

The New York City Bar Association  
Election Law, Government Ethics and State Affairs, New York City Affairs Committees  
and the Task Force on the Rule of Law  
Present  
**NEW YORK/TEXAS: AN ELECTION REFORM CONVERSATION**  
**Wednesday, January 12, 2022, 6:00 – 8:15 p.m.**  
**Webcast**

**Agenda**

- Greeting, Katharine G. Loving, Chair, NYC Bar Election Law Committee
- Welcome, Stephen L. Kass, Chair, NYC Bar Task Force on the Rule of Law, Senior Environmental Counsel, Carter Ledyard
- Moderator
  - Brigid Bergin, Senior Political Correspondent, WNYC & Gothamist
- Speakers
  - Mimi Marziani, President, Texas Civil Rights Project
  - Jerry Vattamala, Director, Democracy Program, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund
  - Douglas A. Kellner, Co-Chair, NYS Board of Elections
  - Dana DeBeauvoir, County Clerk, Travis County, TX
  - Charles Stewart, III, Kenan Sahin Distinguished Professor of Political Science, Founding Director MIT Election Data & Science Lab
  - Richard H. Pildes, Sudler Family Professor of Constitutional Law, New York University School of Law
  - Jorge L. Vasquez, Jr., Founding Partner, Vasquez Segarra, LLP
  - Jessica González, TX State Representative, Vice-Chair, TX House of Representatives Committee on Elections
  - Zellnor Myrie, NYS Senator, Chair, NYS Senate Election Law Committee
- Discussion
- Comment
  - Lawrence Norden, Director, Election Reform Program, Brennan Center for Justice

**Co-Sponsors**

**Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund**  
**Austin Bar Association**  
**Brooklyn Voters Alliance**  
**Citizens Union**  
**DemocracyNYC**  
**Hispanic National Bar Association Region II**  
**League of Women Voters of New York City**  
**Metropolitan Black Bar Association**  
**National Bar Association Region II**  
**Reinvent Albany**  
**Texas Civil Rights Project**

[America's Lawyers on Voting and the Rule of Law: Nine Principles](#)  
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**Bios**

**Brigid Bergin**  
**Senior Political Correspondent, WNYC and Gothamist**

Brigid Bergin is Senior Political Correspondent for WNYC and Gothamist. Her reporting has been featured on NPR, Marketplace, the BBC, ABC Radio, The Takeaway, NY1 and KPCC. Previously she worked as the station's City Hall and Politics Reporter, filing for both WNYC and NPR and has covered a range of stories including Occupy Wall Street, the 2012 elections, and the aftermath of the massacre in Newtown, CT. She's also traveled to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba to report on the trial of the five men accused of plotting the September 11th terror attacks.

Brigid has a passion for breaking news and served as WNYC's first Breaking News Producer. In that role, she directed on-air coverage for major breaking news events like the death of Osama Bin Laden and Hurricanes Irene and Sandy. She also managed WNYC's dynamic morning team. Before becoming a journalist, Brigid spent more than eight years at JPMorgan Chase as a communications manager. She's also a proud graduate of the New York State public education system earning her B.A. at University at Albany and her M.A. from the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism.

**Dana DeBeauvoir**  
**County Clerk, Travis County, Texas**

County Clerk Dana DeBeauvoir has been serving Travis County since she was first elected to office in 1986. Since her election, Dana has devoted herself to bringing high ethical standards, the benefits of new technology, and high-quality customer service to the office of the County Clerk.

Dana is particularly proud of the passion Travis County voters have for democracy and was honored by the opportunity to share their enthusiasm with other parts of the world. She has served as an advisor and election observer for Bosnia, the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, Kosovo, and the historic South Africa election that represented the end of apartheid.

Dana continues her efforts to protect the integrity and accessibility of the election process, to use effective and cost-efficient practices and technology to manage real property and court documents, and to do her best to serve each and every citizen of Travis County.

**Jessica González**  
**Texas State Representative, Vice-Chair, Texas House of Representatives Committee on Elections**

Jessica González is currently serving her second term as State Representative for District 104.

Throughout her short time in the Texas House of Representatives she has dedicated her time to reforming our criminal justice system, expanding voting rights, increasing access to affordable housing, and protecting the civil rights of LGBTQ Texans.

Jessica earned her bachelor of arts in Criminology and Criminal Justice from The University of Texas at Arlington and later attended Western Michigan University-Cooley School of Law, where she held top student leadership positions, clerked at the Voting Rights Section of the Civil Rights Division for the U.S. Department of Justice, and graduated at the top of her class.

In 2011, Jessica was selected as the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute Law Graduate Fellow in Washington, D.C. She served as a Legislative Assistant at the U.S. House of Representatives handling an extensive policy portfolio. She was also selected as a White House intern where she worked extensively on immigration-related issues.

Jessica's white paper titled "New State Voting Laws: A Barrier to the Latino Vote?" earned her a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition for her dedication to address current public policy concerns. Jessica's commitment to protect the rights of voters led to her service as the Nevada Voter Protection Director for President Obama's re-election campaign in 2012.

Today, Jessica practices personal injury at her law firm, Gandara & González, PLLC, located in District 104. Throughout her life, Jessica has remained conscious of her family's courage and determination; she attributes her ambition, strong work ethic and values to her parents. Representative González plans to use her diverse educational, professional, and policy experience to bring positive change to House District 104.

Representative González serves as Vice-Chair of the House Committee on Elections, a member of the House Committee on Insurance, the Vice-Chair of the Texas House LGBTQ Caucus, and the Chair of NHCSL's Human and Civil Rights Task Force.

**Stephen L. Kass**  
**Senior Environmental Counsel, Carter Ledyard**

Widely recognized as one of the premier environmental and land-use attorneys in the nation, Stephen Kass combines the roles of litigator, advisor and draftsman to help clients navigate an extensive array of issues that arise in their matters.

Steve advises and works closely with clients and consultants on environmental impact statements, often on major projects in the New York metropolitan area. He advises private, public, and non-profit entities in corporate transactions, project permitting, administrative proceedings, hazardous substances claims and regulations, landmarking and real property transfers. He also represents companies involved in energy generation issues and has written extensively on international environmental issues.

The environmental legal arena involves balancing myriad complex and at times competing factors, including client economic goals, public health and safety concerns, government oversight, consumer preferences, human rights, and economic and environmental justice issues. Steve finds it gratifying to work at the convergence of all these dynamics and to help clients navigate these complex issues in ways that realize the clients' goals while satisfying the public interest in fair and effective environmental regulation.

Steve's corporate clients turn to him to help them address concerns about how climate change will affect their businesses and commercial objectives. His governmental clients often request his guidance in completing priority projects in ways that don't inspire subsequent litigation (or that litigation, if brought, is successful for his clients). Community groups rely on him to help them ensure that environmentally sensitive areas are effectively protected.

With a particular interest in crafting and reviewing complex environmental impact statements, Steve guides organizations in issues relating to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), and environmental policies affecting the New York region. These documents are often prepared in the context of regional, land use, and transportation planning challenges, as well as in climate-related mitigation and adaptation issues.

Steve has written hundreds of published articles, reports, and other professional pieces about environmental law-related topics. He has written a regular column in the New York Law Journal since 1986 and has also co-authored three books. Steve has also served as an adjunct professor and lecturer at Brooklyn Law School, Pace Law School, NYU's Center for Global Affairs, Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs and Hunter College. He has chaired many New York City Bar Association committees and task forces (including International Environmental Law, Climate Adaptation, Downtown

Redevelopment Following 9/11, Council on International Affairs, Consumer Affairs, International Human Rights) and currently chairs the City Bar Association's Task Force on the Rule of Law. He previously served as a member of the Association's Executive Committee and as its Vice-President in 1985. He is an Emeritus Director of Human Rights Watch, a Director (and former chair) of the National Center for Law & Economic Justice and a member of other non-profit boards concerned with environmental justice.

A partial listing of past and present clients includes: National Broadcasting Company, Related Housing, Julien J. Studley, Inc., United Water Resources, Inc., Gerald Metals, Inc., Levco Metals, Iscar Ltd., AWT-Chemfix Joint Venture, First National Bank of Chicago, First City Investors, National Railroad Passenger Corporation, New York Presbyterian Hospital, Steinway Musical Properties, Inc., Ferry Point Partners, Exco, Inc., Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, Carnegie Hall, the YMCA of New York City, Battery Park City Authority, City of White Plains, Metropolitan Transportation Authority, New York City Convention Center Development Corporation, New York City Transit Authority, New York State Energy Resource and Development Authority, New York State Housing Finance Agency, New York State Urban Development Corporation (Empire State Development Corporation), Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, New York Power Authority, Long Island Power Authority, Rochester Convention Center Development Corporation, Roosevelt Island Development Corporation, Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, Town of Southampton, Village of Larchmont, Village of North Tarrytown, Village of Pelham, Westchester County Board of Legislators, the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations and numerous environmental and non-profit organizations, including the Natural Resources Defense Council, National Audubon Society, Sierra Club, League of Women Voters of New York State, and Human Rights Watch. His other professional activities include:

- International Affairs: Human Rights Watch (Board of Directors, 1985-2005; Emeritus Director, 2005-Present; Chair, Policy Committee; Chair, Americas Advisory Committee); Council on Foreign Relations (Latin America Study Group, Cuba Study Group, Energy and the Environment Study Group, Economic Integration in Americas Study Group)
- Legal Services: Founder, Executive Director and Chair of Board of Trustees, Community Law Offices (now the Volunteer Division of Legal Aid Society); Board of Directors, National Center for Law and Economic Justice (Chair, 1989-99); Board of Directors, Municipal Employees Legal Services Fund (Chair, 1974-76); Board of Directors, Community Action for Legal Services (1973-76); Board of Directors, The Legal Aid Society (1976-82)
- New York Law Journal: Regular Column on "Environmental Law" and "International Environmental Law" (1986-present)
- Adjunct Professor (International Environmental Law), Brooklyn Law School (2004-Present); Adjunct Professor (Climate Change and Human Rights), NYU/SCPS (Center on Global Affairs) (2012-present); Adjunct Professor (Climate Change Policy) Columbia School of International and Public Affairs (2013); Adjunct Professor (International Environmental Law), Pace University Law School (1998-2005); Adjunct Professor (Historic Preservation Law), Pace University Law School (1990-92); Lecturer, Environmental Law and Policy, State University of New York at Purchase (1978-80)

**Douglas A. Kellner**

**Co-Chair New York State Board of Elections**

Douglas A. Kellner has served as Co-Chair of the New York State Board of Elections since 2005. He is also the New York State representative on the U.S. Election Assistance Commission Standards Board and serves on the Advisory Board of the Verified Voting Foundation.

Before assuming his responsibilities at the State Board of Elections, he served as commissioner of the New York City Board of Elections. He is an experienced election lawyer having served as the Co-Chair of the Law Committee of the New York Democratic Committee from 1982 to 1993 and as the Chairman of the Election Law Committee of the New York County Lawyers Association.

When he was first appointed to the New York City Board, Commissioner Kellner was the very first election official to call for a voter verifiable paper audit trail for electronic voting machines, a principle now enshrined not only in New York law, but in the election codes of a majority of the states throughout the nation. While leading the opposition to unverifiable electronic machines, Commissioner Kellner was instrumental in promoting new technology for scanning absentee and provisional ballots. He drafted model procedures to open the process of canvassing ballots to public scrutiny and convinced his fellow commissioners to adopt rules that provided meaningful due process in ballot challenges. He drafted New York's regulation that requires county board to staff polls so that no voter waits more than thirty minutes to cast a ballot. He has been an outspoken advocate for improving the voting process in New York while insisting on transparency, verifiability and uniformity in voting procedures

Doug is a partner in the law firm, Kellner Herlihy Getty & Friedman LLP, where he specializes in complex international asset recovery litigation. He is the Chair of the North America Region of FraudNet, an organization of experts formed by the International Chamber of Commerce to assist in fraud recovery and tracing of assets.

**Mimi Marziani**  
**Texas Civil Rights Project**

Mimi Marziani is the President of the Texas Civil Rights Project, a position she assumed in 2016 at the age of 33. She has an extensive background in civil rights advocacy, nonprofit management, and Texas politics, and is a nationally recognized expert in voting rights and election law. As such, Ms. Marziani is regularly featured in the press, in a variety of public forums, and before the U.S. Congress and other governmental bodies. She is also a teacher and mentor for young lawyers, serving as an adjunct professor at the University of Texas School of Law and on the NYU School of Law Board of Trustees. In 2020, she was recognized with an "Austin Under 40" award. Prior to TCRP, Ms. Marziani led voting rights efforts for political organizations, including running the first coordinated, statewide voter protection program for progressive candidates in Texas in 2014. Ms. Marziani has also worked as Counsel for the Democracy Program of the Brennan Center for Justice in New York City, where she litigated voting rights cases across the country, and as an associate of Sullivan & Cromwell LLP. Ms. Marziani graduated cum laude from NYU School of Law, and clerked for the honorable James C. Francis, a U.S. magistrate judge for the Southern District of New York. She received a B.A., magna cum laude, from Vanderbilt University.

**Zellnor Myrie**  
**New York State Senator, Chair, Committee on Elections**

Senator Zellnor Y. Myrie is a Brooklyn native and affordable housing advocate serving the 20th Senate District.

During his first legislative session, Senator Myrie served in leadership roles on several major legislative victories. Having grown up in a rent-stabilized apartment at the epicenter of the affordable housing crisis, Senator Myrie was honored to co-lead the Senate's Housing Reform Working Group, which produced New York's strongest affordable housing and tenant protection laws in generations. During the legislature's budget negotiations, Myrie also served on the Senate's Criminal Justice Reform Working Group, resulting in sweeping reforms to cash bail, discovery, and speedy trial laws. As Chair of the Elections Committee, Senator Myrie led hearings on Public Financing of Elections and Automatic Voter Registration, and presided over historic election reforms including Early Voting, closing the LLC loophole, and many other crucial reforms to protect and expand our democracy.

Senator Myrie has been publicly recognized for his work, including City & State's Rising Stars Award, the Lindsay Fellowship in Government Leadership and Practice, and many other community awards.

Senator Myrie derives inspiration for his public service from his mother, who moved to Brooklyn 40 years ago from Costa Rica on the promise of a mattress in a friend's apartment and a job at a factory. Myrie is a graduate of Brooklyn Technical High School and earned his B.A. in Communications and M.A. in Urban Studies from Fordham University. He later earned his J.D. from Cornell Law School.

### **Lawrence Norden**

#### **Director, Election Reform Program, Brennan Center for Justice**

Lawrence Norden is the director of the Election Reform Program, where he leads the Brennan Center's work in a variety of areas, including its effort to bring balance to campaign funding and break down barriers that keep Americans from participating in politics, ensure that U.S. election infrastructure is secure and accessible to every voter, and protect elections from disinformation and foreign interference. His work has been featured in media outlets across the country, including the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, Fox News, CNN, MSNBC, and National Public Radio. He has testified before Congress and several state legislatures on numerous occasions.

In 2009, Norden served as chair of the Ohio secretary of state's bipartisan Election Summit and Conference, authoring a report to the State of Ohio on improving that state's election laws. The report was endorsed by the bipartisan Ohio Association of Election Officials and the *Columbus Dispatch*, which praised the report for "following an independent path." Also that year, he received the Usability Professional Association's Usability In Civic Life Award for his "pioneering work to improve elections."

Norden is the lead author of the book *The Machinery of Democracy: Protecting Elections in an Electronic World* (Academy Chicago Press, 2006) and with his Brennan Center colleague Ian Vandewalker, a contributor to *Defending Democracies: Combatting Foreign Interference in a Digital Age* (Oxford University Press, 2021). He is a member of the Election Assistance Commission's Board of Advisors, where he currently serves as vice chair of the Election Security Committee. He is a graduate of the University of Chicago and NYU School of Law.

### **Richard H. Pildes**

#### **Sudler Family Professor of Constitutional Law, New York University School of Law**

Richard H. Pildes is one of the nation's leading scholars of constitutional law and a specialist in legal issues affecting democracy. He is a Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the American Law Institute, and has received recognition as a Guggenheim Fellow and a Carnegie Scholar. His acclaimed casebook, *The Law of Democracy: Legal Structure of the Political Process* (now in its fourth edition), helped create an entirely new field of study in the law schools. *The Law of Democracy* systematically explores legal and policy issues concerning the structure of democratic elections and institutions, such as the role of money in politics, the design of election districts, the regulation of political parties, the design of voting systems, the representation of minority interests in democratic institutions, and similar issues. He has written extensively on the rise of political polarization in the United States, the Voting Rights Act, the dysfunction of America's political processes, the role of the Supreme Court in overseeing American democracy, the powers of the American President and Congress, and he has criticized excessively "romantic" understandings of democracy. In addition to his scholarship on these issues, he has written on national-security law, the design of the regulatory state, and American constitutional history and theory.

Respect for his expertise in these areas is reflected in frequent citations of his work in U.S. Supreme Court opinions, the translation of his work into many languages, and his frequent public lectures and appearances around the world, including his nomination with the NBC News Team for an Emmy Award for coverage of the 2000 Presidential election litigation.

His work has been translated and published in Chinese, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. In addition to his scholarship, Professor Pildes plays an active role litigating in these areas. He has won two cases before the United States Supreme Court, including a 2015 victory in *Alabama Democratic Conference v. Alabama*, a case involving race and redistricting. He served as counsel to a group of former chairmen of the Securities and Exchange Commission in litigation defending the constitutionality of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act; as counsel in election litigation to the Puerto Rico Electoral Commission; as counsel to the government of Puerto Rico; as a federal court-appointed independent expert on voting rights litigation; and as counsel in successful Supreme Court litigation that challenged the way the United States Tax Court operated. He was also a senior legal advisor to the 2008 and 2012 campaigns of President Obama.

Pildes received his A.B. in physical chemistry summa cum laude from Princeton, and his J.D. magna cum laude from Harvard, where he served as Supreme Court Note Editor on the *Harvard Law Review*. He clerked for Judge Abner J. Mikva of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit and for Justice Thurgood Marshall of the U.S. Supreme Court. After practicing law in Boston, he began his academic career at the University of Michigan Law School, before joining the NYU School of Law in 2001.

### **Charles Stewart III**

**Kenan Sahin Distinguished Professor of Political Science, Founding Director, Election Data & Science Lab, Massachusetts Institute of Technology**

Charles Stewart III is the Kenan Sahin Distinguished Professor of Political Science at MIT, where he has taught since 1985, and a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His research and teaching areas include congressional politics, elections, and American political development.

His current research about Congress touches on the historical development of committees, origins of partisan polarization, and Senate elections. His recent books of congressional research include *Electing the Senate* (2014, with Wendy J. Schiller), *Fighting for the Speakership* (2012, with Jeffery A. Jenkins), and *Analyzing Congress* (2nd ed., 2011).

Since 2001, Professor Stewart has been a member of the Caltech/MIT Voting Technology Project, a leading research effort that applies scientific analysis to questions about election technology, election administration, and election reform. He is currently the MIT director of the project. Professor Stewart is an established leader in the analysis of the performance of election systems and the quantitative assessment of election performance. Working with the Pew Charitable Trusts, he helped with the development of Pew's Elections Performance Index. Professor Stewart also provided advice to the Presidential Commission on Election Administration. His research on measuring the performance of elections and polling place operations is funded by Pew, the Democracy Fund, and the Hewlett Foundation. He recently published *The Measure of American Elections* (2014, with Barry C. Burden).

With the support of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Democracy Fund, and the Joyce Foundation, in 2017 Professor Stewart established the MIT Election Data and Science Lab, which applies scientific principles to how elections are studied and administered. In 2020, he partnered with Professor Nate Persily of the Stanford Law School to establish the Stanford-MIT Healthy Elections Project.

Professor Stewart has been recognized at MIT for his undergraduate teaching, being named to the second class of MacVicar Fellows in 1994, awarded the Baker Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, and the recipient of the Class of 1960 Fellowship. From 1992 to 2015, he served as Head of House of McCormick Hall, along with his spouse, Kathryn M. Hess.

**Jorge L. Vasquez, Jr.**  
**Founding Partner, Vasquez Segarra LLP**

Jorge L. Vasquez, Jr. is founding partner at Vasquez Segarra LLP. Prior to forming Vasquez Segarra LLP, Jorge was the Program Director of the Power and Democracy Program at Advancement Project National Office where he led Advancement Project National Office's voter protection, redistricting, rights restoration and democracy initiatives throughout the United States. Jorge has been recognized for his work as a national civil rights lawyer, policy influencer, and democracy expert and was recently a fall 2020 fellow, Harvard Institute of Politics, Harvard Kennedy School. You can follow him online @JorgeVasquezNYC.

**Jerry Vattamala**  
**Director, Democracy Program, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund**

Jerry has been a leader in collecting electoral data on and protecting Asian American voters, organizing AALDEF's National Asian American Exit Poll and Voter Protection Program which deployed over 850 volunteers in 14 states and Washington DC, to survey and protect almost 14,000 Asian American voters on Election Day 2016. Jerry has also organized the Asian American community for redistricting, serving as AALDEF's lead attorney on New York's *Favors v. Cuomo* federal redistricting litigation, resulting in more Asian majority and influence districts at all legislative levels. Jerry has also testified on behalf of the Asian American community at redistricting hearings throughout the Northeast and observed elections for compliance with state and federal voting laws across the country. Jerry litigates cases concerning violations of Sections 203 and 208 of the Voting Rights Act and regularly meets with Boards of Elections across the country to ensure full compliance with federal and local language assistance provisions and the Help America Vote Act. Jerry is also an Adjunct Professor of Law at New York law School. Prior to joining AALDEF, Jerry worked as a commercial litigator at Proskauer Rose LLP. Jerry received a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Engineering from Binghamton University and is a graduate of Hofstra University School of Law.



