

TEXAS IMPACT & TEXAS INTERFAITH CENTER STAFF

Bee Moorhead, Executive Director

Bee has been Director of Texas Impact since 2000, managing every aspect of the organization's work and answering to a 45 member board of directors. The Texas Impact Board is made up of representatives from the state's many faith communities.

Under Bee's leadership, Texas Impact has moved from fewer than 1,000 members to more than 20,000 members and earned recognition as a national leader in interfaith education and community leadership development.

Bee spent eight years as a senior fiscal policy analyst for former Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, John Sharp. Bee was responsible for the Comptroller's attention to public policy issues related to health and human services. She was the chief architect of Family Pathfinders, a unique program linking Texas congregations and civic organizations with families on public assistance.

She holds a B.A. in Drama from the University of Texas in Austin, and a M.A. of Public Affairs from the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas.



Scott Atnip, Outreach Director



Scott began his work with Texas Impact in 2002 as an intern. Since 2013, he has served as Outreach Director to connect the education and advocacy efforts of Texas Impact and the Texas Interfaith Center for Public Policy with people of faith throughout Texas through opportunities like Weekly Witness, Rapid Response and Advocacy Trainings. He received his B.A. in Political Science from Sam Houston State University and a M.A. of Public Affairs from the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas.

In addition to his work with Texas Impact, Scott is heavily involved in the United Methodist Church. He was elected as an alternate delegate to General Conference 2012 and has served as a board member for various organizations including CASA of Walker County and Walker County Community Development Corporation.

Erica Nelson, Courts and Ports Coordinator

Erica Nelson is a 2018 graduate from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and is a candidate for ministry within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Before going to seminary, she was a social worker who specialized in working with teenagers in the foster care system. She has served the local church through hospitality and administrative responsibilities and has served the national church as a delegate to the United Nations Status on the Commission of Women and Ecumenical Advocacy Days.

She has been working for Texas Impact since June of 2018 and has focused on two primary projects; a project assessing the impact of natural disasters and the faith-based community's response to it and the Courts and Ports program, leading people of faith to the Rio Grande Valley to provide faithful witness to those struggling with the immigration and asylum processes.



Emma Davis, Operations & Membership Coordinator



Emma joined Texas Impact in 2016 as an AmeriCorps VISTA Leader under the Welcoming Communities Initiative. She led 23 members in their collaborative goal of engaging faith communities, state agencies, and nonprofits to address forced migration issues across the state. In her current role as Operations and Membership Coordinator, Emma oversees donor and member relations, legislative events and lobby days, staff projects, and daily operations of the organization.

Emma graduated from the University of Louisville with a B.S. in Political Science and Economics. Before coming to Austin, she worked as a Housing Coordinator and Community Resource Mapper for a refugee resettlement agency in her hometown of Louisville, Kentucky.

In addition to her work with Texas Impact, Emma serves as a Volunteer Deputy Registrar for the Travis County Tax Office and as an election judge for Travis County Elections. Emma is still heavily involved in the AmeriCorps Alumni community – organizing volunteer and community events for members serving in the Austin area.

Joseph Czap, Communications Coordinator

Joseph Czap is a 2017 graduate from the University of North Texas in Denton and the grandson of former Texas Impact Board Member Wanda Holcombe. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Integrative Studies with a focus on Political Science, Economics, and Public Affairs/Community Service.



After graduation, Joseph returned to his hometown of Georgetown and interned at State Rep. Ryan Guillen's capitol office and focused on constituent services and legislative development. Joseph also worked as a canvasser in State Rep. John Bucy's campaign and helped him win by almost 8,000 votes. He started as a Policy Analyst in November of 2018 and was promoted to Communications Coordinator after Texas Impact's successful 2019 Legislative Session. Joseph is passionate about Economic and Racial Justice, Climate Change, and History.

SPEAKER BIOS

Congressman Joaquin Castro (TX-20)

Joaquin Castro was born in San Antonio, Texas on September 16, 1974. A second generation Mexican American, he was raised on the city's West Side and is a proud product of the public school system. The Castro family's history in the United States began nearly 100 years ago when his grandmother, Victoria Castro, came to Texas as a young orphan. In the spirit of the American Dream, she often worked two and three jobs at a time to be able to give her daughter (Joaquin's mother, Rosie) and her grandchildren a better chance in life.



Joaquin has worked hard to seize the opportunities created by the sacrifices of his grandmother and prior generations. After finishing high school a year early, Joaquin left San Antonio to graduate with honors from Stanford University in 1996. He then went on to attend Harvard Law School where he received his Juris Doctorate degree in 2000. Upon his return to San Antonio at 28 years old, Joaquin joined a private law practice and was elected to the Texas Legislature. He served five terms as state representative for District 125. In 2012, Joaquin was elected to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives as representative of Texas' 20th Congressional District, which covers a large portion of San Antonio and Bexar County. Joaquin's identical twin brother, Julián Castro, was elected in 2013 to his third term as Mayor of San Antonio. On July 28, 2014, Julian Castro was sworn in as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Now in his fourth term in the U.S. House of Representatives, Joaquin serves on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, as well as the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the House Education and Labor Committee. He was the 2013 Co-President for the House freshman Democrats and currently serves as Chair of the Texas Democratic Caucus.

Outside of the legislative chamber, Joaquin has demonstrated a strong commitment to his community. He created the Trailblazers College Tour, personally raising money to send underprivileged students on college visits, giving them exposure to some of the nation's best institutions of higher education. He also founded SA READS, San Antonio's largest literacy campaign and book drive. Over 200,000 books have been distributed to more than 150 schools and shelters across the city. To honor and express gratitude to San Antonio grandparents and other family members raising relatives who aren't their children, Joaquin created the annual Families Helping Families dinner and awards. He has also taught as a visiting professor of law at St. Mary's University and as an adjunct professor at Trinity University. Joaquin is active on several boards of education-related, non-profit organizations, including the National College Advising Corps, and the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials' (NALEO) Taskforce on Education.

Having experienced America's promise firsthand, Joaquin wants to help build out what he calls the Infrastructure of Opportunity so that future generations will have the same chance to pursue their American Dream. Joaquin believes that just as there is an infrastructure of transportation that helps us get to where we want to go on the road there is an Infrastructure of Opportunity that helps Americans get to where they want to go in life. It is that Infrastructure of Opportunity – great public schools and universities, a sound healthcare system, and good-paying jobs – that enables Americans to pursue their American Dream. Our centuries-long commitment to building and preserving this infrastructure is what distinguishes America among the nations of the world.

As Congressman, Joaquin continues to be a tireless advocate for those who call San Antonio home. From supporting military families to investing in education, Joaquin remains committed to helping mold an Infrastructure of Opportunity for San Antonians and Americans around the country.

Ann Williams Cass, Executive Director of Proyecto Azteca

Ms. Ann Williams Cass has been with the organization since September of 2006 and operates under the direction of a community led Board of Directors and is responsible for proper utilization of funding as well as overseeing program development and administration. Ms. Cass' involvement with self-help housing has benefited Proyecto Azteca in terms of seeking stability and capacity for the organization, improvements to the self-help affordable design, economic development initiatives, and most importantly, networking with other organizations in the community.

Proyecto Azteca is part of the Rio Grande Equal Voice Network and Ms. Cass chairs the network health care and housing working groups. The Equal Voice Rio Grande Valley Housing Coalition has been very active in monitoring the Hurricane Dolly Disaster Relief funding.

Prior to coming to Proyecto Azteca, Ms. Cass was the Pastoral Administrator of Holy Spirit Parish in McAllen, Texas, for twenty five years. She co-founded the Family Health and Resource Center in McAllen, TX, which provides medical and mental health services with volunteer health professionals. Ms. Ann Williams Cass worked as an administrator for the United Farm Workers, AFL-CIO, in Texas during the 1980's.

She holds a Masters in Pastoral Studies with a focus in Parish Administration from Loyola University in New Orleans, and a BA in biochemistry. Ann brings a wealth of experience and knowledge in community and economic development issues on the South Texas Border to housing, health care, immigration and education.

Dr. Asante Todd, Assistant Professor of Christian Ethics at Austin Seminary



Dr. Asante Todd (MDiv'06) joined the Austin Seminary faculty in 2013; he is a member of the Theological-Historical Department.

Todd served as a visiting lecturer during the 2011-2012 academic year through a fellowship with the Lilly Endowment's "Theology and Practice" program at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, where he attended graduate school. He joined the faculty in 2013, and in 2016 he became an assistant professor of Christian ethics.

Todd earned an undergraduate degree from The University of Texas at Austin in 2002 and the Master of Divinity degree from Austin Seminary in 2006. During his years as an Austin Seminary student he served as president of the student body and received the Rachel Henderlite Award, given to a graduating student who has made a significant contribution to cross-cultural and interracial relationships while at Austin Seminary. He earned a PhD from Vanderbilt University in 2016; the title of his dissertation was "Political Sovereignty and its Theologically Cultured Despisers: Prospects for an African American Political Theology." A native of Midland, Texas, Todd has also worked in the Texas State Legislature, for the Austin Area Urban League, and has served as a youth minister.

Alongside the Lilly Endowment's "Theology and Practice" fellowship, Todd's other awards include the 2011-2012 Fund for Theological Education Dissertation Fellowship, and more recently, the 2017 Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning Workshop for Early Career Theological School Faculty Fellowship. His publications include "Thomas Hobbes on Human Nature," an essay in *Beyond the Pale: Reading Ethics from the Margins* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2011) and a chapter, "Black Lives Matter and the New Politics," in the new book *Faith and Resistance in the Age of Trump* (Orbis Books, 2017). Asante Todd's general area of research is public theology, the ways in which theological and religious commitments impact public debate, policy, politics, and opinion. He also desires to think with religious communities about social consciousness and democratic responsibility.

Matt Lohmeier, San Antonio Regional Justice for Our Neighbors

Matt Lohmeier is the Executive Director of the San Antonio Region Justice For Our Neighbors, a United Methodist immigration ministry that provides quality, free and low-cost legal services to immigrants trying to navigate the complicated U.S. immigration system. He's an accomplished non-profit leader who champions social justice.



Since graduating from Purdue University with a Bachelor of Arts in Law and Society and earning a Master of Divinity degree from Loyola University Chicago, Matt has helped nonprofits from a variety of vantage points. He's served as an adjunct professor at St. Edward's University in Austin, a mission leader in faith-based healthcare, co-chaired the Mayor's Advisory Council on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Substance Abuse in Corpus Christi, co-founded the Clergy Alliance to address issues of poverty and its comorbidities, also in Corpus Christi, served as a train the trainer facilitator for the "Workshops on Racism and Ethnic Sensitivity" program with the Archdiocese of Chicago and lobbied elected officials in multiple states.

Matt and his wife enjoy introducing their children to ministry work, teaching them the value of learning about other cultures and encouraging them to never sit on the sideline and allow injustice to happen to others.

Rick Newman, San Antonio Regional Justice for Our Neighbors

Richard Newman has more than 30 years of legal experience and is widely recognized for his expertise in business, employment and corporate immigration matters. Mr. Newman's range of knowledge and practice includes temporary employment visas such as H-1B, L-1, E-1 and E-2, O-1, J-1 and I visas. In addition, he has a distinguished reputation for his expertise in employment-based green cards including PERM labor certifications, EB-1 cases, National Interest Waivers, and other employment-based cases. The law firm also handles family-based green cards, adjustment of status and consular processing.

Jodi Goodwin, ESQ.

In addition to practicing law, our attorney Jodi Goodwin, ESQ., shares a deep-rooted belief in volunteerism. She is involved in several organizations designed to teach and train young lawyers and frequently teaches throughout the United States. She also holds several positions with the American Immigration Lawyers Association, including Past Chair of the Texas Chapter of AILA, national and local liaison committees with Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Apart from her professional volunteerism, Jodi Goodwin, ESQ. also devotes much of her time to the Girl Scouts of America as a Troop Leader. She is a graduate of the University of Texas and St. Mary's University.

Laura Tuell, Jones Day Law Firm

Laura Tuell is the Firmwide head of Pro Bono and continues her efforts as an active pro bono practitioner representing numerous immigrants seeking asylum, particularly women seeking protection against gender persecution. Laura also has experience in housing discrimination, voting rights, landlord-tenant law, and death penalty issues. She was instrumental in working with the D.C. Bar to create the Free Legal Advice and Referral Clinic and has participated in that clinic for more than 10 years. Laura is chair of the board of the Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition and secretary of the board of Bread for the City. Among many awards for her efforts, she was named D.C. Bar Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year.



In her role, Laura is working to build a global pro bono program that provides opportunities for Jones Day lawyers around the world to serve the diverse communities in which the Firm has a presence. She is also developing opportunities to advance the rule of law and to make a global difference in the areas of affordable, decent housing, and access to education.

Prior to assuming her current position, Laura was a member of the Firm's trial practice and has broad experience in complex domestic and commercial litigation and arbitration. Laura has been involved in international, multijurisdictional, and multiparty matters before federal and state courts and before the International Chamber of Commerce. She has extensive experience representing plaintiffs and defendants with issues arising under the federal RICO statute.

Mike Seifert, ACLU of Texas



Michael Seifert has lived in Texas border communities since 1989, when he came to the Rio Grande Valley as a Roman Catholic priest. He met the ACLU when the organization offered to advocate for the US citizen members of his parish, who, have been born by midwives, were being denied passports by the State Department (a rule created to address supposed fraud by some of the midwives). Along the border, a citizen without a passport cannot cross back and forth into Mexico, meaning that there can be no visits to a physician, or to a grandmother, or to the funeral of a loved one.

After 24 years of service as a priest, Seifert married in 2009 and took up the responsibilities as the Network Weaver for the Rio Grande Valley Equal Voice Network. The Network shaped collective impact efforts on behalf of more than sixty community-based organizations, and effectively brought the voice of the poorest of Texans to the tables of decision makers. In 2017, Seifert accepted the position of Border Advocacy Strategist for the ACLU of Texas, working out of the Brownsville office. The position allows him to continue to advocate for border communities at a time when national and state politics are willing to deny those residents basic rights enjoyed by the rest of Americans.

He and his wife, Dr. Marsha Griffin, live in a home just a half a mile from the border. In the morning, they enjoy the sounds of the birds that migrate freely, north and south, without passports, high above the border wall.