



SSN Welcomes Mark Schmitt as New Board Chair

MAY 7, 2026

The Scholars Strategy Network is excited to announce [Mark Schmitt](#) as the new chair of the Board of Directors. The Director of the Political Reform program at New America and a long-time friend and supporter of SSN, Schmitt has a wealth of insight from his time in government, philanthropy, and journalism to help guide the organization for years to come.

“I’ve long thought that state and federal policymaking would benefit from the insights of scholars, and that scholarship would benefit from engagement with urgent public questions,” Schmitt said. “As soon as I came across SSN, in its earliest days, I saw that it could change the incentives for both policymakers and academics, and support decisions based on real evidence and insight.”

The SSN Board of Directors sets the strategic direction for the organization, advancing our mission to ensure that research is used wherever policy decisions are made and empowering scholars in the project of strengthening democracy. Since SSN’s founding, the board has been led by [Robert Bowditch Jr](#), and we thank him for his years of dedication and service, as well as his continued role as a regular member of the board.

At a time when American democracy is under threat, Schmitt will bring critical new insights to the board, drawing on his expertise on political reform, budget and tax policy, and U.S. social policy, as well as his extensive professional experience. He was previously the executive editor of *The American Prospect*; a senior fellow and advisor to the president at the Roosevelt Institute; the director of the Governance and Public Policy program at the Open Society Foundations; and a speechwriter, policy director, and presidential campaign senior adviser to Senator Bill Bradley.

Looking ahead, Schmitt believes that “the individual scholars and state chapters organized by SSN will help ensure that the next generation of governance draws on what they have learned from careful research and imaginative thinking about what works.” He added that this work is especially crucial, “in the coming years, as our country will face enormous challenges to rebuild or renew programs, institutions and structures that make our economy work for everyone and bring justice to the



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globe.”

Leaving SSN's board are professors [Amy Fried](#) and [Lawrence R. Jacobs](#) and we thank them for their time and support of our work. Fried and Jacobs were both part of the first 50 members of the network and founding board members. Fried also helped to launch and lead the Maine SSN chapter and Jacobs launched and led the Minneapolis-St. Paul SSN chapter.

Finally, SSN is excited to announce [Ethan Stein](#) as the new Director of Chapters, working to strengthen chapter leadership and provide support to our 35+ chapters across the country. Stein's background is in community organizing, including leading a housing campaign in Philadelphia that brought together residents and elected officials to address affordability through the city's budget process. Across his work, he has been driven by a focus on education, both in the classroom and beyond it, as a foundation for developing critical thinking and expanding opportunity.

Please join us in celebrating the exceptional leadership of these individuals, which has been and will continue to be crucial to supporting our over 2,000 members in bridging the gap between research and public policy.