

## PARTICIPANTS

**Mark Baldassare** is president and CEO of the Public Policy Institute of California, where he holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is a leading expert on public opinion and survey methodology, and has directed the [PPIC Statewide Survey](#) since 1998. He is an authority on elections, voter behavior, and political and fiscal reform, authoring ten books and numerous reports on these topics. He often provides testimony before legislative committees and state commissions, and regularly hosts PPIC's Speaker Series, a public forum featuring in-depth interviews with state and national leaders. Previously, he served as PPIC's director of research. Before joining PPIC, he was a professor of urban and regional planning at the University of California, Irvine, where he held the Johnson Chair in Civic Governance. He has conducted surveys for the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the California Business Roundtable. He holds a PhD in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley.

**Lourdes Castro Ramírez** is the secretary of the Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency, where she oversees 10 departments responsible for expanding affordable housing, developing solutions to end homelessness, guarding civil rights protections, regulating banking and financial services, and strengthening consumer protections. She currently chairs the Homeless Coordinating and Financing Council and serves on the California Strategic Growth Council, the California Housing Finance Agency Board, and the Governor's Taskforce on Business and Jobs Recovery. Previously she led the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Public and Indian Housing, and served as president and CEO of the San Antonio Housing Authority, director of the LA City Housing Authority, and the president of the University Health System Foundation in San Antonio. She received the 2019 Community Partner Award from the San Antonio American Institute of Architects for chairing the Mayor's Housing Policy Task Force. In 2020 she was awarded the Hispanas Organized for Political Equality's Ray of HOPE award and was inducted into the San Antonio Women's Hall of Fame. She earned her bachelor's degree in political science and Chicano studies and her master's degree in urban planning at University of California, Los Angeles.

**Sabrina Cervantes** represents the 60th Assembly District and serves as chair of the Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development, and the Economy, and the Assembly Select Committee on Veteran Employment and Education. As a state legislator, she has worked continuously to serve her community and enhance the quality of life for Riverside County residents. She has authored legislation to prevent sexual assault and domestic violence; to improve health services for women and new mothers; and to support California veterans, students, and working families—twenty-six pieces of which have been signed into law. During her tenure, she has secured an estimated equivalent of \$1.6 billion in significant investments for early childhood education, veterans services, transportation projects, parks and open spaces, and workforce development for western Riverside County. She also championed \$20 million to support women-, minority-, and veteran-owned small businesses with free and low-cost business counseling and other services through local small-business technical assistance centers. She earned her bachelor's degree in political science from the University of California, Riverside, and completed an executive education program at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

**Pat Fong Kushida** is the president and CEO of the California Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce, the largest ethnic chamber in California, advocating for 600,000 Asian and Asian Pacific Islander-owned small businesses. She has served in this capacity since 2010 and is a recognized leader in California and nationally as a champion of the minority business enterprise community. Through her efforts, the chamber has developed partnerships with over 53 community-based organizations throughout the state.

She has served on the advisory board of California's Public Utility Commission, the California Insurance Commissioner's Insurance Diversity Taskforce, the senior community advisory council to PG&E, and the advisory board for the Northern California Small Business Development Centers. She started her public service work as president and CEO of the Sacramento Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce, formed in 1993 to combat Proposition 209, which prohibited affirmative action goals in public contracting. Her civic leadership includes serving on the boards of health care and financial institutions and national nonprofits. She has received numerous awards and citations and was recently recognized by the Sacramento Business Journal as one of the 2021 Most Admired CEOs. She received her bachelor's degree in business administration from California State University, Sacramento.

**Queena Sook Kim** is the senior editor of Weekend Desk at KQED, where she produces reports on news, politics, and life in the Golden State. Previously she was the senior editor of the Silicon Valley Desk and the host of The California Report, and before that, a senior reporter covering technology for Marketplace, NPR's daily business show. She started her career as a business journalist at the *Wall Street Journal*, where she spent four years covering the paper, home building, and toy industries. She has spent much of her journalism career helping start-up editorial products, including The Bay Citizen, an experimental online news site in San Francisco, and a podcast called CyberFrequencies, which reported on the culture of technology. Her stories have appeared on NPR's Day to Day, Hearing Voices, WNYC's Studio 360, WBUR's Here and Now, BBC's Global Perspectives and the *New York Times* multimedia page. Before becoming a journalist she taught in Seoul, South Korea, and Southern California. She earned a bachelor's degree in politics from New York University and a graduate degree from the Graduate School of Journalism at University of California, Berkeley.

**Nicole Rice** is president of the California Natural Gas Vehicle Coalition (CNGVC), an association of natural gas engine and vehicle manufacturers, utilities, and fuel providers. In this role, she presides over an alliance of experts and guides their engagement of forging a path toward the more inclusive adoption of natural gas vehicles and fuels. She also serves as a gubernatorial appointee to the California Workforce Development Board and represents the manufacturing industry as a board member of the EDGE Coalition and co-chair of the Get R.E.A.L. Coalition. Before joining CNGVC, she spent nine years as senior policy director of government relations at the California Manufacturers & Technology Association, working to improve and enhance the business climate for California's over 30,000 manufacturing, processing, and technology-based companies, an economic sector that generates more than \$230 billion every year and employs more than 1.2 million Californians. A 20-year veteran in public policy development, she developed her expertise representing industries, utility companies, educational organizations, and local government bodies on a wide range of matters. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science from California State University, East Bay, and a JD from Santa Clara University School of Law.