

**RIPON SOCIETY & FRANKLIN CENTER  
HONOR THE “UNSUNG HEROES OF CAPITOL HILL”  
AT 14TH ANNUAL BIPARTISAN LUNCHEON**

WASHINGTON, DC – The Ripon Society and The Franklin Center for Global Policy Exchange held their 14th annual bipartisan luncheon on Friday, honoring the Operations Directors, Schedulers, and Deputy Chiefs of Staff who serve in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.

“Operations Directors, Schedulers, and Deputy Chiefs of Staff are the unsung heroes who coordinate the complex machinery of Congress,” said Ripon and Franklin President & CEO Jim Conzelman. “Without their expertise and dedication, our legislative branch simply could not function.”

The luncheon drew more than 100 Operations Directors, Schedulers, and Deputy Chiefs of Staff, who heard remarks from Congressman Steven Horsford (D-NV-04), John Byers, Chief of Staff to Congressman August Pfluger (R-TX-11), and Matt Fried, Chief of Staff to Congressman Tom Suozzi (D-NY-03). All three speakers emphasized the critical role these professionals play in supporting the day-to-day operations of the legislative branch.

Following their remarks, Conzelman followed another tradition of the annual luncheon – naming the top Operations Directors, Schedulers, and Deputy Chiefs of Staff of 2025

“This has become one of our most anticipated traditions,” Conzelman noted. “Each year we set out to honor 10 individuals, and each year the quality of nominations is so exceptional that we can’t keep it to just 10. The professionals we recognize today come from both sides of the aisle, united by their outstanding commitment to public service. It is my great honor to present the ‘Top 20 of 2025!’”

Those honored this year include: Lauren Allen – with U.S. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (WV); Zehra Bakirdan – with U.S. Rep. Darin LaHood (IL-18); Erika Bone – with U.S. Rep. Mike Bost (IL-12); Emily Button – with U.S. Sen. Todd Young (IN); Gordon Croce – with U.S. Rep. Jimmy Panetta (CA-19); Libby Donahoo – with U.S. Rep. Greg Murphy, M.D. (NC-03); Larissa Fernandez – with U.S. Rep. Steven Horsford (NV-04); Jasmine Goodman – with U.S. Rep. Terri Sewell (AL-07); Hannah Hartman – with U.S. Rep.

Chrissy Houlahan (PA-06); Nicholas Herlevic – with U.S. Rep. Stephanie Bice (OK-05); Caroline King – with U.S. Sen. John Curtis (UT); Aisha Mae Mughal – with U.S. Rep. Ami Bera, M.D. (CA-06); Brooke Oliver – with U.S. Rep. August Pfluger (TX-11); Sabrina Parker – with U.S. Rep. Tom Cole (OK-04); Jessica Pettis – with U.S. Rep. Jake Auchincloss (MA-04); Angela Ryan – with U.S. Sen. Steve Daines (MT); Kalyn Schroeder – with U.S. Rep. Jay Obernolte (CA-23); Angela Schulze – with U.S. Sen. Thom Tillis (NC); Avery Van Ingen – with U.S. Rep. Joyce Beatty (OH-03);

and, Victoria von Stein – with U.S. Rep. Tom Suozzi (NY-03).

Drawing on his own experience from more than two decades as Chief of Staff to former Congressman Mike Oxley (R-OH), Conzelman closed the luncheon with words of gratitude for the vital work these professionals perform daily.

“On behalf of the Ripon Society and Franklin Center, thank you,” Conzelman said. “Thank you for your dedication and hard work in service to one of the most consequential institutions in the world—the United States Congress.”



The Top Operations Directors and Schedulers of 2025

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The Ripon Society is a public policy organization that was founded in 1962 and takes its name from the town where the Republican Party was born in 1854 – Ripon, Wisconsin. One of the main goals of The Ripon Society is to promote the ideas and principles that have made America great and contributed to the GOP's success. These ideas include keeping our nation secure, keeping taxes low and having a federal government that is smaller, smarter and more accountable to the people.

Founded in 1978, The Franklin Center for Global Policy Exchange is a non-partisan, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization

committed to enhancing global understanding of important international issues. The Franklin Center brings together Members of the U.S. Congress and their international parliamentary counterparts as well as experts from the Diplomatic corps, foreign officials, senior private sector representatives, scholars, and other public policy experts. Through regular conferences and events where leading international opinion leaders share ideas, the Franklin Center promotes enlightened, balanced, and unbiased international policy discussion on major international issues.

# “UNSUNG HEROES OF CAPITOL HILL” 14TH ANNUAL BIPARTISAN LUNCHEON



Congressman Steven Horsford



Chief of Staff John Byers



Chief of Staff Matt Fried



A crowd of more than 100 turned out for the December 12th event.