

# Conference Agenda

## Sunday, November 2

**Washington Marriott Georgetown**

**1221 22nd Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037**

### **Early Arrivals, Program Registration and Exhibitor Set-up**

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

### **Memorandum of Understanding Signing between the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission of Kenya and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems**

***Room 3015, Third Floor***

1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Ahmed Issack Hassan, Chairman, Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission

William R. Sweeney Jr., IFES President and Chief Executive Officer

### **Opening Remarks**

***West End Ballroom, Second Floor***

2:00 p.m. – 2:25 p.m.

William R. Sweeney Jr., IFES President and Chief Executive Officer

Judy A. Black, Vice Chairman, IFES Board of Directors

### **Plenary Session: America Votes: An Introduction to the U.S. Election System(s)**

***West End Ballroom, Second Floor***

2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

The Constitution of the United States guarantees American citizens the right to vote for their government representatives every two years, on the first Tuesday (after the first Monday) in November. Yet, it is the laws of the states and territories that govern the administration of these elections and together constitute the electoral system. The decentralized nature of elections in the United States is a product of federalism, history and political traditions.

Moderated by Michael Svetlik, IFES Vice President of Programs

Speakers:

Thad Hall, Director of the Master of Public Policy Program, University of Utah

Doug Chapin, Director, Program for Excellence in Election Administration, University of Minnesota

**Afternoon Break**

3:35 p.m. – 3:55 p.m.

**Breakout I: Party Politics Unplugged: Primaries and the Practice of Democracy in America's Two-Party System**

*Dupont Ballroom, Second Floor*

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

For over a century, primary elections have been a common feature of the two-party system of the United States. Primaries, in all their variations, are designed to take the power of candidate nomination from party leaders to the people. Recent reform of the primary election system in California provides lessons for the future of party politics and intra-party democracy at the state level.

Moderated by Judy A. Black, Vice Chairman, IFES Board of Directors

Speaker:

James Thurber, Director of the Center for Congressional & Presidential Studies, American University

**Breakout II: The Fifth Estate: How Public Interest Media Organizations are Keeping Elections Honest  
*Rooms 3016 and 3017, Third Floor***

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

No federal protections exist to ensure that citizens are not misled by the campaigns of candidates and political parties. In recent years, a burgeoning practice of fact checking by public interest media organizations has evolved to supplement traditional media's efforts to investigate and verify campaign claims.

Moderated by Juliette Schmidt, IFES Senior Program Manager

Speaker:

Jeremy Holden, Director of Research, Media Matters for America

**President's Welcome Reception**

*West End Ballroom, Second Floor*

7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

## **Monday, November 3**

**Washington Marriott Georgetown**  
**1221 22nd Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037**

### **Arrivals and Program Registration**

9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

### **Plenary: From Selma to Montgomery and Beyond: The 1965 Voting Rights Act and the Future Role of the Federal Government in Elections**

***West End Ballroom, Second Floor***

9:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

The passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act was a watershed in American history that sought to prohibit discrimination in the election process. A central feature of the Act was the requirement that some states with a history of discriminatory practices seek federal approval prior to enacting any changes to their election laws. A 2013 decision by the Supreme Court called into question, however, the role of the federal government in enforcing voting rights. In the *Shelby County v. Holder* decision, the Supreme Court struck down Section 4 of the Act, which contained the formulas used to determine the list of districts that must receive this pre-clearance approval. Over the past year, many states – including those listed in Section 4 – have legislated changes to their election processes. These changes range from administrative changes to improve access to the vote – such as online voting tools – to those that may serve to limit access at the polls, including shortened hours and more stringent voter identification requirements.

Moderated by Chad Vickery, IFES Director of the Center for Applied Research and Learning

#### Speakers:

Daniel P. Tokaji, Charles W. Ebersold and Florence Whitcomb Ebersold Professor of Constitutional Law,  
The Ohio State University's Moritz College of Law

Brendan J. Morrissey, Counsel, Wiley Rein LLP

### **Morning Break**

10:35 a.m. – 10:55 a.m.

### **Breakout I: Got ID? Recent Trends in Voter Identification Requirements**

***Rooms 3016 and 3017, Third Floor***

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Extending the franchise to eligible voters is fundamental to any democratic system across the globe. This fundamental right is often enshrined in a country's constitution or electoral acts. However, in order to

ensure a sufficient level of legitimacy the sanctity of the ballot cannot be undermined by fraud, such as impersonation in the polling stations. In order to ensure that only eligible voters are able to cast their ballot most countries require individuals to prove their identity before voting.

In recent years, a heated debate has emerged in the U.S. where some argue that new voter-ID laws lead to voter suppression of marginalized groups rather than fraud prevention. Others argue that voter fraud is a reality and a more stringent ID-requirement is a must to combat this integrity risk to U.S. elections.

Moderated by Staffan Darnolf, IFES Director of Program Development and Innovation

Speakers:

Hans A. Von Spakovsky, Manager of the Election Law Reform Initiative, Heritage Foundation

Justin Levitt, Professor of Law, Loyola Law School

### **Breakout II: Measuring Public Opinion: Old and New Challenges to Accuracy and Reliability**

***Dupont Ballroom, Second Floor***

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Opinion research polling has been a mainstay of American political campaigns, allowing candidates, the media, and the public to stay continually informed of the horserace aspects of important political campaigns. But continually declining response rates, the rapid proliferation of cell phone-only households, and higher costs of administering surveys have made obtaining reliable survey data an increasingly difficult challenge for pollsters in the United States. This panel will explore some of the more critical challenges facing politically-focused opinion researchers and the steps being taken by them to address these challenges.

Moderated by Rakesh Sharma, IFES Director of Public Opinion Research

Speakers:

Clifford Young, Managing Director, Polling and Public Sector, Ipsos Insight

Thomas A. Devine, IFES Board of Directors

### **Lunch**

***West End Ballroom, Second Floor***

12:05 p.m. – 1:25 p.m.

### **Breakout I: What is trending? Assessing the Future of Social Media and Elections**

***Dupont Ballroom, Second Floor***

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Social media is playing an increasingly important role in informing and mobilizing voters in both established democracies, such as the U.S. and India, and emerging democracies such as Afghanistan and Ukraine. This panel aims to capture trends in Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other social media usage by election management bodies, political parties, candidates, civil society and voters themselves.

Moderated by Vasu Mohan, IFES Regional Director for Europe and Asia

Speakers:

Catlin O'Neill, Manager of Public Policy, Facebook

Kate Sokolov, Global Program Manager for Politics & Elections, Google

### **Breakout II: Point, Counter Point: The Role of Candidate Debates in Political Discourse**

***Rooms 3016 and 3017, Third Floor***

1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

One of the most exciting parts of the campaign season are candidate debates, when nominees of political parties get to publicly express and defend their views on key issues of the day. Debates are often televised, giving the public a first hand, unedited view of the candidates. While debates primarily target undecided voters, all voters get excited to see their candidate go head-to-head with an opponent.

Moderated by Peter Erben, IFES Senior Global Electoral Adviser and Chief of Party in Indonesia

Speakers:

Diana Carlin, Vice President of Graduate Education & International Initiatives, Saint Louis University

Matt Dippell, Director, Deputy Director for Latin America and Caribbean, National Democratic Institute

### **Plenary: Money Talks: Free Speech, Political Action Committees and the Future of Campaign Finance Regulation**

***West End Ballroom, Second Floor***

2:35 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Recent rulings by the United States Supreme Court have removed long-standing limits on election contributions and spending by individuals and organizations. In 2010, the Citizens United ruling held that the government may not place limits on independent spending for political purposes by corporations and labor unions in candidate elections. Earlier this year, the Court removed aggregate limits on campaign contributions finding that such restrictions violated constitutional free speech guarantees. These decisions have dramatically changed the landscape of campaign finance in the United States.

Moderated by Magnus Ohman, IFES Senior Political Finance Adviser

Speakers:

Ellen Weintraub, Commissioner, Federal Election Commission

Trevor Potter, President, Campaign Legal Center

**Afternoon Break**

3:35 p.m. – 3:55 p.m.

**Plenary: More Power to More People: How the ADA and the CRPD are Expanding Political Rights**

***West End Ballroom, Second Floor***

4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Twenty-four years ago, the United States became the first country in the world to adopt national civil rights legislation banning discrimination against people with disabilities. Since that time, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) have provided the legal context for accessible and inclusive elections. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which came into force in 2008, incorporated many standards identified in U.S. legislation.

Moderated by Virginia Atkinson, IFES Access and Inclusion Specialist

Speakers:

Judith Heumann, Special Advisor for International Disability Rights, U.S. Department of State

Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo, Coordinator for Disability and Inclusive Development, USAID

Lewis Bossing, Senior Staff Attorney, Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

**Election Access Simulation**

***Dupont Ballroom, Second Floor***

5:05 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Immediately following the plenary session on electoral access, conference participants will have the opportunity to take part in an interactive election simulation meant to reflect the experiences of voters with disabilities. Participants will attempt to vote at one of two polling stations: one that is accessible and one that is not.

**Joe C. Baxter Award Reception**

***West End Ballroom, Second Floor***

6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems has named Dr. Christiana Thorpe, Chief Electoral Commissioner and Chairman of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) of Sierra Leone, as the 2014 Joe C. Baxter Award recipient. The annual Baxter Award recognizes the contributions of election

professionals whose skills, dedication and sacrifices to the field of election administration epitomize the mission of IFES and embody the spirit of former IFES Senior Adviser for Election Administration Joe C. Baxter. Dr. Thorpe is the first woman to serve as Chief Electoral Commissioner in Sierra Leone. A former nun, she has spent her life fighting for the rights of the most vulnerable in society and served as an electoral administrator for many years. During her tenure as the head of the NEC, the Commission has implemented meaningful reforms and conducted elections that have been agreed upon by all electoral stakeholders and the international community as being free, fair, transparent and in conformity with international best practices.

Speakers:

William R. Sweeney Jr., IFES President and Chief Executive Officer

Ambassador Bockari Kortu Stevens, Embassy of Sierra Leone in Washington, D.C.

Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State

## **Tuesday, November 4**

**Washington Marriott Georgetown (breakfast, lunch and reception) and visits to various polling sites (District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia)**

**1221 22nd Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20037**

**Election Day Breakfast Briefing**

***West End Ballroom, Second Floor***

8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

In his 2013 State of the Union Address before Congress, President Barack Obama pledged to identify nonpartisan ways to improve future elections. The Presidential Commission on Election Administration was officially established in March of that year and its report addressed ways to promote the efficient conduct of elections and provide better access to the polls for all voters. The 10-member Commission made up of experts in election administration, policy and procedures, and leaders from business and industry was headed by Co-Chairs Robert Bauer and Benjamin Ginsberg.

Moderated by William R. Sweeney Jr., IFES President and Chief Executive Officer

Speakers:

The Honorable J. Kenneth Blackwell, Secretary, IFES Board of Directors

Catlin O'Neill, Manager of Public Policy, Facebook

**Election Day - Tour of Polling Stations in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia**

***Please wait for your bus number to be called in the West End Ballroom, Second Floor***

9:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

IFES will take visitors on an exclusive half-day tour of polling sites in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia.

After visiting polling stations, buses will return to the Washington Marriott Georgetown for lunch.

### **Lunch**

***West End Ballroom, Second Floor***

1:05 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Following a tour of polling sites throughout the Washington metropolitan area, IFES election specialists will lead lunchtime discussions with participants about what they observed and learned from the experience.

Participants interested in visiting Voice of America will board buses departing no later than 2:30 p.m.

### **Tour of Additional Polling Site or Voice of America - please bring passport**

***Please wait for your bus number to be called in the West End Ballroom, Second Floor***

3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

IFES will provide an additional afternoon visit to a polling site in Maryland or Virginia, or a tour of international broadcasting network Voice of America followed by a conversation with reporters and possible media interviews.

Buses will return to the Washington Marriott Georgetown following all tours.

### **Election Night Reception**

***West End Ballroom and Dupont Ballroom, Second Floor***

7:00 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.

IFES will host an evening of televised election coverage by major international media networks for participants, representatives of the global democracy and governance community, foreign dignitaries and other key stakeholders.

## **Wednesday, November 5**

**United States Institute of Peace (USIP)**

**2301 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20037**

### **Transportation to USIP**

7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.



*Buses will depart from the Washington Marriott Georgetown at 7:30 a.m. to transport participants to USIP. The last bus departs at 8:00 a.m.*

**Breakfast Session: Reflections and Reactions: A Facilitated Discussion with Participants**

***George P. Shultz Great Hall***

9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Welcome remarks by Dr. Kathleen Kuehnast, Director of the Center for Gender & Peacebuilding, United States Institute of Peace

Opening remarks by William R. Sweeney Jr., IFES President and Chief Executive Officer

Moderated by Michael Svetlik, IFES Vice President of Programs

Speaker:

Thomas A. Devine, IFES Board of Directors

**Morning Break**

10:35 a.m. – 10:55 a.m.

**Plenary: Erasing the Gender Gap: Successful Strategies to Boost Women's Participation in U.S. Politics**

***George P. Shultz Great Hall***

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

In the United States and countries around the world, women and men have the right to vote and run for office. There has been good gender news in recent elections. In the 2012 U. S. presidential elections, women outnumbered men as voters 53 percent to 47 percent respectively. Women made “big gains” in office, with a record 20 female Senators and 97 Congresswomen now in Congress. Despite these upward trends, numbers fall short of gender parity, especially for women as elected officials. Why is this? Do women have the time and resources to run? Do they have the right connections in a traditionally male dominated arena? Do they have the information to become engaged? Why does gender parity matter?

Moderated by Jessica Huber, IFES Senior Gender Adviser

Speakers:

Semhar Araia, Executive Director, Diaspora African Women's Network (DAWN)

Susannah Wellford, President and Founder, Running Start

Ann Lewis, President, No Limits Foundation

**Closing Remarks**

***George P. Shultz Great Hall***

12:20 p.m.

William R. Sweeney Jr., IFES President and Chief Executive Officer

**Boxed Lunch**

***George P. Shultz Great Hall***

12:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

**Return to Washington Marriott Georgetown**

2:00 p.m.