
SUMMARY

Policy researcher, advocacy strategist, and writer committed to applying political acumen and analytical skills for leading policy and advocacy organizations. Experienced in evaluation, planning, and the analysis of complex data. Track record in directing or advising campaigns resulting in millions of voter registrations, expanded child nutrition programs, groundbreaking civil rights litigation, new coalitions, positive attention in state and national media, and stronger ties between advocates and state and federal officials. Author of policy reports covered by the *NY Times*, *Washington Post*, NPR, and other media.

EDUCATION

- ♦ **PhD in Public Policy**, George Washington University. Social & urban policy; American Politics.
- ♦ **MA in Policy Studies**, Johns Hopkins University. Nonprofit management; Program evaluation.
- ♦ **BA in Psychology**, Grinnell College.

EMPLOYMENT AND CONSULTING HISTORY

Democracy Fund

Remote

Freelance research and policy consultant

November 2021 – March 2022

- ♦ Collected and analyzed data from multiple sources for impact evaluations of automatic voter registration policies and advocacy efforts to improve state “motor voter” programs.

Grinnell College

Grinnell, IA

Assistant Professor of Political Science and Policy Studies

August 2013 – July 2021

- ♦ Taught courses in statistics, policy studies, and political science.
- ♦ Appointed or elected to campus committees on teaching assessment, faculty organization, and student entrepreneurship and leadership.
- ♦ Designed and co-led workshops for faculty on student engagement and team teaching.
- ♦ See *CV* on website for teaching achievements, scholarly presentations, publications, and additional teaching for Smith College and Georgetown and George Washington Universities.

National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) Research Project

Grinnell, IA

Principal Investigator

August 2013 – August 2019

- ♦ Raised \$110,000 in grants for research project to collect, clean, and analyze time-series data used for assessing states’ compliance with the NVRA and evaluating the impact of enforcement efforts.
- ♦ Co-authored and published research in a leading journal using field experiments in government agencies in two states to test interventions to improve compliance with federal law.
- ♦ With two national policy organizations, co-authored a report assessing social services agencies’ online SNAP (food stamp) applications and compliance with the law. Report led to additional support from a grantmaking foundation.
- ♦ Presented findings to funders, advocates, the Justice Department, and at conferences.
- ♦ Designed and led a two-day workshop on data collection and analysis for three civil rights groups.
- ♦ Hired and supervised research assistants.

ACT for Alexandria Foundation

Alexandria, VA

Freelance research and policy consultant

August 2012 – August 2013

- ♦ Principal investigator for a mixed-methods assessment of food security in Alexandria, Virginia, for a local coalition of health advocates, funders, and officials.
- ♦ Co-authored a report that recommended and led to the founding of a new organization to address hunger in the city (Hunger Free Alexandria).
- ♦ Hired and supervised co-investigator.

Food Research and Action Center

Freelance research and policy consultant

Washington, DC

May 2012 – August 2013

- ♦ Wrote and edited sections of a white paper on food deserts in low-income communities based on extant research and interviews with community food advocates and academics.

Rockefeller Family Fund

Freelance research and policy consultant

Washington, DC

August 2012 – December 2012

- ♦ Assisted Fund president with coordinating state-based community organizations and lobbyists around innovative uses of billion-dollar settlements with banks stemming from the mortgage crisis.

Wellspring Advisors

Freelance research and policy consultant

Washington, DC

June 2011 – August 2011

- ♦ Authored memo on strategic opportunities for funders to enhance civic engagement projects.
- ♦ Designed and executed a projection of demographic changes in state populations using Census data.

Project Vote

Senior research and strategy consultant

Washington, DC

Summer 2004; May 2007 – August 2010

- ♦ Reconvened and co-directed or advised a coalition of national civil rights groups to enforce fair implementation nationwide of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), resulting in millions of voter registrations from traditionally marginalized communities.
- ♦ Initiated meetings with federal and state officials and provided analytical support for coalition partners' work over several years resulting in renewed federal action on NVRA enforcement and improved state implementation.
- ♦ Co-authored testimony for Congress and the National Research Council.
- ♦ Advised funders and contributed to grant writing and grant reports.
- ♦ Designed monitoring systems to evaluate the impact of our work and ensure state compliance.
- ♦ Represented Project Vote on task forces or coalitions in the civil rights community.
- ♦ Hired and trained research consultant. Trained staff and educated officials on data and policy.
- ♦ Authored numerous reports on voting rights, voter registration rates, and turnout and reviewed independent evaluations of voter registration drives.

Food Research and Action Center

Senior Policy Analyst

Washington, DC

January 2000 – August 2003

- ♦ Surveyed state officials and collected data from various federal and state sources on state legislation, case studies of best practices, and participation in food and nutrition programs.
- ♦ Authored or co-authored reports that received positive coverage in state and national media, served as reference sources for advocates and officials, and led to changes in policy.
- ♦ Analyzed Census Bureau survey data for national report on state food security rates.
- ♦ Provided interviews with state and national media on food security and food security policies.

Congress Watch

Research Director

Washington, DC

May 1999 – December 1999

- ♦ Conducted campaign finance and lobbying research for reports on asbestos corporations' dealings with Congress, leading to coverage by *New York Times*. Supervised research assistant.

Human Rights Campaign

Southern Regional Organizer

Washington, DC

August 1996 – September 1997

- ♦ Organized GOTV and lobbying efforts with LGBT advocates in Miami and Atlanta for the Human Rights Campaigns' 501(c)3 and 501(c)4 programs.
- ♦ Wrote grassroots lobbying guide distributed to members.

Project Vote

Manager of National Voter Registration Act Project

Washington, DC

January 1994 – August 1996

- ♦ Liaised with attorneys, community organizations, and the Department of Justice on first-ever litigation victories to ensure fair implementation of the NVRA in recalcitrant states.
- ♦ Designed data monitoring systems used in legal settlements to confirm compliance and measure the performance of government agencies' voter registration programs.
- ♦ Authored first-ever national report on NVRA implementation and performance.
- ♦ Represented Project Vote at national task force or coalition meetings.
- ♦ Hired and supervised three employees and interns.

International Brotherhood of Teamsters

Research Assistant for Corporate Strategies

Washington, DC

April 1993 – December 1993

- ♦ Researched corporate finance and structure at the Security and Exchange Commission and co-authored a report on executive compensation and labor practices in the trucking industry during contract negotiations.
- ♦ Seconded to an organizing drive of textile workers in Miami.

Washington Office on Haiti

Assistant to Executive Director

Washington, DC

November 1992 – April 1993

- ♦ Founded a coalition of observers that released a combined report on human rights in Haiti and organized a press conference with Rev. Jesse Jackson that received national news coverage.
- ♦ Conceived and directed the first-ever congressional lobbying day by Haitian Americans and allies.
- ♦ Co-authored testimony for Congress and provided interviews to media.
- ♦ Supervised three employees.

Association of Community Org. for Reform Now

Field Organizer/Political Organizer

Brooklyn, St. Louis, and Little Rock

August 1991 – November 1992

- ♦ Conducted community organizing drives in diverse communities leading to new chapters of ACORN or the New Party (now the Working Families Party).

APPOINTMENTS AND VOLUNTEERING

- ♦ Co-led effort to create the new Election Assistance and Policy Committee at the American Political Science Association (APSA); appointed to a three-year term on the committee (2022-2024).
- ♦ Participant at the inaugural Institute for Civically Engaged Research, APSA (2019).
- ♦ Appointed to Advisory Board of Wilson Center for Innovation and Leadership, Grinnell College.
- ♦ Elected or appointed to committees on assessment and faculty organization, Grinnell College.
- ♦ Fellow at the Faculty Institute on Engagement and the Academy, Obermann Center for Advanced Studies, University of Iowa (2020).
- ♦ Co-edited a special symposium of papers on engaged research for the journal *PS: Political Science*.
- ♦ Discussant for research panels at political science and US Dept. of Agriculture conferences on food security and reviewer for US Dept. of Agriculture grants.

PUBLICATIONS

- ♦ Available at www.douglashess.com are recent policy reports, academic articles, and opinion pieces for *The Washington Post (The Monkey Cage)*, *The Hill*, *The Conversation*, *Des Moines Register*, *the London School of Economics United States Centre blog*, *PS: Political Science*, and *Public Administration Review*.