

Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development and the Economy

Overview of the California Economy

Wednesday, February 11, 2015
California State Capitol, Room 444
9:00 a.m. to noon

Witness Biographies

Donna Davis Regional Administrator Region IX federal Small Business Administration

Donna Davis was appointed by President Barack Obama in December 2013 to serve as the SBA Regional Administrator for Region IX, which encompasses Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, and Nevada. As the senior executive for the Region, Ms. Davis oversees the capital, contracting, and counseling services and leads a team of 500+ employees who work diligently to help small businesses and entrepreneurs start, grow and innovate.

Previously, Ms. Davis was the CEO of the Arizona Small Business Association (ASBA), championing the needs and issues of entrepreneurs and small business owners on the federal and state levels. Under her dynamic leadership, ASBA grew substantially to be the largest trade association in the state with over 11,000 business members.

A successful serial entrepreneur, Ms. Davis also served as Founder, President and CEO of a global event management company, an international speakers' bureau and a real estate investment firm. Notable events included the location production for the movie Jerry Maguire starring Tom Cruise, Super Bowl XXX Halftime show and conferences for HP, IBM and Charles Schwab. Notable speakers included Colin Powell, Lou Holtz, Terry Bradshaw, Nely Galan, Sherman Alexie, Jim Collins and Lisa Ling.

Prior to this, Ms. Davis spent twelve years as a senior executive in the high tech microcomputer industry working for global Fortune 500 corporations. She also worked as a Park Ranger at Grand Canyon National Park, a unique experience she will always treasure.

Ms. Davis has served on the boards of the American Indian Chamber of Commerce, Arizona Science Center, East Valley Community Bank, National Small Business Association, National Association of Women Business Owners, and Women Impacting Public Policy and is a Leadership America inductee.

She was appointed by Governor Janet Napolitano to serve on the Equity in State Contracting Board. For her professional success and dedication to the community, Ms. Davis has received numerous awards and recognitions including the World of Difference Award from The International Alliance of Women, iVillage and Microsoft National Entrepreneurial Star Award, ATHENA Leadership Award, Arizona Society of Association Executives Executive of the Year, US SBA Arizona Woman Business of the Year, and the Girl Scouts of Arizona's Women of Distinction Community Service Award.

She graduated with high honors from Northern Arizona University and completed a Harvard Business School Executive Program.

Mr. Ehsan Gharatappeh
CEO, Cellpoint Corporation

Mr. Ehsan Gharatappeh was born and raised in Houston, Texas and is the CEO of CellPoint Corporation, a global manufacturing firm based in Orange County, CA. Cellpoint Corp assists manufacturing companies with creative and innovative solutions to reduce manufacturing costs and increase product value. He enjoys skiing, mountain climbing and general mountaineering. Ehsan lives in Newport Beach with his wife and two children.

Mr. Scott Hauge
President, CAL Insurance and Associates, Inc.

Scott G. Hauge is the President and owner of CAL Insurance & Associates, Inc. The company was founded in 1927 and currently has 25 employees. Since then, the agency has achieved B Corporation certification while continuing to specialize in providing insurance for small to medium sized businesses.

Mr. Hauge has been a leading advocate in paving the way for small and medium sized businesses. He has introduced government legislation that has affected business on local, state and national levels. He is considered one of the insurance industry's leaders in setting guidelines and has received numerous awards and countless commendations for his efforts. Scott was awarded the 2007 Small Business Advocate of the Year presented by The National Small Business Association (NSBA) and has been named the 2014 Small Business Advocate of the year by the California Association for Micro Enterprise Opportunity (CAMEO).

Mr. Hauge is renowned for his knowledge and how to best protect and serve the business community. He is currently a member of over 20 boards and commissions in San Francisco and California. He is founder and President of Small Business California, a non-profit, non-partisan advocacy and education group for small business in California. It outreaches to 2700 small businesses statewide representing most of the 3.2 million small businesses in California. Mr. Hauge also serves as Co-Founder and Vice President of Clinic by the Bay, and on the Board of Advisors at Insure the Uninsured Project (ITUP). As of 2012, Mr. Hauge has been appointed by Senator Steinberg to be the Vice Chair of the California Commission on Disability Access.

Dr. Jerry Nickelsburg
Adjunct Professor of Economic, Anderson School of Management and Senior Economist,
UCLA Anderson Forecast

Jerry Nickelsburg joined the UCLA's Anderson School of Management in 2006. He teaches economics in the MBA program with a focus on Asian economies. At the Anderson Forecast he plays a key role in the economic modeling and forecasting of the National, and California economies. He has conducted research in the areas of labor economics, industrial organization, statistics, and international monetary economics, focusing on the development of new data and the application of economic theory and statistical methods to policy issues. His current academic research is on specific skills, structural unemployment, and the seasonal adjustment of time series. He is a regular presenter at Economic Conferences is cited in the national media including the Financial Times, Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Los Angeles Times, and Reuters.

He received his Ph.D. in economics from the University of Minnesota in 1980 specializing in monetary economics and econometrics. He was formerly a professor of Economics at the University of Southern California and has held executive positions with McDonnell Douglas, FlightSafety International, and FlightSafety Boeing during a fifteen-year span in the aviation business. He also held a position with the Federal Reserve Board of Governors developing forecasting tools, and has advised banks, investors and financial institutions.

From 2000 to 2006, he was the Managing Principal of Deep Blue Economics, a consulting firm he founded. He has been the recipient of the Korda Fellowship, USC Outstanding Teacher, India Chamber of Commerce Jubilee Lecturer and is a Fulbright Scholar. He has published over 100 scholarly and popular articles on monetary economics, economic forecasting and analysis, labor economics, and industrial organization and he is the author of two books on monetary economics and exchange rates.

Ms. Molly Ramsdell

Director, Washington Office, National Conference of State Legislatures

Molly Ramsdell, Director, Washington Office, National Conference of State Legislatures

Molly Ramsdell is Director of the Washington, D.C. office of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and oversees the Conference's state-federal affairs division. Ms. Ramsdell joined NCSL in 1996 and prior to becoming the D.C. office director in 2010, staffed a number of NCSL standing committees and task forces. In that capacity, she led NCSL's advocacy activities before Congress and the administration on a range of issues including deficit reduction, unfunded mandate reform, surface transportation, the REAL ID, homeland security and emergency preparedness, and clean air and clean water issues. Ms. Ramsdell was the author of NCSL's Mandate Monitor, a publication that tracks federal mandates and the cost shift to states.

Prior to joining NCSL, Ms. Ramsdell was a research associate at the Intergovernmental Health Policy Project at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. where she tracked state legislation on managed care. Ms. Ramsdell holds a master's degree in public health from the George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences. She also completed her undergraduate work at George Washington University.

Dave Petree

CEO, Cloak and Dagger

Dave Petree is founder and CEO for the Sacramento start-up software company; Cloak and Dagger which specializes in cyber security for the average computer user. Their namesake product "Cloak and Dagger Encryption" allows someone to encrypt documents with virtually no training.

David has 20 years experience in the tech field. Although a terrible speller, Dave somehow managed to get a Bachelor's degree in business and project management from Colorado Tech and surprisingly an advanced degree in Data and Systems Analysis from Oxford University- yeah, the one in England. His dream is to one day hire someone full time to follow him around "reminding me how awesome I am"

Dave lives in Sacramento, CA with his wife and daughters and calls Sacramento the "best kept secret in California". He spends his time surfing all over the world and watching international soccer matches.

Mr. Mac Taylor

California's Legislative Analyst Legislative Analyst's Office

Mac Taylor was appointed to the position of Legislative Analyst in October 2008, as the fifth person to serve in that capacity since the office was founded in 1941. In his 30-year career with the office, he has served in various capacities:

- Program Analyst. He worked in the tax area (primarily income-related taxes), authoring reports on state and local spending limits, tax expenditure programs, and tax auditing issues.

- Section Head. Mac managed the General Government section in the office, covering a wide variety of assignments (retirement, employee compensation, labor issues, and housing).
- Deputy. He served for 17 years as deputy to the prior Analyst, Elizabeth Hill, overseeing the work of the K-12 Education, Higher Education, Local Government, State Administration, and Economics and Taxation sections.

As Legislative Analyst, Mac serves as the nonpartisan fiscal advisor to both houses of the California Legislature and oversees the preparation of annual fiscal and policy analyses of the state's budget and programs. His office is also responsible for preparing impartial analyses of all initiatives and constitutional measures qualifying for the state's ballot. Mac earned a bachelor's degree, with highest honors, in political science from the University of California, Riverside, and a master's degree in public affairs from Princeton University. He serves on the Statewide Leadership Council of the Public Policy Institute of California. Mac resides in Carmichael with his wife and they have three children.