

# Improving Opportunities for Children: Advice for the New Administration

## *The 2016 Paul Offner Lecture*

### Speaker Biographies

**Ron Haskins** is a senior fellow in the Economic Studies program and codirector of the Center on Children and Families at the Brookings Institution. He is also senior consultant at the Annie E. Casey Foundation. In 2002, Haskins was the senior adviser to the president for welfare policy at the White House. Before joining Brookings and Casey, he spent 14 years on the House Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee, first as welfare counsel to the Republican staff, and then as the subcommittee's staff director. From 1981 to 1985, he was a senior researcher at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Haskins also taught and lectured on history and education at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and developmental psychology at Duke University. His areas of expertise include welfare reform, child care, child support, marriage, child protection, and budget and deficit issues. In 1997, the *National Journal* selected Haskins as one of the 100 most influential people in the federal government. He received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (2000), the President's Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Field of Human Services from the American Public Human Services Association (2005), and the Lion Award from the Grantmakers for Children, Youth, and Families (2010).

**Isabel V. Sawhill** is a senior fellow in Economic Studies at the Brookings Institution. She was vice president and director of the Economic Studies program from 2003 to 2006. She has also been a codirector of the Center on Children and Families. Before joining Brookings, Sawhill was a senior fellow at the Urban Institute. She served in the Clinton administration as an associate director of the Office of Management and Budget, where her responsibilities included all the human resource programs of the federal government. Her research has spanned several economic and social issues, including fiscal policy, economic growth, poverty, and inequality. Over the past decade, her major focus has been on how to improve opportunities for disadvantaged children in the United States. She has authored or edited numerous books and articles. Sawhill cofounded the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and is president of its board. She has been a visiting professor at Georgetown University Law School, director of the National Commission for Employment Policy, and president of the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management. She also serves on several boards. Sawhill received the Exemplar Award from the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (2014) and the Daniel Patrick Moynihan Prize with Ron Haskins from the American Academy of Political and Social Science (2016). She was named a distinguished fellow by the American Economic Association in 2016. She attended Wellesley College and received her PhD from New York University.

**C. Eugene Steuerle** is an Institute fellow and the Richard B. Fisher chair at the Urban Institute. He was deputy assistant secretary of the US Department of the Treasury for Tax Analysis (1987–89), president of the National Tax Association (2001–02), codirector of the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center, and chair of the 1999 technical panel advising Social Security on its methods and assumptions. Between 1984 and 1986, he was economic coordinator and original organizer of the Treasury’s tax reform effort, which Treasury and White House officials acknowledged would not have moved forward without his leadership. Steuerle is the author, coauthor, or coeditor of 18 books and numerous publications and congressional testimonies, including *Dead Men Ruling*, *Nonprofits and Government: Collaboration and Conflict*, and *Advancing the Power of Economic Evidence to Inform Investments in Children, Youth, and Families*. He is cofounder of the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center and the Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy, as well as cofounder and chair of Act for Alexandria, a community foundation. He serves or has served as an elected, appointed, advisory panel, or board member for the Congressional Budget Office, Comptroller General of the United States, the Joint Committee on Taxation, Venture Philanthropy Partners, and the National Center on Philanthropy and the Law. Among other honors, Steuerle received the first Bruce Davie–Albert Davis Public Service Award from the National Tax Association in 2005 and received distinguished or outstanding alumnus awards from the University of Dayton and St. Xavier High School.

**Nisha Patel** is executive director of the US Partnership on Mobility from Poverty at the Urban Institute. Supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Partnership is a nonpartisan group of leaders, experts, and practitioners working to identify promising interventions to make real, lasting progress against persistent poverty in America. Patel has nearly two decades of experience leading, developing, and implementing initiatives to increase economic opportunities for low-income families. She served in the Obama administration as director of the Office of Family Assistance within the US Department of Health and Human Services, overseeing a \$17 billion annual portfolio of federal grants, including the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program. Patel was previously deputy director of Ascend at the Aspen Institute, where she led national efforts to expand two-generation approaches to improve outcomes for children and their parents. Before that, Patel was a program officer in the US Program at the Gates Foundation, where she managed a portfolio focused on increasing postsecondary success through community partnerships and policy development, as well as special initiatives. Patel previously held positions as director of programs at the Washington Area Women’s Foundation and senior policy analyst at the Center for Law and Social Policy. She has also been an adjunct professor at the George Washington University. Patel is a graduate of Vanderbilt University and holds an MSW with a concentration in social and economic development from Washington University in St. Louis.

**Sarah Rosen Wartell** is the third president of the Urban Institute. During her tenure, Urban has articulated its strategy to “elevate the debate” by bringing more of its research insights to federal, state, and local government and practice; becoming a leader in research communications and data visualization; and undertaking an ambitious program of business systems and technology modernization. Previously, Wartell was deputy assistant to the president for economic policy and deputy director of the National Economic Council. At the US Department of Housing and Urban Development from 1993 to 1998, she advised the federal housing commissioner on housing finance, mortgage markets, and consumer protection. Later, she was a consultant to the bipartisan Millennial Housing Commission. After government service, Wartell was the founding chief operating officer and then executive vice president of the Center for American Progress. Her work focused on the economy and housing markets, and she directed the Mortgage Finance Working Group and “Doing What Works” government performance program. Before her tenure in government, she practiced law with the Washington, DC, firm Arnold & Porter. Wartell serves on the boards of the LIIF, Center for Law and Social Policy, and Center for Urban Science and Progress at New York University. She is also a Penn Institute for Urban Research Scholar. Her areas of expertise include community development, consumer finance, asset building, and housing finance. Wartell has an AB degree with honors in urban affairs from Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. She has a JD degree from Yale Law School.