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CONTACT: Denis Chicola, 415-856-1414

Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund Announces New Program Directors for Immigrant Rights, Education Equity

San Francisco — The Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund announced today that it has hired new staff leaders for its Immigrant Rights and Education Equity programs.

John Govea, a former senior program officer with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, will be program director managing the Haas, Jr. Fund's Immigrant Rights portfolio. Raquiba LaBrie, a former senior leader with the Open Society Foundations, will serve as program director for the Fund's Education Equity program.

"Raquiba and John come to the Fund with strong credentials and wide-ranging experience in philanthropy," said Haas, Jr. Fund Interim President Jennie Watson. "But even more important, they are both steeped in the values that drive the work of the Haas, Jr. Fund and our partners. Their careers and their paths through life show a profound commitment to advancing the cause of fairness, equality, and opportunity for all people."

About John Govea

John Govea joins the Haas, Jr. Fund staff after 10 years with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation in New Jersey, where he managed national programs and initiatives focused on childhood obesity and health equity. Born and raised in Bakersfield, California, Govea is descended from Mexican immigrants who settled in the state. His father came to the United States under the *bracero* program during World War II to work on the Santa Fe Railroad. His maternal grandparents were migrant farmworkers in the San Joaquin Valley.

"I have admired the work of the Haas, Jr. Fund for many years," Govea said. "To join the Fund's team at a challenging time for immigrant communities across the country is both a great honor and a profound responsibility. I look forward to working with the Directors, staff and the Fund's wonderful partners in the immigrant rights movement to stand up for the promise of freedom and opportunity that defines California and our nation."

Govea started his professional career as an attorney representing farmworkers in rural California. He has worked on the staffs of the Community Foundation for Monterey County and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and was senior program officer with the State of California's California Service Corps, where he oversaw implementation of the state's AmeriCorps program.

Govea holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Stanford University, a law degree from the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law, and a master of public administration from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

About Raquiba LaBrie

LaBrie joins the Haas, Jr. Fund after serving for three years as director of community investment with L+M Development Partners in New York City. Her work with the affordable housing developer focused on the design and management of a grantmaking program aimed at strengthening low-income communities of color in the city by investing in academic enrichment, workforce development and urban agriculture. LaBrie also worked for 13 years with the Open Society Foundations, managing grantmaking programs on racial justice, immigrant and LGBT rights, Black male achievement, neighborhood stabilization, and other priorities.

LaBrie was raised in the Bay Area; her father organized one of the first Black student unions in the country at San Francisco State University and her mother was an actress in local Black theater. She said her journey from her early years in the public schools in East Oakland to the Ivy League has underscored the profound importance of a quality education in creating life opportunities.

“I am inspired by the Haas, Jr. Fund’s groundbreaking work with the San Francisco school district and other education partners,” LaBrie said. “I am eager to help the Fund build on its historic commitment to equity in education so we can close the opportunity gap for students of color in San Francisco and throughout the Bay Area.”

LaBrie started her career in a New York City-based law practice working with foundations and public charities. She graduated magna cum laude from Yale University with a degree in English. She also holds a law degree from Harvard University.

About the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund

The Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund seeks to fulfill its founders’ vision of a just and compassionate society where all people have the opportunity to live, work and raise their families with dignity. The Fund’s program areas include: Immigrant Rights; Gay and Lesbian Rights; Education Equity; the Haas Leadership Initiatives; and Community Partnerships and Initiatives.