

Mara Sheldon

Principal

Denver

T +1 303 894 6109

mara.sheldon@squirepb.com



About Mara

Mara Sheldon is a member of the firm's Strategic Advocacy Public Policy Practice, where she represents states, municipalities, private sector companies and nonprofits on a variety of legislative and regulatory matters related to renewable energy, environment and natural resources, healthcare, cannabis and hemp, tourism and hospitality, and banking and financial services issues. With deep expertise working with federal, state and local governments, her work with the National Governors Association has been particularly instrumental for clients in navigating state and federal issues related to appropriations funding and the NDAA. With more than 30 years of experience working at the intersection of public policy and strategic communications, Mara, at age 21, served as one of the youngest Press Secretaries on Capitol Hill and rose quickly to become Communications Director to several members of Congress, including former Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, John D. Dingell, and current Ranking Member of the House Committee on Small Business, Nydia Velazquez. Throughout her time on Capitol Hill, Mara worked on several marquee pieces of legislation, including healthcare, environment and water, and banking and financial services.

Mara serves as the State of Colorado's Federal Liaison at the National Governors Association (NGA), where she has been the conduit for the state with both the Trump and Biden administrations and the nation's governors.

Prior to joining the firm, Mara served as Communications Director and spokesperson for Governor Jared Polis' successful gubernatorial campaign. Over the last two decades, she has worked both nationally and locally on political campaigns, including presidential races, serving in senior roles for statewide candidate elections and at the grassroots level on state and local ballot initiatives.

Mara currently serves on the Advisory Board for KEY Investment Partners LLC, and previously on the Board of Directors for the Colorado Hemp Association, as a Trustee on The Summit Foundation Board of Directors, the Boards of Directors for Rose Women's Group, a Rose Community Foundation donor-advised fund in Denver, Colorado, and Team Breckenridge Sports Club in Breckenridge, Colorado.

Mara graduated with a Bachelor of Journalism from the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Journalism, and a Minor in Political Science. She regularly writes commentaries on state and federal policy issues, particularly on cannabis and hemp. Her articles have recently been published in *Politico*, *The Denver Post*, *Colorado Politics*, *Law360*, *Cannabis Law Report* and *Cannabis Law Journal*. Many of her articles are further distributed by news aggregators such as the *National Law Review* and Lexology. Mara also frequently authors and contributes content for the *Capital Thinking* blog and routinely appears as a guest expert on podcasts sharing the latest updates on cannabis regulatory matters.

Credentials

Education

- University of Missouri, School of Journalism, B.A., 1994

Expertise

Services

- Public Policy
- Government Investigations & White Collar

Publications & Speaking Engagements

- Panelist, "Future of Federal Cannabis Reform: Legislation, Rescheduling & 2025 Outlook," National Cannabis Industry Association's Colorado Stakeholder Summit, April 2025.
- Panelist, "DEA's Reclassification of Cannabis to Schedule III," KEY Investment Partners Webinar, May 2024.
- Panelist, "Cannabis 101 – Public to Private and Everything In Between," CFA Society New York Discussion, February 2024.
- Podcast guest speaker, "Podcast: Cannabis Unlocked – Discussing rescheduling of cannabis from a Schedule 1 drug to Schedule 3," KEY Investment Partners Podcast, September 2023.
- Podcast guest speaker, "Podcast: Cannabis Unlocked – Discussing cannabis reform," KEY Investment Partners Podcast, March 2023.
- Author, "Opinion: A new year, a new Congress, and a new chance to pass banking legislation for the cannabis industry," *The Colorado Sun*, January 22, 2023.
- Podcast guest speaker, "Podcast: Cannabis Unlocked – Discussing new hurdles and opportunities for cannabis," KEY Investment Partners Podcast, October 2022.
- Author, "Opinion: Safe banking for cannabis industry needs to be carried cross finish line," *The Denver Post*, April 2022.
- Guest lecturer, "Politics in the U.S.," American University, November 2021.
- Author, "Opinion: Are we about to crush Colorado's marijuana industry?," *The Denver Post*, October 2021.
- Author, "Squire Patton Boggs (US) LLP: Post-Election Cannabis Update," *Cannabis Law Journal*, January 2021.
- Co-author, "Squire Patton Boggs: The 2020 US Election Cannabis & Hemp – Will It Be The Game Changer?" *Cannabis Law Journal*, November 2020.
- Author, "OPINION | Diverse dynamics will drive the Nov. 3 vote," *Colorado Politics*, October 2020.

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One of the world's strongest integrated law firms, providing insight at the point where law, business

and government meet. We deliver commercially focused business solutions by combining our legal, lobbying and political capabilities and invaluable connections on the ground to a diverse mix of clients, from long-established leading corporations to emerging businesses, startup visionaries and sovereign nations. More than 1,500 lawyers in over 40 offices across four continents provide unrivaled access to expertise.