

David Nelson: Director of Political Affairs

With over two decades of dedicated public service, David Nelson stands as a seasoned and accomplished political and policy operative, leaving an indelible mark on the State Capitol and throughout California. As he assumes the role of Director of Political Affairs at MMS Strategies, David brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record of success.

David's journey in public service commenced in the State Assembly, marking the beginning of a career characterized by unwavering commitment and strategic leadership. His most recent role as the Executive Director of the California Forward Action Fund, the 501c4 policy advocacy arm of California Forward (CAFWD), showcases his dedication to improving the lives of all Californians through policies fostering inclusive, sustainable growth and enhanced government at both state and local levels.

While at CAFWD, David skillfully oversaw the organization's efforts, spearheading initiatives aimed at addressing the core issues that impact Californians daily. His vision and strategic acumen were pivotal in navigating the complex landscape of policy advocacy.

Prior to his role at CAFWD, David served as the Director of Public Policy at the California Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce and the Sacramento Asian Pacific Chamber of Commerce. Here, he achieved a landmark victory for small businesses statewide with the passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 2019 (Petrie-Norris). This legislation codified the State's 25% small business procurement goal, a legacy that traces back to an Executive Order in the Schwarzenegger Administration.

David's commitment to supporting small businesses was further evident in his role as the Statewide Liaison for the California Small Business Development Centers. In 2021, he took on the responsibility of Co-Chair for the Small Businesses Owned by People of Color workgroup for the California Economic Summit, contributing to the state's economic vitality.

A true catalyst for change, David played a key role in delivering substantive infrastructure reform for California while at CAFWD. Collaborating with former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Governor Newsom's office, David spearheaded a groundbreaking effort to streamline regulations and maximize investment dollars from the Federal Bipartisan Infrastructure and Jobs Act (IIJA). The result was the first comprehensive infrastructure regulatory reform in the state in a generation.

David's impact extends beyond policy advocacy, as he has actively managed and advised political and legislative campaigns for years. His strategic prowess was particularly evident in 2020 when he successfully blocked the passage of Proposition 15, the "split roll" property tax, protecting Prop 13 tax protections.

In addition to his professional achievements, David has served as a Trustee on the Sierra College Joint Community College Board, a Transportation Commissioner for the City of Roseville, and a member of the UC Davis Health Community Advisory Board. His commitment to community involvement and leadership is further underscored by his role on the Board of Directors for the Los Angeles Business Federation (LA BizFed).



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A proud resident of Sacramento, David Nelson resides with his three children, embodying a life dedicated to service, leadership, and making a positive impact on the communities he serves. As he embarks on this new chapter with MMS Strategies, David's legacy of excellence and transformative leadership is set to continue shaping the political landscape of California and beyond.