RE-2 Employee Post Travel Disclosure of Travel Expenses

Date/Time Stamp
RECEIVED
SECRETARY OF THE SENATE
PUBLIC RECORDS
2026 OCT -7 PM 4:27

Post Travel Filing Instructions: Complete this form within **30 days** of returning from travel. Submit all forms to the Office of Public Records in 144 Hart Building.**This form is a public disclosure. The form and all attachments will be made publicly available.**

Certification:*In compliance with the Regulations Governing Privately Sponsored Travel, Senate Rule 35, and the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007, I certify that I accepted the following gift of privately sponsored travel:*

Private Sponsor(s):
America First Policy Institute

Travel Dates:
09/25/2026 to 09/27/2026

Name of accompanying family member (if any):

Relationship to Traveler:

Expenses

Transportation Expenses	Lodging Expenses	Meals Expenses	Other Expenses (Amount & Description)
$383.80	$220.00	$165.00	$0.00

I also certify that attached to this form are all required documents for post travel disclosure, including:

- **The final Employee Pre-Travel Authorization** (Form RE-1)
- The final **Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form** with all attachments
- The final invitation
- The final approved itinerary

Finally, I certify that all trip information reflected in the attachments above accurately reflects the travel that I accepted. If there were any changes to the trip after I received approval from the Committee, the changes are described in ATTACHMENT 1.

10/7/26
Date

CRAIG BERNING
Printed Name of Traveler

Signature of Traveler

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING MEMBER/OFFICER

I have made a determination that the expenses set out above in connections with travel described in the Employee Pre-Travel Authorization form, are necessary transportation, lodging, and related expenses as defined in Rule 35.

10/7/26
Date

Signature of Supervising Senator/Officer

ATTACHMENT 1 – CHANGES FROM APPROVED PRE-TRAVEL

Note: Material changes to a trip that occur after the Committee has issued an approval letter may invalidate the Committee's approval. Please contact the Committee with any questions regarding changes to an approved trip.

Were there any changes to the pre-approved travel expenses? (Transportation, Meals, Lodging, Other)?

○ Yes ● No

Expense Change	Revised Amount	Explanation
There were no changes to pre-approved travel expenses.		

Were there any changes to the pre-approved itinerary?

● Yes ○ No

Explanation: Itinerary change – Breakout Sessions (1:00–2:30 PM). The two breakout sessions listed in the pre-travel submission were combined into a single program attended by all Senate participants, with each segment lasting approximately 45 minutes. Group A (Working with the House, White House, and Agencies): Natalie Burkholter and Renee Hudson were unable to attend and were replaced by Hannah Anderson, Senior Director, Healthy America, America First Policy Institute, and Eric Ueland, Deputy Director, Office of Management and Budget. AFPI had originally invited an additional speaker based on his prior White House service. That speaker was reviewed by AFPI and the Committee prior to travel under the name he commonly uses, and no lobbying registration was found. Several days before the summit, AFPI learned that he is a registered lobbyist under a different legal name. AFPI notified the Committee on Tuesday, September 22, 2026, and removed him from the program. During the Group A segment, the moderator, then an AFPI employee, invited him to join the panel. That invitation was contrary to AFPI's decision and was made without the organizers' knowledge or authorization. He did not participate in any Senate staff programming other than this panel. AFPI disclosed his participation to the Committee on September 29, 2026, has addressed the matter internally, and the moderator is no longer employed by AFPI. Group B (Maximizing the Message): Proceeded as described in the pre-travel submission with the exception of Alex Miller, who did not attend. The combined session remained educational in nature, consistent with its pre-travel description. No advocacy for specific legislation, political positions, or campaign-related matters occurred at any point in the session, including during the lobbyist's participation.

Were there any additional changes to the pre-approved trip?

○ Yes ● No

Explanation: There were no additional changes to the pre-approved trip.

July 6, 2026

AMERICA FIRST
SENATE WORKING GROUP

Dear Craig Berning,

On behalf of America First Policy Institute's Senate Working Group, we cordially invite you to the **2026 Senate Deputy Chiefs of Staff & Deputy Staff Directors, Legislative & Communications Directors Summit**. The event will be held **Friday, September 25 – Sunday, September 27, 2026**, at **The Greenbrier Resort in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia**.

As the largest gathering of Senate Deputy Chiefs of Staff, Deputy Staff Directors, Legislative Directors, and Communications Directors outside of Washington, D.C., the Summit brings together our country's leaders, policy experts, and key thinkers for an educational deep dive into the most pressing issues facing our nation.

By stepping outside the day-to-day pressures of the Capitol and into a setting built for collaboration, this Summit offers a focused environment to examine the challenges and opportunities before us—and to explore how we can ensure the American Dream remains achievable for every American.

America First Policy Institute will coordinate all logistical arrangements for the Summit, including room reservations, travel, meals, meetings, and other activities during the event.

America First Policy Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and this summit is fully compliant with Senate Ethics rules. No lobbyists will be in attendance.

To **RSVP**, please visit: https://events.americafirstpolicy.com/swg_fall_retreat_26

We understand your attendance is pending Ethics' approval. If you have any questions, concerns, or need additional information, please contact me directly at (858) 336-0293 or jkimmey@americafirstpolicy.com

Thank you for your consideration and we look forwarded to seeing you at the Greenbrier!

Sincerely,

James Kimmey
Director, Senate Working Group
America First Policy Institute

RE-1 Employee Pre-Travel Authorization

Date/Time Stamp
8/25/26

Pre-Travel Filing Instructions: Complete and submit this form at least 30 days prior to the travel departure date to the **Select Committee on Ethics in SH-220.** Incomplete and late travel submissions will **not** be considered or approved.

Name of Traveler:
Craig Berning

Employing Office/Committee:
FISCHER, DEB

Private Sponsor(s):
America First Policy Institute

Destination(s):
White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia

Travel Dates:
09/25/2026 to 09/27/2026
NOTE: If you plan to extend the trip for any reason you **must** notify the Committee.

Explain how this trip is specifically connected to the traveler's official or representational duties.

The Summit is an educational training opportunity that provides access to policy-focused resources and information not otherwise available through the Senate, and is beneficial to the performance of my official duties.

Do you have an accompanying family member or spouse on this trip?
No

Name and Relationship to Traveler:
N/A

I certify that the information contained in this form is true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge.

8/25/26
Date

Craig Berning
Signature of Employee

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING MEMBER/OFFICER
(President of the Senate, Secretary of the Senate, Sergeant at Arms, Secretary for the Majority, Secretary for the Minority, and Chaplain)

I Senator Deb Fischer
(Print Senator's/Officer's Name)

hereby authorize Craig Berning
(Print Traveler's Name)

an employee under my direct supervision, to accept payment or reimbursement for necessary transportation, lodging, and related expenses for travel to the event described above. I have determined that this travel is in connection with his or her duties as a Senate employee or an officeholder, and will not create the appearance that he or she is using public office for private gain.

I have also determined that the attendance of the employee's spouse or child is appropriate to assist in the representation of the Senate.

[X] (signify "yes" by checking box)

8/25/26
Date

Deb Fischer
Signature of Supervising Senator/Officer

America First Policy Institute: 2026 Senate Deputy Chiefs of Staff, Deputy Committee Staff Directors, Legislative & Communications Directors Summit

CRAIG BERNING

Title:
None

Employing Office/Committee:
FISCHER, DEB

Duty Station:
WASHINGTON,DC

Destination(s):

White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia

Explain how this trip is specifically connected to the traveler's official or representational duties:

The Summit is an educational training opportunity that provides access to policy-focused resources and information not otherwise available through the Senate, and is beneficial to the performance of my official duties.

Name of accompanying family member (if any):
Not Entered

Name and Relationship to Traveler:
None

Organization Information

Organization Name
America First Policy Institute

Is your organization classified as a §501(c)(3)?
(●) Yes ( ) No

§501(c)(3) Organization Type
Public Charity

Address
1455 Pennsylvania Ave NE

Address 2 (Optional)
Suite 225

City, State Zip
Washington, District Of Columbia 20004 United States

Phone Number
8583360293

Organization URL

History of Congressional Travel

The America First Policy Institute (AFPI) has direct experience sponsoring educational travel for congressional staff in compliance with Senate ethics rules. Most recently, in spring 2026, AFPI sponsored an educational program in Palm Beach, Florida for Senate Chiefs of Staff and Committee Staff Directors, featuring policy briefings with subject-matter experts on issues before the Senate. The trip was conducted pursuant to Senate Ethics Committee requirements, including advance approval, detailed itineraries, and full transparency regarding expenses. AFPI's experience also includes programs historically conducted by the Senate Working Group (SWG), founded in 2021 and later acquired and integrated into AFPI. SWG organized multiple domestic educational programs for Senate Chiefs of Staff, Committee Staff Directors, and other senior staff, focused on policy education, expert briefings, and site-based learning, all conducted in full compliance with Senate Ethics Committee requirements.

Educational Activities

The America First Policy Institute conducts public policy and civics education, including policy research and analysis, educational briefings, seminars, and publications designed to inform policymakers, congressional staff, and the public on a range of public policy issues. AFPI regularly produces policy papers, reports, and issue analyses across a variety of subject areas, and hosts educational forums designed to provide nonpartisan, substantive information on policy challenges and proposed solutions. The Institute also convenes subject-matter experts, former government officials, and industry leaders to engage in educational discussions and briefings intended to inform policymaking and public understanding.

Lobbyist and Foreign Agent Registration Information

Lobbyist Registration Status: *I certify that the sponsor is not a federally registered lobbyist and does not retain or employ a federally registered lobbyists.*

Foreign Agent Registration Status: *I certify that the sponsor is not an agent of a foreign principal and do not retain or employ an agent of a foreign principal.*

Foreign Government Involvement

Foreign Agent Registration Status:

- ☑ I certify that the sponsor is not a foreign government.
- ☑ I certify that the sponsor is not an entity that is owned or operated by a foreign government.
- ☑ I certify that the sponsor does not receive funding from a foreign government.

Comments

Signature Page

The signature page is below.

Purpose and Details

Provide a brief description of the trip.

The 2026 Senate Deputy Chiefs of Staff, Deputy Staff Directors, Legislative & Communications Directors Summit is a domestic educational program designed for senior Senate staff. The Summit will consist of structured briefings, panel discussions, and educational sessions focused on public policy topics and emerging policy challenges.

Explain how the purpose of the trip relates to your organization's mission.

The America First Policy Institute's mission includes public policy and civics education through research, analysis, and educational convenings. This Summit directly advances that mission by providing educational programming, expert briefings, and structured discussions focused on public policy issues and challenges. The program is designed to inform understanding of policy matters relevant to federal governance and public service through nonpartisan educational engagement.

Is your organization the only sponsor for this trip?

- [x] Yes
- [ ] No

Grantmaking Organizations (Optional)

There are no grantmaking organizations.

With or Without Regard for Congressional Participation

The trip is arranged or organized specifically with regard to congressional participation.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Involvement in Planning, Organizing, Requesting or Arranging

- [x] The trip will not in any part be planned, organized, requested, or arranged by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal, other than de minimis involvement.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Financing

- [x] The trip will not be financed in any part by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal.
- [x] No funds or in-kind contributions were earmarked directly or indirectly for the purpose of financing this specific trip from a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal or from a private entity that retains or employs one or more registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Accompaniment

Complete if all sponsors are §501(c)(3) organizations

- [x] The trip is limited to three days (for trips inside the continental United States) or seven days (for trips outside the continental United States), and no lobbyist or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee at any point throughout the trip
- [ ] The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **one** overnight stay) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip
- [ ] The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **two** overnight stays) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

Complete if any of the sponsors is not a §501(c)(3) organizations.

- [ ] The trip is limited to three days (for trips inside the continental United States) or seven days (for trips outside the continental United States), and no lobbyist or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee at any point throughout the trip
- [ ] The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **one** overnight stay) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip
- [ ] The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **two** overnight stays) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

Certification of No Recreational Activity and No Alcohol

- Travel expenses paid for will not include expenditures for recreational activities.
- Travel expenses paid for will not include expenditures for alcohol, except as permitted by the Regulations Governing Privately Sponsored Travel.

Invitees

- Members and staff from the House of Representatives **will not** receive invitations.

The list of invitees is below.

Travel Details

Trip Start Date/Time:
09/25/2026 @ 04:00 PM

Trip End Date/Time:
09/27/2026 @ 11:00 AM

Will the traveler be accompanied by a family member for whom the sponsor will pay travel expenses?

○ Yes ● No

Itinerary

The itinerary is below.

Transportation (Per Member/Officer/Employee: $383.80 | Accompanying Family Member: $0.00)

Transportation Type	Class	Amount
Ground Transportation	N/A	$383.80

Note
Mileage reimbursement in accordance with IRS rates. 505 roundtrip miles.

Lodging (Per Member/Officer/Employee: $220.00)

Check-In	Check-Out	Facility	City	State	Country	Nights	Cost/Night	Cost Exceed Per Diem
09/25/2026	09/27/2026	Greenbrier Resort	White Sulphur Springs	West Virginia	United States	2	$110.00	No

Meals (Per Member/Officer/Employee: $165.00)

Date	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidentals	Total	City	State	Country	Cost Exceeds Per Diem
09/25/2026	$0.00	$0.00	$51.00	$0.00	**$51.00**	White Sulphur Springs	West Virginia	United States	No
09/26/2026	$16.00	$19.00	$28.00	$0.00	**$63.00**	White Sulphur Springs	West Virginia	United States	No
09/27/2026	$51.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	**$51.00**	White Sulphur Springs	West Virginia	United States	No

Reasonable Miscellaneous Expenses (Per Member/Officer/Employee: $0.00)

Expense Type	Amount	Notes

There are no miscellaneous expenses.

Additional Attachments

Document Name

There are no additional attachments.

PRIVATELY SPONSORED TRAVEL

SPONSOR SIGNATURE PAGE

I hereby certify that the information submitted in connection with the trip listed below is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Trip Name: 2026 Deputy Chief, Deputy Staff Director, Legislative & Com

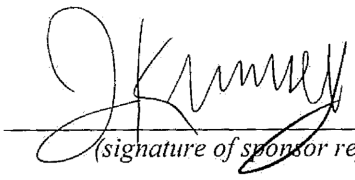
Travel Date(s): September 25 - 27, 2026

Travel Destination(s): The Greenbrier Resort - White Sulphur Springs, WV

Sponsor: America First Policy Institute

James Kimmey — *(printed name of sponsor representative)*

Director, Senate Working Grou — *(title)*



(signature of sponsor representative)

08/18/2026 — *(date)*

AMERICA FIRST SENATE WORKING GROUP

2026 Senate Deputy Chiefs of Staff, Deputy Committee Staff Director, Legislative & Communications Directors Summit

Senate Invitees

Adam Webb
Communications Director, Sen. Thom Tillis (NC)

Adam Wek
Legislative Director, Sen. John Thune (SD)

Alexandra Slocum
Legislative Director, Sen. Alan Armstrong (OK)

Alison Whitaker
Legislative Director, Sen. Joni Ernst (IA)

Alyssa Burleson
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Tim Sheehy (MT)

Amanda Coyne
Communications Director, Sen. Dan Sullivan (AK)

Amanda Critchfield
Communications Director, Finance

Amber Bland
Legislative Director, Sen. John Barrasso (WY)

Andrew Rothe
Legislative Director, Sen. Bernie Moreno (OH)

Angela Lingg
Communications Director, Sen. Jerry Moran (KS)

Angela Ramponi
Legislative Director, Sen. Lisa Murkowski (AK)

Annie Clark
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Susan Collins (ME)

Arden Koenecke
Communications Director, Sen. Mike Rounds (SD)

Audrey Cook
Communications Director, Sen. Marsha Blackburn (TN)

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Billy Gribbin
Communications Director, Sen. Mike Lee (UT)

Blair Taylor
Communications Director, Commerce, Science, & Transportation

Brad Patout
Deputy Staff Director, Armed Services

Brendon Gallo
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Tim Scott (SC)

Brent Scott
Communications Director, Environment & Public Works

Brooke Starr
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Alan Armstrong (OK)

Caitlin Affolter
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Steve Daines (MT)

Caitlin Miller
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Ted Budd (NC)

Cami Morrison
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. John Barrasso (WY)

Charles Adams
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Jim Risch (ID)

Charles Sedore
Legislative Director, Sen. Ashley Moody (FL)

Chris Gallegos
Communications Director, Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith (MS)

Chris Lucas
Deputy Staff Director, Banking, Housing, & Urban Affairs

Chris Prandoni
Deputy Staff Director, Energy & Natural Resources

Christian McMullen
Communications Director, Sen. Ted Budd (NC)

Christina Salazar
Deputy Staff Director, Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs

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Clare Slattery
Communications Director, Sen. Chuck Grassley (IA)

Corey Messervy
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Josh Hawley (MO)

Corey Weber
Deputy Staff Director, Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry

Courtney Rutland
Legislative Director, Sen. Ron Johnson (WI)

Craig Abele
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Darline Graham (SC)

Craig Berning
Legislative Director, Sen. Deb Fischer (NE)

Craig Wheeler
Communications Director, Sen. Deb Fischer (NE)

Dan Gerig
Legislative Director, Sen. Steve Daines (MT)

Dan Hillenbrand
Legislative Director, Sen. Roger Wicker (MS)

Daniel Auger
Legislative Director, Sen. John Hoeven (ND)

Daniel Ulmer
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith (MS)

Daniel Yarbrough
Legislative Director, Sen. Pete Ricketts (NE)

Danielle Janowski
Deputy Staff Director, Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions

Dave Vasquez
Communications Director, Armed Services

David Adkins
Policy Director, Majority Leader

Dilan Maxfield
Communications Director, Sen. John Curtis (UT)

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Drew Carmichael
Communications Director, Sen. Rand Paul (KY)

Emilie Sekine
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Joni Ernst (IA)

Erich Hartman
Deputy Staff Director, Budget

Erik Elam
Legislative Director, Sen. Dan Sullivan (AK)

Erin Dempsey
Deputy Staff Director, Finance

Gabrielle Lipsky
Communications Director, Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs

Garrett Daniel
Legislative Director, Sen. Thom Tillis (NC)

Garrison Holmberg
Legislative Director, Sen. Jerry Moran (KS)

Grace Carnathan
Communications Director, Sen. Ron Johnson (WI)

Grace Evans
Communications Director, Sen. Katie Britt (AL)

Greg Warren
Legislative Director, Sen. Todd Young (IN)

Hannah Ray
Communications Director, Indian Affairs

Jake Bornstein
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. John Curtis (UT)

Jake Bornstein
Legislative Director, Sen. John Curtis (UT)

James Cunningham
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Dave McCormick (PA)

James Hart
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Eric Schmitt (MO)

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Jared Honts
Policy Director, Aging

Jason Bohrer
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Communications Director, Banking, Housing, & Urban Affairs

Jessica Mcbride
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. John Thune (SD)

Jessica Mccune
Communications Director, Sen. Jim Banks (IN)

Jessica Newman
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Joe Ramallo
Communications Director, Health, Education, Labor, & Pensions

Joel Wellum
Policy Director, Commerce, Science, & Transportation

Joey Brown
Staff Director, Senate Republican Communications Center

John Chapuis
Deputy Staff Director, Majority Whip

John Maniscalco
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Jonathan Turcotte
Policy Director, Conference Chair

Joni Deoudes
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Jordan Pakula
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Jordan Roberts
Communications Director, Energy & Natural Resources

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Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Mike Lee (UT)

Kaitlin Stoddard
Legislative Director, Sen. Tommy Tuberville (AL)

Kami Capener
Communications Director, Sen. John Hoeven (ND)

Kate Noyes
Communications Director, Majority Whip

Kate Williams
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Lisa Murkowski (AK)

Kathleen Gayle
Policy Director, Banking, Housing, & Urban Affairs

Kathryn Cromack
Legislative Director, Sen. Jim Justice (WV)

Katie Warbinton
Communications Director, Sen. Cynthia Lummis (WY)

Katie Weissert
Legislative Director, Sen. Rick Scott (FL)

Katy Montgomery
Communications Director, Sen. Dave McCormick (PA)

Kelley Moore
Communications Director, Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (WV)

Kendall Moore
Legislative Director, Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith (MS)

Kim Barnes
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Thom Tillis (NC)

Kristin Sapperstein

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Communications Director, Sen. John Barrasso (WY)

Lauren Allen
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (WV)

Leah Selk
Communications Director, Sen. Pete Ricketts (NE)

Leo Kowalski
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Marsha Blackburn (TN)

Lucas Dapieve
Legislative Director, Sen. Bill Hagerty (TN)

Macarena Martinez
Communications Director, Sen. Ted Cruz (TX)

Madeline Sieren
Communications Director, Sen. Josh Hawley (MO)

Madison Erstine
Legislative Director, Sen. Tom Cotton (AR)

Madison Hardy
Communications Director, Sen. Jim Risch (ID)

Maggie Ward
Legislative Director, Sen. John Husted (OH)

Mallory Jaspers
Communications Director, Sen. Tommy Tuberville (AL)

Marcus Brubaker
Legislative Director, Sen. Cynthia Lummis (WY)

Maria Kim
Communications Director, Sen. Tim Scott (SC)

Maria Reynolds
Communications Director, Sen. James Lankford (OK)

Mark Malone
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Bill Cassidy (LA)

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Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Ron Johnson (WI)

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Communications Director, Sen. Steve Daines (MT)

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Legislative Director, Sen. Tim Sheehy (MT)

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Matthew Wester
Communications Director, Sen. John Boozman (AR)

Melanie Lawhorn
Communications Director, Sen. Mike Crapo (ID)

Michael Mets
Legislative Director, Sen. Susan Collins (ME)

Mikalah Skates
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Cynthia Lummis (WY)

Molly Carpenter
Legislative Director, Sen. Mike Crapo (ID)

Molly Harper
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Bernie Moreno (OH)

Murphie Barrett
Deputy Staff Director, Environment & Public Works

Natalie Yezbick
Communications Director, Sen. John Cornyn (TX)

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Communications Director, Sen. Rick Scott (FL)

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Nichole Kotschwar
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Nicole Christus
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Palmer Brigham
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Parker Reynold
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Patrick Lehman
Policy Director, Policy Chair

Payton Fuller
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Penne Barton
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Peyton Roth
Legislative Director, Sen. Jim Banks (IN)

Phoebe Keller
Communications Director, Appropriations

Preston Howey
Legislative Director, Sen. Ted Cruz (TX)

Rachel Dumke
Communications Director, Sen. Eric Schmitt (MO)

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Rita Lari
Deputy Staff Director, Judiciary

Rob Macgregor
Policy Director, Energy & Natural Resources

Robert Borden
Legislative Director, Sen. Mike Lee (UT)

Robert Donachie
Communications Director, Sen. Bill Hagerty (TN)

Robyn Engibous
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Dan Sullivan (AK)

Rosie Heiss
Deputy Chief of Staff & Legislative Director, Sen. John Boozman (AR)

Ryan Cannon
Commerce Committee Coalitions and Member Services Advisor

Ryan Wrasse
Communications Director, Sen. John Thune (SD)

Samantha Gonzalez
Deputy Staff Director, Veterans' Affairs

Samantha Scoca
Deputy Staff Director, Small Business & Entrepreneurship

Sara Lasure
Communications Director, Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry

Sarah Drake
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Roger Wicker (MS)

Sarah Seitz
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. James Lankford (OK)

Sarah Young
Communications Director, Sen. Bill Cassidy (LA)

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Skylar Sowder
Policy Director, Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry

Stephanie Penn
Communications Director, Sen. Mitch McConnell (KY)

Stephen Newton
Legislative Director, Sen. Katie Britt (AL)

Stephen Simonetti
Legislative Director, Sen. Marsha Blackburn (TN)

Stephen Tausend
Legislative Director, Sen. John Cornyn (TX)

Suzanne Wrasse
Deputy Staff Director & Communications Director, Foreign Relations

Tate Mitchell
Communications Director, Sen. Tim Sheehy (MT)

Tatum Wallace
Communications Director, Sen. Tom Cotton (AR)

Taylor Reidy
Communications Director, Sen. Darline Graham (SC)

Taylor Reidy
Communications Director, Budget

Thomas Power
Deputy Staff Director, Aging

Tiffany Delgado
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Bill Hagerty (TN)

Tim Corley
Policy Director, Majority Whip

Tyler Hardy
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. John Hoeven (ND)

Victoria Garrastacho

Chief Investigative Counsel, Sen. Rick Scott (FL)

Vijay Menon
Legislative Director, Sen. Josh Hawley (MO)

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Wesley Davis
Legislative Director, Sen. John Kennedy (LA)

Whitney Ray
Deputy Chief of Staff, Sen. Ashley Moody (FL)

William O'Grady
Communications Director, Sen. Ashley Moody (FL)

AMERICA FIRST
SENATE WORKING GROUP

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Revitalizing the American Dream

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2026

EVENT REGISTRATION/ HOTEL CHECK-IN

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM
The Greenbrier Resort

This period is reserved for participant arrival and administrative check-in. No programming or substantive discussion will occur during this time.

WELCOME RECEPTION

5:30 PM – 6:30 PM
The Greenbrier Resort

The welcome reception provides an informal opportunity for attendees to engage in professional networking and collegial interaction. No structured programming, policy discussions, or official business will be conducted during this time.

WELCOME DINNER

6:30 PM – 8:30 PM
The Greenbrier Resort

James Kimmey, Director, Senate Working Group
Matthew Henderson, Chief Government Affairs Officer, AFPI
Martin Gillespie, Executive Director, AFPI
Greg Sindelar, President, AFPI

This welcome session offers an introduction to the history, mission, and institutional structure of the America First Policy Institute, presented by AFPI's senior leadership. Drawing on the experience of AFPI's Director of the Senate Working Group, Chief Government Affairs Officer, Executive Director, and President, the discussion will address the organization's founding, its policy research work, and its engagement with congressional offices. The session is intended to enhance institutional understanding among attendees and does not involve political messaging, campaign strategy, or advocacy on behalf of any candidate, party, or legislative initiative.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

GRAB-AND-GO BREAKFAST

7:00 AM – 9:00 AM
The Greenbrier Resort

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
The Greenbrier Resort

Senate participants are required to attend one of these sessions

Group A: Effective Communicating In An Ever Changing Environment
David Popp, Senior Advisor, Senator McConnell*
Will O'Grady, Communications Director, Senator Moody
Hogan Gidley (Moderator), Former White House Deputy Press Secretary & AFPI Senior Advisor

This session provides an educational discussion of communications operations within the United States Senate, examining how congressional offices and committees structure and manage public communications in a rapidly evolving media environment. Drawing on the professional experience of senior communications staff, the discussion will address organizational approaches to media relations, digital and traditional communications tools, and internal coordination between offices and committees when responding to a fast-paced news cycle. The session is intended to enhance institutional understanding of communications operations and does not involve political messaging, campaign strategy, or advocacy on behalf of any candidate, party, or legislative initiative.

Group B: The America First Agenda
Josh Grant, Legislative Director, Senator Tim Scott
Laura Atcheson, Legislative Director, Senator McCormick

Katie Wiesert, Legislative Director, Senator Rick Scott
Matthew Henderson (Moderator), Chief Government Affairs Officer, America First Policy Institute

This session provides an educational discussion of policy priorities associated with the America First agenda as it may develop in the next Congress, drawing on the professional experience of senior legislative staff from across the Senate. The discussion will address how congressional offices are approaching anticipated legislative priorities, the process for advancing policy proposals in a new Congress, and institutional considerations relevant to legislative planning and staff coordination. The session is informational in nature and is intended to enhance understanding of the legislative landscape heading into the next Congress. It does not involve advocacy for specific legislation, political positions, or campaign-related discussion.

BREAK
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

LUNCH SESSION
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM
The Greenbrier Resort

Public Opinion Research: Methodology and Interpretation
John Rogers, Executive Director, America First Works

This session provides an educational examination of national public opinion on key issues affecting Americans. The discussion will focus on how major issues are perceived across the country, how public sentiment has evolved over time, and emerging trends reflected in national polling data. The session will address polling methodology and interpretation at a high level and is intended to enhance understanding of issue-based public sentiment. The discussion will not include elections, campaigns, political messaging, or advocacy.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS
1:00 PM – 2:30 PM
The Greenbrier Resort

Senate participants are required to attend one of these sessions

Group A: *Working with the House, White House, and Agencies*
*Natalie Burkholter, Deputy Chief of Staff for the Department of Homeland Security**
Renee Hudson, Executive Vice President, America First Policy Institute
Matthew Henderson (Moderator), Chief Government Affairs Officer, America First Policy Institute

This session provides an educational discussion of interbranch and interagency coordination, drawing on the professional experience of former senior White House and federal agency officials. The discussion will address how Senate offices engage with the House of Representatives, the White House, and executive branch agencies to advance policy development, oversight, and effective governance. Speakers will share institutional perspectives on communication channels, organizational structures, and practical approaches to coordination across the legislative and executive branches. The session is educational in nature and is intended to strengthen institutional understanding of how the branches of government work together. It does not involve advocacy for specific legislation, political positions, or campaign-related discussion.

Group B: *Maximizing the Message*
Alex Swoyer, Editor, Newsmax / Washington Times
Bradley Jaye, Breitbart
*Alex Miller, Fox News Senate Reporter**

This session provides an educational discussion of the media environment covering the United States Senate, featuring perspectives from journalists and editors across print, digital, and broadcast outlets. Drawing on their professional experience covering Congress, panelists will discuss how congressional news is reported, the practical realities of engaging with the press corps, and considerations for clear and effective public communication. The session is informational in nature and is intended to enhance understanding of the media landscape and press relations. It does not involve political messaging, campaign strategy, or advocacy on behalf of any candidate, party, or media outlet.

BREAK
2:30 PM – 3:30 PM

AFTERNOON SESSION
3:30 PM – 4:30 PM
The Greenbrier Resort

De/Regulation: Reconciliations, Reauthorizations, Oversight, Fraud, and More
Hon. Eric Ueland, Deputy Director, Office of Management and Budget*
Hon. Mike Faulkender, former Deputy Secretary of the Treasury & Co-Chair of American Prosperity at AFPI
Stephen Moore, former Senior Economic Advisor to President Trump & Co-Chair of the Save America Coalition at AFPI
Hon. Chad Wolf, former Acting Secretary of Homeland Security & Chair of Homeland Security and Immigration Policy at AFPI

This session provides an educational discussion of federal regulatory and budget processes, including reconciliation, program reauthorizations, oversight, and efforts to combat waste, fraud, and abuse. Drawing on the professional experience of current and former federal officials, the discussion will address how executive branch agencies and the Office of Management and Budget approach regulatory and budgetary decision-making, and how these processes intersect with congressional oversight responsibilities. The session is informational in nature and is intended to enhance institutional understanding of federal regulatory and budget processes. It does not involve advocacy for specific legislation, political positions, or campaign-related discussion.

BREAK
4:30 PM – 6:30 PM

DINNER SESSION
6:30 PM – 8:30 PM
The Greenbrier Resort

Safeguarding America: Insights on National Security Challenges
General Keith Kellogg, AFPI *Co-Chair of the Center for American Security*
Hon. Chad Wolf, former Acting Secretary of Homeland Security & *AFPI Chair of the Center for Homeland Security & Immigration*
Hon. Robert Wilke, former Secretary of Veterans Affairs & AFPI Chair for American Security
(Moderator) Jacob Olidort, Ph.D., *AFPI Chief Research Officer & Director of American Security*

This engaging panel offers an educational exploration of domestic and international security issues, drawing on the expertise of seasoned professionals in the field. Participants will gain perspectives on current threats, historical contexts, and strategic considerations from Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert Wilkie, General Keith Kellogg and former Acting DHS Secretary Chad Wolf, moderated by Dr. Jacob Olidort. The session is informational in nature, focusing on enhancing understanding without involving policy advocacy, legislative strategy, or political messaging.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2026

BREAKFAST SEND OFF SESSION
9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
The Greenbrier Resort

Enforcing the Rule of Law: Insights into Federal Litigation and Regulatory Frameworks
*Harmeet Dillon, Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Justice

This session offers an educational overview of federal litigation and regulatory enforcement, featuring perspectives from Harmeet Dillon, Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Justice. Drawing on professional experiences, the discussion will explore the structure of enforcement actions, roles of federal agencies and the DOJ, and key considerations in civil and regulatory processes. It is designed to foster institutional understanding in an informational capacity, without engaging in advocacy, specific case involvement, or coordination on ongoing matters.

SUMMIT CONCLUDES
11:00 AM

**Invited, not confirmed*