

RNC: Chairwoman McDaniel announces additions to political department

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WASHINGTON – Republican National Committee (RNC) Chairwoman Ronna McDaniel released the following statement on additions to the RNC’s political department:

“I am pleased that Sarah will be joining the leadership of our political department as we continue to build the most adept operation in the country,” said Chairwoman McDaniel. “The ground game implemented by our political department delivered upset victories across the board in 2016. The decades of combined experience of Jon, Alexis, Mark, Steven, Russell, and Elissa will help put all Republican candidates across the finish line in 2017 and 2018. The RNC remains committed to building the most talented and dedicated team in politics to continue delivering victories for years to come.”

Sarah Nelson, Deputy Political Director

With over a decade of experience running successful political campaigns, Sarah Nelson has held leadership positions in competitive races at every level ranging from state legislature to presidential. Prior to taking on her new role, Sarah most recently served as RNC Regional Political Director for the northeast during the 2016 cycle. She served as Deputy Political director for Marco Rubio’s presidential bid, and Regional Political Director for the midwest and State Director for Nevada on Mitt Romney’s 2012 presidential campaign. Previously, she served as Deputy Political Director for Meg Whitman’s 2010 campaign for governor of California. She has overseen public affairs efforts for Fortune 500 companies, technology startups, and healthcare, education and energy groups. Sarah was born and raised in

Southeastern, Idaho. She studied journalism and political science at Brigham Young University.

Jon Black, Mid-Atlantic Regional Political Director

Jon Black most recently served as the Director of Turnout and Targeting for the RNC during the 2016 cycle. He also led the RNC's National Voter Turnout effort throughout the 2014 cycle. A seasoned operative, Black spent the last two cycles helping to overhaul the field and data operation at the RNC. Prior to joining the RNC Political department in 2013, Black was a part of the Romney for President digital operation and enjoyed stints at the Michigan Republican Party, the Republican Party of Virginia and the RNC Strategy Department.

Alexis Valdez Darnell, Western Regional Political Director

Alexis has over 15 years of experience working in politics and government at the local, state, and national levels. She worked as a Field Director for the 2004 Bush Victory campaign, as a State Director for the RNC during the 2008 McCain campaign, and as the Mid-Atlantic Regional Political Director for the RNC in 2010. She went on to serve as the Director of Operations for New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez, and most recently was the RNC's Southwest Regional Political Director during the 2016 election cycle.

Mark Jefferson, Midwestern Regional Political Director

Mark most recently served as Director of Majority Retention and a Regional Political Director for the RNC during the 2016 cycle. Before joining the RNC, he worked in the Wisconsin State Assembly, was statewide director of Republican Assembly campaigns throughout the state, and acted as Executive Director of the Republican Party of Wisconsin under then-State Chairman Reince Priebus.

Steven Ostrow, Great Lakes Regional Political Director

Before joining the RNC, Steven most recently served as the Michigan Republican Party's Executive Director under Chairwoman McDaniel. His previous experience includes work at the local, state, and national level including the state party's political director in 2012, and a Regional Victory Director for the RNC in 2010.

Russell Peck, Southeastern Regional Political Director

Russell Peck previously served as the campaign manager for North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory's campaigns for Governor in North Carolina in both 2012 and 2016. Prior to the 2016 campaign, Russell was a Senior Vice President of Mercury Public Affairs in Raleigh, NC. He has worked for the American Natural Gas Alliance as a Director of External Affairs, held various roles with the Republican National Committee, and served on the campaigns and administrations for President George W. Bush, Governor Chris Christie, and Governor Jeb Bush.

Elissa Voccola, Northeastern Regional Political Director

Elissa Voccola joins the RNC having spent the last several months assisting the campaign of New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu. She has nearly a decade of experience working on campaigns across the country. In 2012, Voccola joined the Romney Presidential campaign, working in several western states before managing Colorado's political operations. She has served as Executive Director of both the Connecticut and New Hampshire Republican Parties.