



**SEMI-ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA  
JANUARY 26-27, 2009**

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**Advancing Human Rights with Local Policymakers: Challenges and Opportunities**

**Monday, January 26, 2009, 4:00 – 5:30 pm**

*Speakers:*

Doug Schenkelberg, Associate Director of Policy & Advocacy, Heartland Alliance; Robin S. Toma, Executive Director, Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission

*Facilitator:*

Alan Jenkins, Executive Director, The Opportunity Agenda

*Session Organizer :*

Sophia Conroy, Program Officer, Open Society Institute; Puja Dhawan, Senior Program Officer, US Human Rights Fund

*Sponsor:*

US Human Rights Working Group members

As we enter a political climate likely to be friendlier to human rights, advocates are preparing to carry out domestic human rights advocacy at the local, state and federal levels of government. The effectiveness of their work is dependent not only on increased awareness amongst policymakers on U.S. human rights obligations, but also on crafting persuasive messages and constituency building. The Opportunity Agenda's 2008 research on state policymaker attitudes towards human rights brings useful perspective to advocates' efforts. Our panelists balanced these key findings with on-the ground perspectives on when and how to most effectively employ human rights arguments to advance domestic advocacy goals.