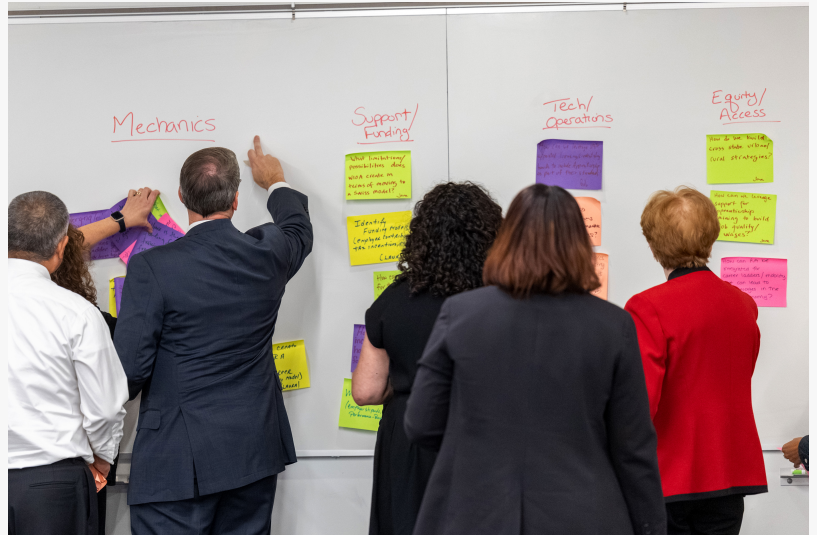


AMERICAN SWISS FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES THE CLASS OF 2025 INNOVATION FELLOWS

BOSTON, MA, UNITED STATES, October 16, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On October 9, 2025, the American Swiss Foundation launched the inaugural "Innovation Forum: Developing the Workforce of Tomorrow" at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. This landmark gathering brought together leaders from government, industry, and academia to share transatlantic perspectives on labor innovation and workforce development.

The inaugural class of Innovation Fellows is a distinguished group of seventeen state Secretaries of Labor from across the United States.

Robert J. Giuffra, Jr. (Young Leader 1996), Chair, American Swiss Foundation remarked: "The American Swiss Foundation's inaugural Innovation Forum in Boston reflects our mission to connect and engage leaders from Switzerland and the United States. We are delighted to bring together top leaders from government, business, and academia to exchange ideas about the future of work. Today, we are proud to launch our year-long Innovation Fellowship with a distinguished group of seventeen state secretaries and commissioners of labor—representing states from Maine to Louisiana and Montana to Hawaii—continuing our tradition of fostering transatlantic dialogue and developing practical solutions to shared workforce challenges, while incorporating best practices from Switzerland's



world-renowned apprenticeship system."

Dr. Srishti Gupta, Co-Chair of the Stratton Prize Committee and Member of the Board of Directors, noted that the new Forum marks a meaningful evolution of the Foundation's established leadership programs. "In reimagining the Stratton Fellowship as part of the ASF's new Innovation Forum, we wanted to build on the Prize's distinguished history while expanding its reach and relevance for today's leaders. The redesigned program connects outstanding thinkers and practitioners from across the public and private sectors, equipping them to collaborate on solutions to the most pressing workforce and innovation challenges of our time."



Mike Lake (Young Leader, 2013), Co-Chair of the Stratton Prize Committee and Member of the Board of Directors, highlighted the significance of this new initiative in fostering collaboration at scale: "The ASF's convening power has created a rare platform for collaboration — bringing together leaders from across the U.S. and Switzerland to shape the future of work. For the first time, we've assembled such a broad coalition of state workforce leaders to address the evolving needs of our economy and build a future where every worker can find purpose, opportunity, and respect in their career."

The American Swiss Foundation extends its sincere gratitude to the Innovation Forum program sponsors Aon and Swiss International Air Lines, and to Program Partners SwissImpact, Swissnex, Greater Zurich Area, and Leading Cities for their generous support in making the inaugural Innovation Forum possible.

This new annual program will continue to advance the Foundation's mission by fostering collaboration between Swiss and American leaders, strengthening transatlantic partnerships, and developing innovative solutions to the workforce challenges of the future.

Innovation Fellows, Class of 2025

Commissioner Rob Asaro-Angelo, New Jersey Department of Labor & Workforce Development

Director Joe M. Barela, Colorado Department of Labor & Employment

Commissioner Danté Bartolomeo, Connecticut Department of Labor

Director Jade T. Butay, Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

Director Jane R. Flanagan, Illinois Department of Labor

Commissioner Laura A. Fortman, Maine Department of Labor

Director Anna Hui, Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations

Secretary Stewart Knox, California Labor and Workforce Development Agency

Secretary Lauren E. Jones (Young Leader 2017), Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

Director & State Secretary of Labor Dr. Unique Morris-Hughes, District of Columbia Department of Employment Services

Commissioner Gary G. Pan, Virginia Department of Labor and Industry

Commissioner Roberta Reardon, New York Department of Labor

Undersecretary Jacque Roberts, California Labor and Workforce Development Agency

Commissioner Sarah Swanson, Montana Department of Labor & Industry

Secretary Susie Schowen, Louisiana Workforce Commission

Commissioner Deniece L. Thomas, Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development

Secretary Portia Wu, Maryland Department of Labor

About the American Swiss Foundation

Founded in 1945 in response to World War II, the American Swiss Foundation's mission is to connect and engage Swiss and American leaders. Toward the end of the 20th century, two former U.S. Ambassadors to Switzerland—Shelby Cullom Davis and Faith Whittlesey—ushered in

a new era for the organization, transforming it from a primarily social association to one focused on nurturing and investing in the next generation of leaders.

In 1975, Ambassador Davis assumed an active leadership role with the Foundation. He served as chairman and president until 1989, and as honorary chairman until his passing in 1994. In 1989, Ambassador Whittlesey became chairman and president of the Foundation and launched its flagship program, the Young Leaders Conference.

Today, alumni of the conference number more than 1,550 leaders who shape the futures of the two countries, including members of U.S. Congress and Swiss parliamentarians, entrepreneurs and business executives, media professionals, and public policy experts. The American Swiss Foundation's mission is to connect and engage Swiss and American leaders through inspirational programs to strengthen the shared values of liberty, the rule of law, and free enterprise.

Vanessa Beary, Executive Director

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