

Legislative Advocates

Presenter Bios



Paul J. Yoder

Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange, Partner

A founding partner in the firm, Paul J. Yoder has earned an impeccable reputation among Sacramento decision makers during his long career as a legislative advocate. Clients praise Paul's vast institutional knowledge, and his propensity for always making them feel like they are his highest priority.

Paul represents dozens of local governmental entities both in legislative and regulatory matters. His duties and experience include drafting legislative language; reviewing, tracking and analyzing bills, laws, and regulations, testifying at hearings; coordinating legislative strategies with other interest groups and related associations; and, maintaining liaison with clients regarding pending legislative issues; and developing strategies to move client interests forward.

After beginning his advocacy career as a lobbyist for the County of San Diego, Paul joined Gerber and Associates, Inc., where he lobbied for many of the firm's public clients, including counties, water agencies, transit agencies, and solid waste interests, as well as the firm's corporate clients. In 1998, Paul joined with Joshua Shaw to acquire Gerber and Associates, Inc. The firm was subsequently renamed Shaw / Yoder, Inc., then Shaw / Yoder / Antwih, Inc. prior to becoming Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange. Concurrent with these metamorphoses, the firm acquired three other Sacramento lobbying firms and grew itself into a perennial occupant in quarterly Top 10 rankings in California.

Paul holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature from Yale University. He has completed all the course work towards a Master of Arts degree in Public Policy and Administration, at California State University, Sacramento.



Joe Krahn

Paragon Government Relations, President

Joe Krahn, president and managing partner of Paragon Government Relations, directs the firm's day-to-day operations and provides hands-on lobbying services for the firm's clients. A 25-year veteran of Paragon Government Relations, Joe has dedicated nearly his entire professional career to promoting the interests of county governments before Congress and Executive Branch departments and agencies.

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During his tenure with the firm, Joe has partnered with several organizations, large and small, to help them build and sustain successful federal government relations programs. From statewide associations to individual county governments, Joe works closely with clients to maximize their input in the legislative and regulatory arenas. Joe also has considerable experience building coalitions as a means to leverage support for client initiatives.

Joe has policy expertise in the area of water and natural resources, transportation, justice and public safety, and tribal affairs. He has developed an outstanding reputation on Capitol Hill, among his colleagues, and within local government circles as an effective and trustworthy advocate. Joe also regularly appears before client groups and other audiences to provide his perspective on matters of policy and politics.

Prior to joining Paragon Government Relations, Joe worked as a foster care case manager at a private non-profit agency in Chicago, Illinois. As a case manager, he gained valuable experience providing direct social services to children and families in the city's foster care system.

Joe holds a Juris Master degree from George Mason University School of Law, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from Loyola University Chicago.



Hasan Sarsour
Paragon Government Relations, Senior Legislative Associate

Hasan Sarsour is a proven advocate for the firm's clients, serving county governments on such issues as energy policy, agriculture, natural resources, public lands, and housing. Prior to joining Paragon Government Relations in 2011, Hasan worked on the House Energy and Commerce Committee. As a committee staff member, he assumed responsibility for legislative issues within the panel's jurisdiction and was closely involved in hearings, briefings, and strategic initiatives to advance the chairman's legislative agenda.

While on Capitol Hill, Hasan also served as a legislative assistant to Congressman Dan Maffei. In that capacity, he developed, planned, and advised the congressman on a range of domestic policy objectives, including health care policy, transportation projects, infrastructure issues, appropriations, and the federal budget. He also counseled the congressman on issues arising before the House Judiciary Committee.

Hasan is a graduate of James Madison University in Virginia, where he earned a bachelor's degree in political science.

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Jacqueline Wong-Hernandez
California State Association of Counties, Chief Policy Officer

Jacqueline was appointed as the CSAC Deputy Executive Director in 2021, now titled Chief Policy Officer, overseeing CSAC's Legislative staff, policy committees and works alongside CSAC CEO Graham Knaus with CSAC Officers, Executive Committee and oversees, caucuses. Jacqueline has driven major advocacy efforts representing the interests of California's 58 counties such as the CSAC AT HOME

Initiative.

Before working at CSAC, Jacqueline's professional tenure included with than 14 years of experience serving in government leadership roles within state legislative, executive and constitutional offices. Before coming to CSAC, she served on the State Controller's executive team as Deputy Controller, advising on policy and serving on numerous government oversight boards and commissions on behalf of State Controller Betty T. Yee. Prior to this, Jacqueline served as Chief Deputy Director for Policy at the State Department of Finance, and previously as its Director of Legislation. Jacqueline's career also includes providing fiscal and policy recommendations as a consultant to the California Senate Appropriations Committee, where she worked on education, public safety, and human services legislation. She began her public service career as a Senate Fellow in the Committee on Budget & Fiscal Review in 2007.



Sarah Dukett
Rural County Representatives of California, Policy Advocate

Sarah Dukett joined RCRC in 2021 and serves as a policy advocate. In that capacity, Sarah advocates on both regulatory and legislative proposals on behalf of RCRC's rural county members. Sarah represents RCRC on a wide range of issues, including cannabis, county finance and operations, labor/employment, emergency management, health, human services, and public safety.

Sarah came to RCRC after serving as Deputy Chief Executive Officer for the County of Mendocino where she was responsible for budget management, policy development, legislative/governmental affairs and the operations of the Mendocino County Water Agency. She also has held various staff positions with Members of the California State Legislature. Sarah holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from California Baptist University and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from the University of La Verne