City, Tennessee, Deputy Secretary Vaden brings expertise in agricultural policy, law, and rural development. Previously, he served as a judge on the U.S. Court of International Trade and as General Counsel of USDA. Throughout Deputy Secretary Vaden's time as General Counsel, he led successful Supreme Court litigation, advanced regulatory reform, and supported the implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill.

He is a graduate of Yale Law School and Vanderbilt University. A public servant with strong agricultural roots, Deputy Secretary Vaden is committed to revitalizing rural America and ensuring an abundant, affordable, and safe U.S. food supply.

Robert Long, President & CEO, Space Florida



Robert Long has nearly two decades of experience crafting defense industrial, aerospace, and fiscal policy and strategies, which included key roles advising the Defense Department's Chief Technology Officer and senior Defense Department space leaders. He has a long track record of building partnerships across and within government & industry toward mutually beneficial outcomes.

Long most recently served as the Commander for Space Launch Delta 30 and Western Launch and Test Range, Vandenberg Space Force Base. In this role he managed \$8.4 billion in assets, a \$280 million annual budget, installations spanning more than 118,000 acres, and oversaw 11,000 military, civilian, and contractor personnel.

Long received his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Washington, earned a master's degree in aerospace engineering from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs and has master's degree from the College of Naval Command and Staff, the School for Advanced Air and Space Studies and the Eisenhower School. He retired as a colonel from the United States Space Force in July 2023.

Paul Sohl, Rear Adm. USN (Ret), CEO, Florida High Tech Corridor



As CEO, Sohl facilitates connection and collaboration between Florida's three major research universities (University of Central Florida, University of South Florida, and University of Florida) and their partners in academia, industry and economic development.

He also oversees The Corridor's portfolio of programs supporting research, marketing, workforce and entrepreneurship. This includes its cornerstone Matching Grants Research Program, which since its inception in 1996 has generated over \$1 billion in verified downstream impacts; Cenfluence — a clustering initiative in partnership with the governments of Orange County, Seminole County, the City of Orlando and Duke Energy; STEM outreach; and Small Business Innovative Research facilitation.

Sohl joined The Corridor in June 2020, following more than three decades of service in the U.S. Navy. In his last command, Sohl led over 500 civilian and military personnel at the Navy's Operational Test & Evaluation Force in Norfolk, Virginia, where he directed the operational testing and evaluation of all Navy warfighting systems and capabilities. Sohl has extensive experience in simulation and training as a program director and test pilot and has served two tours overseas for Operation Desert Shield and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Sohl holds a bachelor's degree in aeronautical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a master's degree in aeronautical and astronautical engineering from Stanford University.

Vilma Consuegra, Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Wounded Warrior Project



Vilma Consuegra serves as Chief Marketing and Communications Officer at Wounded Warrior Project (WWP). In this role, she is responsible for translating the organization's strategic priorities into integrated marketing and communication strategies to further support WWP's mission to honor and empower wounded warriors.

Prior to joining WWP Vilma was a senior executive with Acosta Sales & Marketing, a leading outsourced sales and marketing agency in the consumer-packaged goods industry. At Acosta she oversaw the Marketing and Communications teams for 13 years leading the development and execution of marketing and communication strategies including brand, marketing, internal communication, advertising, and public relations.

Vilma is a former board member of Angelwood, a Jacksonville not-for-profit organization supporting children and adults with developmental disabilities. She previously served as a member of the Leadership Jacksonville Board of Directors and is a graduate of Leadership Jacksonville class of 2008.

Vilma holds a bachelor's degree in public relations from the University of Florida and an MBA from the University of South Florida.

James Jacobs, Director of Partnerships and Policy, Cyber Florida



At Cyber Florida, James manages a team that is responsible for leading the Center's Public Policy Research efforts and Partnerships Program. In addition, he serves as the liaison to Government Affairs on behalf of the Center and facilitates the Center's advisory and governance support bodies.

James brings a decade of expertise and leadership in education, community relations, policy development, and advocacy to his role.

Prior to Cyber Florida, James served as the Government Affairs Manager for a major regional water supplier, overseeing all the agency's federal and state lobbying efforts and coordinating all the agency's grant development initiatives. He has a wealth of experience in the policy process and has served in various staff roles in both

legislative and executive offices at the state and federal levels.

James holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Florida in history and a Master of Public Administration from the University of South Florida. He is actively pursuing his PhD in Higher Education Administration at the University of South Florida.

Robert O'Leary, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism, International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce



Robert O'Leary serves as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism within the National Travel and Tourism Office (NTTO) at the U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration.

NTTO produces the official U.S. government statistics on travel and tourism, is the federal liaison to Brand USA, and collaborates with federal agencies and international counterparts to promote the United States as a leading global travel destination.

As DAS for Travel and Tourism, Mr. O'Leary and his team support policies and programs that enhance the global competitiveness of the U.S. travel and tourism sector, help steer the development of the National Travel and Tourism Strategy, and advance efforts to expand travel and tourism exports in support of jobs and economic growth nationwide.

Prior to joining the International Trade Administration, Mr. O'Leary spent more than 25 years in the hospitality industry, including roles in franchise development at Choice Hotels and WoodSpring Suites, and as a hotel investment advisor at The Plasencia Group.

He graduated cum laude from the University of Pennsylvania with a Bachelor of Science from the Wharton School and a Bachelor of Arts from the College of Arts and Sciences and earned his Juris Doctor from Duke University School of Law.

Andy Belcher, Ed.D., Founding Partner, EQUUS Leadership Solutions



Dr. Andy Belcher, Ed.D., has worked as a Math & Science Teacher, a Guidance Counselor, Principal, and currently the Assistant Superintendent of Hopkins County Schools in Madisonville, Kentucky, as well as other roles in the education field.

Dr. Belcher is a founding partner of Equus Leadership Solutions. Equus' digital solutions integrate mental health support with behavioral risk assessments, providing secure, centralized access to essential student data whenever it is needed.

He holds a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) and a specialization in School Safety from Oakland City University, and is an adjunct professor at Oakland City University, in Indiana.