

2019 Upcoming Leadership Roundtables Series

These are exclusive opportunities for BizFed leaders to directly engage senior policy makers. Seating is limited to ensure productive dialogue. To participate, please contact Lara at Lara.Larramendi@bizfed.org.

Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, District 2

WHEN: April 10, 2019 from 3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

WHERE: TBD

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Since he was overwhelmingly elected in 2008, and reelected in 2012 and 2016 to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, **Mark Ridley-Thomas** has distinguished himself as an effective leader for more than two million Second District residents. He is a board member of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum Commission and LA Care, the nation's largest publicly operated health plan.



Prior to his election to the Board of Supervisors, Supervisor Ridley-Thomas served the 26th District in the California State Senate, where he chaired the Senate's Committee on Business, Professions and Economic Development. While in the Senate, he served as Chair of the California Legislative Black Caucus in 2008 and led the Caucus in unprecedented levels of cooperation and collaboration with counterparts in the Latino and Asian-Pacific Islander Legislative Caucuses.

Mark Ridley-Thomas was first elected to public office in 1991 and served with distinction on the Los Angeles City Council for nearly a dozen years, departing as Council President pro Tempore. He later served two terms in the California State Assembly, where he chaired the Jobs, Economic Development, and Economy Committee and served the Assembly Democratic Caucus. His legislative work addressed a broad range of issues with implications for economic and workforce development, health care, public safety, education, budget accountability, consumer protection and civic participation.

He is widely regarded as the foremost advocate of neighborhood participation in government decision-making by virtue of his founding of the Empowerment Congress, arguably the region's most successful 26-year initiative in neighborhood-based civic engagement. Ridley-Thomas' political career was preceded by a decade of service as the executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Greater Los Angeles (1981-1991).

The Supervisor graduated from Manual Arts High School (Class of 1972) and then earned BA and MA degrees along with secondary and adult education credentials from Immaculate Heart College. Supervisor Ridley-Thomas went on to receive his Ph.D. in Social Ethics from the University of Southern California focusing on Social Criticism and Social Change.

He is married to Avis Ridley-Thomas, Co-Founder and Director of the Institute for Non-Violence in Los Angeles. They are the proud parents of Sinclair and Sebastian, both Morehouse Men. Sinclair earned an MBA degree at USC's Marshall School of Business, works in the investment banking industry, and resides in San Francisco with his wife Shaunicie, an attorney, and 1-year old son Duke Flynn. Sebastian formerly represented California's Fifty-fourth Assembly District (12/05/13-12/31/17). He will now turn his attention to political empowerment, millennial civic engagement, and training a new generation of leaders throughout the state of California as Chief Strategist for the African American Voter Registration, Education, and Participation Project beginning in March of this year.

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State Senator Holly Mitchell (SD30)

WHEN: April 26, 2019 from 10:00 am – 11:30 am

WHERE: TBD

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A third-generation native Angeleno, **Sen. Holly J. Mitchell** is the proud daughter of career public servants and the protégé of community leaders who instilled in her a passion for service. She continued her family legacy of “firsts” when she was named the first African American to chair the powerful Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee in December 2016. Less than two months later, a profile in ***The Los Angeles Times*** described Mitchell as “the Legislature’s moral compass.”



She proved to be just that in 2017 and 2018 when she oversaw the adoption of consecutive state budgets of nearly \$200 billion each and won wide praise for directing funds to elementary and college students, the health-care systems and long-neglected programs to assist infants, the elderly, youth and working families.

In recognition of her work, the five-member Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors last November presented her with its Distinguished Legislator Award.

Advocate for children

Mitchell, the mother of a teen-age son, has devoted her professional life to creating a California where all children thrive. She has led the charge to reform the criminal and juvenile justice systems, expand access to healthcare, early care and education, foster care, secure women’s reproductive health and end the trafficking of minors. She is a passionate defender of women’s rights and the environment.

Fighting for #EquityAndJustice

In addition to fighting for a budget that better serves the more vulnerable among us, Mitchell joined up with Sen. Ricardo Lara and over two years jointly authored a successful package of 10 criminal justice reforms that place a greater emphasis on prevention, rehabilitation and maintaining family cohesion.

A history of caring

Mitchell previously headed California’s largest child and family development organization, Crystal Stairs, and worked for the Western Center for Law and Poverty. This gave her valuable insights in how to improve services to diverse communities whose needs were not being addressed by state or local governments.

With nearly 70 bills signed into law, Mitchell’s other groundbreaking successes include improving human services, expanding access to healthcare, defending the civil rights of minorities and the undocumented, and reducing the numbers of children growing up in poverty.

Mitchell sits on the Senate Health Committee; the Joint Committee on Rules; the Public Safety Committee; the Labor and Industrial Relations Committee; and the Insurance, Banking and Financial Institutions Committee. She also chairs the Senate Select Committee on Women and Inequality, which she founded. In January, 2018, she was named vice chair of the Joint Committee on Rules Subcommittee on Sexual Harassment Prevention and Response.

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Mitchell has been cited for her outstanding leadership by more than 100 community and business groups, including the Courage Campaign, Sierra Club, United Cerebral Palsy Association, the Greater Los Angeles African American Chamber of Commerce and the Women's Foundation of California Board. She was named the 2017 Lois DeBerry Scholar by Women in Government Leadership and this year received the first Willie L. Brown Jr. Advocacy Award from the California Black Lawyers Association. The National Conference of State Legislatures last summer elected her to its national Executive Committee. Her advocacy on behalf of the expansion of mental health services earned her Legislator-of-the-Year Award from the National Alliance on Mental Illness California, as well as the 2017 California Champion of Mental Health from Mental Health California. She also served as Faculty in Residence at Rutgers University in 1997, and has served as Legislator in Residence at Mount St. Mary's University since 2016.

Los Angeles City Council President Herb Wesson (CD10)

WHEN: May 6, 2019 from 10:00 am – 11:30 am

WHERE: TBD

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Herb J. Wesson, Jr. has served as the President of the Los Angeles City Council since November 2011 and has represented Council District 10 since 2005. Wesson is the first African American to hold the position of Council President in the city's history and has been re-elected three times to lead the city's legislative body. During his tenure as Council President, Wesson has presided over monumental policy initiatives making Los Angeles a better place to live, work and raise a family. Not only have local policy initiatives—which include raising the minimum wage, pension reform and consolidating city elections to increase voter turnout—positively affected local residents, but in many cases the city's actions have spurred state and national response and served as a model for similar policies.

Wesson chairs several committees including the Rules, Elections, Intergovernmental Relations, and Neighborhoods (REIRN) Committee, Board of Referred Powers and the Ad Hoc Committee on the 2024 Summer Olympics. He is the Vice Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Comprehensive Job Creation. As chair of REIRN, Wesson has facilitated the empowerment of Neighborhood Councils while finding new and innovative ways to engage the public and promote civic engagement.

Personal Life

Council President Wesson has been happily married to Fabian Wesson for more than 35 years and is the proud father of four sons- Douglas, P.J., Herb III, and Justin. Wesson is grandfather to three grandchildren- Patrick, Maileah, and Tatiana. When Council President Wesson is not spoiling his grandchildren, you can find him on the links with his wife. He is a graduate of [Lincoln University](#) in Pennsylvania.

Career Highlights

- Chief of Staff, Office of Los Angeles City Councilmember Nate Holden, 1982 – 1992
- Chief of Staff, Office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne Burke, 1992 – 1997
- Assembly Member, 47th California State Assembly District, 1998 – 2004
- 65th Speaker of the California State Assembly, 2002 – 2004
- Los Angeles City Councilmember, 10th Council District, 2005 – present
- President of the Los Angeles City Council, 2011 – present