

Chris Peterson, Kael Wilson Interviews Set For Sept. 10 | CPD Blog

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On Thursday, September 10, the CPD's policy team interviews two candidates: Chris Peterson, Democratic candidate for Utah Governor, and Kael Weston, Democratic candidate for Utah's Second Congressional District. The interviews will focus on the candidates' stance on disability issues, and the public is invited.

These interviews are part of "Getting to Know the Candidates: Disability Policy," a series of individual interviews with candidates up for election for a variety of offices. (Find a complete list of candidates who will be interviewed on our [policy page](#). All interviews will be held over Zoom with a link available to members of the public who wish to listen in. Candidate interviews will also be archived on the CPD website.)

Questions for all candidates will cover receiving a fair and appropriate education in the time of COVID-19; ways to increase the employment of Utahns with Disabilities during the pandemic; independent and accessible voting for people with disabilities; ways to better support service providers during the COVID-19 crisis; how to encourage the expansion of mental health services in Utah; and ensuring law enforcement officers are trained to handle situations involving people in a mental health crisis.

Chris Peterson

Chris Peterson's interview airs on Zoom on Sept. 10, 2020 from 11:00 to 11:30 am. He is a fifth generation Utahn, a professor of business law at the University of Utah, and is an expert on safeguarding consumer rights. He was raised by a disabled single mother in West Valley City. Following graduation from law school at the University of Utah, Peterson worked as a law clerk to Judge Wade Brorby on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit. He then moved to Washington, DC to work as consumer rights attorney for a non-profit on Capitol Hill. Then he began his teaching career as a law professor at the University of Florida. After publishing an award-winning book and numerous scholarly articles, he returned Utah to teach at his alma mater.

After the financial crisis of 2008, Peterson returned to Washington, DC to help build the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau—a federal agency dedicated to ensuring banks and other financial services businesses treat customers fairly. Peterson's team stopped illegal, deceptive practices by Wall Street banks, payday lenders, and debt collection agencies, returning nearly \$12 billion in restitution to working Americans. At the Department of Defense, he helped lead the Pentagon's efforts to protect military servicemembers from predatory lending and received the *Office of the Secretary of Defense Award for Excellence* for his efforts on behalf of military families.

Chris lives in Salt Lake City with his amazing wife and three wonderful children. The Petersons enjoy hiking, camping, and skiing in Utah's majestic outdoors.

Kael Weston

[Kael Weson's](#) interview airs on Zoom on Sept. 10 from 1 to 1:30 pm. A native Utahn, Kael Weston served for over a decade in the U.S. State Department, including seven years in Iraq and Afghanistan. During his government career, specific assignments included: U.S. representative on the UN Security Council's Al Qaeda/Taliban Sanctions Committee in New York; Iraq team, Political Section, U.S. Mission to the United Nations; State Department Political Adviser to a dozen Marine commanding generals, including during and after the biggest battle of the Iraq War (Fallujah, 2004-2007). In

this role, he and Marine leaders were responsible for rebuilding the city's infrastructure, facilitating the return of hundreds of thousands of Fallujans back into the city, establishing a new city council despite numerous assassinations of local politicians, and working closely with Iraqi governors in Ramadi and central Iraqi government representatives in Baghdad. Several nation-wide elections and a constitutional referendum were held across Iraq during this time.

In eastern Afghanistan's Khost Province, Kael helped prioritize over \$50 million dollars in U.S. reconstruction funds and worked to reintegrate former Taliban fighters in coordination with U.S. military leaders and Khost's Afghan governor. He also met with a group of former Guantanamo Prison detainees and helped lead U.S. government political engagement with Afghan tribal and religious leaders. In Helmand Province, he worked directly with a Marine commanding general during the 2008-2009 U.S. troop surge that doubled Marine forces in the area from just under 11,000 to almost 20,000.

Kael is the author of the book, *The Mirror Test* (Knopf, 2016) a New York Times Editors' Choice (NYT Book Review) and Military Times' Best Book of the Year. He has taught at the college level in Utah and in Quantico, Virginia, at Marine Corps University, as well as leading seminars at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. Kael writes monthly for the Salt Lake Tribune and has contributed to NPR, New York Times, Washington Post, The Hill, Wall Street Journal, Foreign Affairs, Daily Beast, and other publications.

For Kael Weston's multi-year service in Fallujah, Iraq, the State Department awarded him the Secretary of State's Medal for Heroism.

Education: University of Utah, B.A.; Cambridge University, M.Phil.; Fulbright Scholarship, Amsterdam School of International Relations, University of Amsterdam; Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship, London School of Economics.

Founder: Democrats Abroad, Iraq ("Donkeys in the Desert")

Member: Salt Lake County Open Space Advisory Board