



Bipartisan Policy Center

BPC Special Event: A Paid Family Leave Conversation with Top Philanthropic, Business, and Advocacy Leaders

Wednesday, August 25 | 2:30pm Eastern

PANELISTS



Suzanne Clark

President and CEO, U.S. Chamber of Commerce

[🐦 @SuzanneUSCC](https://twitter.com/SuzanneUSCC)

Suzanne Clark is president and chief executive officer of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, a director on two corporate boards, a former business owner, and an entrepreneur at heart. With a global perspective and a fierce commitment to free enterprise, Clark's experience in the private sector deeply informs her leadership of the U.S. Chamber—the world's largest business organization representing employers of every size and sector in Washington, D.C., across the country, and around the globe.

Prior to rejoining the U.S. Chamber in 2014, she acquired and led a prominent financial information boutique—Potomac Research Group. Before that, Clark was president of the National Journal Group (NJG), a premier provider of information, news, and analysis for Washington's political and policy

communities. Through 2010, Clark led NJG through a period of rapid digital transformation, resulting in record-level profits and multiple journalism awards. Earlier in her career, Clark served in multiple leadership positions at the U.S. Chamber, including chief operating officer, and as chief of staff at a major transportation association.

Carrying her passion for business and entrepreneurship into the classroom, Clark was a 2021 Spring Fellow at American University's Sine Institute of Policy & Politics, where she led a lecture series on the role of private sector job creation. Clark earned a B.A., magna cum laude, and an M.B.A. from Georgetown University. She lives in Virginia with her husband and their daughter.



Kelly Veney Darnell

Chief Operating Officer, Bipartisan Policy Center

Kelly Veney Darnell is the Chief Operating Officer for the Bipartisan Policy Center. She has extensive experience across several sectors including positions in nonprofit, banking, government, legal and politics. Kelly has served in the capacity of Chief Operating Officer (COO) for several organizations including The Executive Leadership Council, United Way of the National Capital Area, and for the Washington, D.C. Office of the State Superintendent of Education. As COO for these organizations, she has been responsible for operations, as well as fundraising, marketing and communications, member services, and

events management. In addition to her operational experience, she practiced corporate law and served as a risk

manager in Capital Markets Structured Finance at Bank of America. Her board service includes the D.C. Bar Foundation and Calvary Women's Services. She is a Woodrow Wilson Fellow and has received numerous awards, including the 2019 Washington Business Journal's Women Who Mean Business Award.

She received her B.A. in Economics from Spelman College and a Master's of Public Management degree from the University of Maryland. She received her law degree from the American University, Washington College of Law.



Debra L. Ness

President, National Partnership for Women & Families

[@DebraLNess](#)

Debra L. Ness is president of the National Partnership for Women & Families, an organization that works to improve the lives of women and families by achieving equity for all women. She serves on the Executive Committee of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (LCCHR) and co-chairs its Health Care Task Force. She serves on the Board of Directors of the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), is a member of the Board of Directors of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) and serves on the advisory

board for the Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy. She is also one of the first public members of the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) Board of Directors and was appointed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to serve on the Guiding Committee of the Health Care Payment Learning & Action Network (HCPLAN).

Debra graduated summa cum laude from Drew University with a bachelor's degree in psychology and sociology. She received her Master's of Science from Columbia University School of Social Work. Prior to that she headed field operations for NARAL, where she worked to revitalize the organization's grassroots political capability and affiliate network, before becoming its deputy director and helping transform the organization into a major force in electoral politics. She also spent eight years in labor movement working for SEIU, promoting the development of on-the-job training and advancement opportunities for low-wage workers.

MODERATOR



Melinda French Gates

Co-Chair, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Founder, Pivotal Ventures

[@melindagates](#)

Melinda earned a bachelor's degree in computer science and economics and an MBA, both from Duke University. She spent the first decade of her career developing multimedia products at Microsoft before leaving the company to focus on her family and philanthropic work. She has three children, Jenn, Rory, and Phoebe, and lives in Seattle, Washington.

Melinda French Gates is a philanthropist, businesswoman, and global advocate for women and girls.

As the co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Melinda sets the direction and priorities of the world's largest philanthropy. She is also the

founder of Pivotal Ventures, an investment and incubation company working to drive social progress for women and families in the United States, and the author of the bestselling book *The Moment of Lift*.

Melinda grew up in Dallas, Texas. She received a bachelor's degree in computer science from Duke University and an MBA from Duke's Fuqua School. Melinda spent the first decade of her career developing multimedia products at Microsoft before leaving the company to focus on her family and philanthropic work. She has three children, Jenn, Rory, and Phoebe, and lives in Seattle, Washington.

