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Staff and Contact Information [1]

Washington, DC Office

1101 14th Street NW
Suite 1210
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 303-495-9624

Denver Office

1800 Grant Street
Suite 800
Denver, Colorado 80203
Phone: 303-246-7040

FEDERAL RELATIONS TEAM

Natalie Barry, Director of Federal Relations and Operations

Contact:

Phone: 303-495-9624
Natalie.Barry@cu.edu [2]

Bio:

Natalie Barry is the Director of Federal Relations and Operations. She has been with the University of Colorado since 2011, and supports a broad range of administrative, research, writing, and analytical duties that are designed to support CU's federal relations efforts. Barry works closely with staff for the Colorado congressional delegation, federal elected officials, military officials, and other offices to schedule outreach meetings, campus tours, and events with congressional members and staff, federal elected officials, and military officials (in Colorado, Washington, D.C, and virtually). She also acts as the point of contact with congressional schedulers for events, coordination with university staff and faculty, constituent matters, etc. for all campuses and the CU System offices. In addition, Barry manages the overall office budget for the Denver office and manages operations for the Washington, DC office, including office budgets, contracts, and travel. Barry also manages the Colorado Capital Conference for the University, in cooperation with external and CU campus partners.

Natalie received a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from University of Nevada, Las Vegas

and an AAS in Business Management from Community College of Southern Nevada. She and her husband Tyler enjoy living in Colorado with their dogs and traveling as much as possible.



Natalie Barry, Director of Federal Relations & Operations

Cyrus McCrimmon

Heather Bené, Senior Associate Vice President of Federal Relations

Contact:

Phone: 202-763-4467
Heather.Bene@cu.edu [3]

Bio:

Heather Bené is the Senior Associate Vice President of Federal Relations for the University of Colorado and represents CU in Washington, DC. Bené represents the university with federal officials, national organizations and government entities on funding and policy issues related to higher education and scientific research.

Bené has served in numerous national leadership roles, including as President of The Science Coalition, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization of more than 50 of the nation's leading research universities dedicated to sustaining federal investment in fundamental scientific research. She has served on the leadership boards for the Association of American Universities' (AAU) Council on Federal Relations and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities' (APLU) Council on Governmental Affairs. Bené is the 2020 recipient of AAU's "Ripple Effect" Impact Award, which recognizes her public service and mentorship

contributions both within AAU and across the higher education community.

Prior to joining CU in 2014, Bené worked in the Government Relations Office at Oregon State University on state and federal policy. Bené is a graduate of Oregon State University with Bachelor’s Degrees in English and Political Science and a Master's Degree in Public Policy.



Heather Bené, Senior Associate Vice President of Federal Relations

Tim Coburn

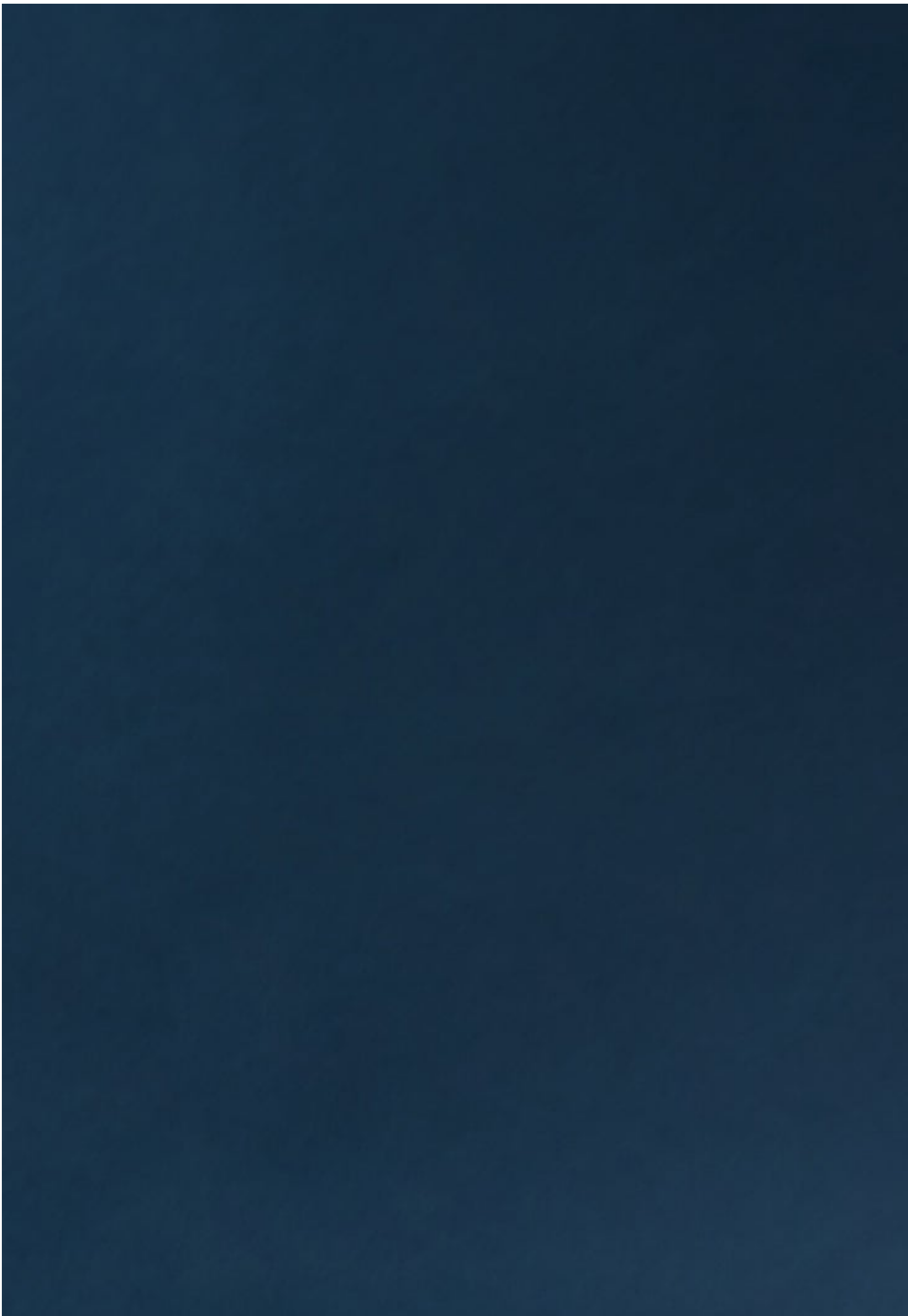
Riley Black, Federal Relations Assistant

Contact:

Phone: 202-642-0954
Riley.Black@cu.edu [4]

Bio:

Riley Black is the Federal Relations Assistant for the Office of Government Relations at the University of Colorado. He assists the federal relations team with administrative, research, and event planning tasks. Prior to joining CU in 2024, he served as an intern in the U.S. Senate. Riley is a graduate of Vanderbilt University with a Bachelor’s Degree in Public Policy Studies. Born and raised in Colorado, he currently resides in Washington, D.C.



Riley Black, Federal Relations Assistant

Jon Arnold

Annie Larson, Assistant Vice President of Federal Relations and Outreach

Contact:

Phone: 720-403-3026
Annie.Larson@cu.edu [5]

Bio:

Annie Larson is the Assistant Vice President of Federal Relations and Outreach for the University of Colorado System. Based in Denver, she serves as the federal liaison for the CU Denver and UCCS campuses, and provides staff support at CU Boulder and CU Anschutz.

Annie joined CU in 2023, bringing with her a decade of experience working in and with the government in Colorado. Annie gained her experience in public policy, constituent relations, government relations and outreach through her time at the Colorado State House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate, and at a Denver public relations firm where she served as a consultant on behalf of healthcare and bioscience clients and focused on state and federal advocacy and outreach. Prior to moving to Colorado in 2013, Annie worked in Washington, D.C.

A native Oregonian, Annie discovered her passion for the legislative process through interning at the Oregon State Legislature during college. She graduated from Willamette University with a Bachelor’s Degree in American Politics. Annie resides in Denver South with her husband and two daughters.



Annie Larson, Assistant Vice President of Federal Relations & Outreach

University of Colorado

Brett Roude, Assistant Vice President of Federal Relations and Health Policy

Contact:

Phone: 202-281-9301
Brett.Roude@cu.edu [6]

Bio:

Brett Roude is the Assistant Vice President of Federal Relations and Health Policy for the University of Colorado and represents CU in Washington, DC. He represents the university

with federal officials, national organizations, and government entities on health policy issues, medical research and public health funding, health workforce development, and coverage issues. Prior to joining CU in early 2022, Brett worked for the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), where he focused on research, workforce development, and higher education issues. He is a graduate of the University of Delaware with a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science, and earned his Master's in Political Management from the George Washington University. A native New Yorker, Brett currently resides in Washington, D.C.



Brett Roude, Assistant Vice President of Federal Relations & Health Policy

Tim Coburn

STATE RELATIONS TEAM

Jillian Coffey, Senior Advisor for State Relations & Public Policy

Contact:

Phone: 908-577-8027
Jillian.Coffey@cu.edu [7]

Bio:

Jillian Coffey serves as a Senior Advisor for State Relations and Public Policy for the

University of Colorado System. In this role, she is a key member of the state relations team, advocating for the university at the state level through budget requests, legislative engagement, and policy development. As a registered lobbyist representing the CU System at the State Capitol, she is responsible for cultivating strong relationships with policymakers and advancing initiatives that support a robust and strategic higher education system in Colorado. With more than a decade of experience in government relations, Jillian is skilled at navigating federal, state, and local policy environments. She has led strategic initiatives across diverse policy areas—spanning local government, human services, child welfare, economic development, healthcare access, consumer protections, voting system modernization, and oil and gas regulation. Known for turning complex policy challenges into clear, actionable strategies, Jillian brings both a deep understanding of governmental systems and a strong commitment to effective, equitable public policy.

Originally from the East Coast, Jillian built her career in Colorado politics and has grown deep roots in the Denver-Metro community. When she’s not working, you can find her with her husband, and their small but mighty rescue pup, usually cheering on the Denver Nuggets or the New York Yankees & now the CU Buffalos! Sko Buffs!



Abby Keleher, State Relations Coordinator

Contact:

Phone: 720.672.0241
abigail.keleher@cu.edu [8]

Bio:

Abby serves as the State Relations Coordinator for the University of Colorado's Office of Government Relations. As part of the state relations team, she supports CU's state government relations strategy through legislative research and analysis, stakeholder engagement, constituent response, legislative and election tracking, events and outreach, and operational management. Her work helps advance the university's legislative priorities and support its government relations efforts across all four campuses. As the daughter of two parents with careers in politics and public affairs, she is extremely passionate about the important work that this office leads.

Prior to joining CU, Abby worked at a local non-profit, where she coordinated meetings and initiatives involving elected officials, university leaders, donors, and community partners. Earlier in her career, she worked on a Colorado congressional campaign team before joining Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold's re-election campaign. Following the campaign, Abby joined the Secretary of State's office, where she supported operations and coordinated with legislators, government officials, and other stakeholders. Abby earned her bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Colorado Boulder.

Originally from Fort Worth, Texas, Abby has called Colorado home since moving in 2019 to pursue her degree at CU Boulder. An avid football fan, she can be found cheering on the Dallas Cowboys, Denver Broncos, Texas Longhorns, and of course, the Colorado Buffaloes any day of the week. Sko Buffs!



Abby Keleher, State Relations Coordinator

Rebecca Massey, Senior Advisor for State Relations & Public Policy

Contact:

Phone: 720-403-0143
Rebecca.Massey@cu.edu [9]

Bio:

Rebecca Massey is a Senior Advisor for State Relations and Public Policy for the Office of Government Relations at the University of Colorado. She is a part of the state relations team, which is responsible for CU's advocacy efforts at the state, including budget and capital requests, legislation of impact and representing all four campuses at the capitol. As a registered lobbyist for the University, she develops, coordinates, and maintains necessary relationships on the campuses as well as develops strategy to assist in attaining the University's legislative priorities.

Prior to coming to CU, Rebecca worked at the Colorado Department of Higher Education as a Lead Finance Analyst. Originally from Salida, Rebecca's family's roots are in Texas-prompting her to study at Baylor (Sic 'em Bears!). Rebecca is also active with Junior League of Denver where she focuses on public policy around housing, food access, and women's issues.



Rebecca Massey, Senior Advisor for State Relations & Public Policy

University of Colorado

Angela Rennick, Senior Director of State Relations

Contact:

Phone: 303-246-7040
Angela.Rennick@cu.edu [10]

Bio:

Angela Rennick is the Senior Director of State Relations on the University of Colorado's Office of Government Relations. She serves on the state relations team which is responsible for

CU’s advocacy efforts at the state, including budget and capital requests, legislation of impact and representing all four campuses at the capitol. She is responsible for analyzing and tracking legislation during the state session, as well as preparing fact sheets for use with legislators and assisting the lobby team with coverage of committee hearings and stakeholder meetings. Additionally, she helps prepare correspondence and updates to the university community on legislation. Angela also works with the offices of the Governor, Lt. Governor and state legislators on constituent issues and organizing tours and events throughout Colorado.

Angela has a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies from Colorado State University and a Master in Public Administration from the University of Colorado Denver School of Public Affairs. She resides in Denver with her husband Alex and their dog Ginny.



Angela Rennick, Senior Director of State Relations

Cyrus McCrimmon

Heather Retzko, Vice President for State Relations

Contact:

Phone: 303-818-2519
Heather.Retzko@cu.edu [11]

Bio:

Heather Retzko serves as the Vice President of State Relations for the University of Colorado’s Office of Government Relations. With over fifteen years of experience in both government relations and higher education, she is an accomplished lobbyist and public policy

influencer. She leads the University of Colorado's State Government Relations team, which represents all four campuses at the capitol. The office is responsible for CU's advocacy efforts at the state, including budget and capital requests and legislation of impact. Through building critical relationships with members of the legislature and executive branch, her team works to translate the value of the University and its distinctive campuses to state leaders so that they in turn remain committed higher education partners.

Heather's unique background in these sectors has given her an extensive understanding of the interplay between policy and the higher education landscape. She takes special interest in issues related to operations management, Title IX, research, academic affairs and role and mission as well as removing barriers to access for students in Colorado. She recently led in advocacy efforts to eliminate the state requirement for perspective college students to submit national assessment scores during the admissions process. Heather is a trusted thought partner and strategist, both to political and higher education leaders alike. She plays a pivotal role driving higher education policy in the State of Colorado. Prior to her work on state issues, Heather also worked on CU's Federal Relations team on critical research and policy areas.

She has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Colorado Boulder and a Master of Public Administration from the University of Colorado Denver School of Public Affairs. Heather was a fellow in the CU's Excellence in Leaders Program, a President's Employee of the Year nominee and serves on the American Heart Association's Go Red for Women Board of Directors. Born and raised in Aurora, Colorado, she resides in Denver, with her husband Jay and their three children Ryker, Mila and Bryson. She enjoys camping in Colorado's great outdoors, is an avid cycler/Pelotoner and a lifelong Bronco fan.



Heather Retzko, Vice President for State Relations

Cyrus McCrimmon

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