# BLOCKCHAIN ASSOCIATION 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

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# A MESSAGE FROM CEO KRISTIN SMITH

As we approach the end of 2024, the cryptocurrency industry in America finds itself at a newly critical juncture, marked by significant progress and new momentum following the election. While I often say that the coming year will be important for crypto in the United States, there are a few reasons why I think that this is especially true as we move into 2025.

To be clear, crypto is the most powerful industry in Washington. Now, we must capitalize on this momentum and get real policy across the finish line.

Crypto won the election – even before any votes were cast. Now, we have a pro-crypto Presidentelect, along with the most procrypto Congress yet. This year, crypto was undoubtedly an important issue, able to sway vital voters in swing states. The incoming administration and future political candidates will hopefully take this lesson to heart: there is no upside to being anti-crypto.

Despite this political momentum, the regulatory environment remains complex; however, we are hopeful for a speedy resolution to our industry's most pressing concerns. Over the past year, Chair Gensler's SEC has maintained its aggressive stance towards the industry, issuing numerous Wells notices and enforcement actions. The Commission's ongoing struggle to clearly define crypto assets or establish coherent guidelines for custody and dealer operations continues to create unnecessary, damaging uncertainty in the market. We await a change at the Commission that will ease the aggressive, anti-crypto stance that has plagued our industry for the

past four years. Fortunately, that change appears imminent.

While we have made limited progress with federal regulators, we've seen encouraging progress on Capitol Hill. The bipartisan support for the SAB 121 repeal and market structure bill – the Financial Innovation and Technology for the 21st Century Act – marked significant milestones in support for crypto policy. While these victories are noteworthy, they also underscore the work that remains to be done.

There are reasons for optimism in 2025. We have cultivated a growing, bipartisan base in Congress. The new administration presents an opportunity to recalibrate the national conversation on crypto. Changes across federal regulatory agencies will bring fresh perspectives to long-standing issues. The crypto-conscious voter is a well-defined force, one that future campaigns will need to treat with increasing seriousness.

Blockchain Association's strength and success is built on our members. Your insights, expertise, and engagement on critical industry issues have been instrumental to our progress. As we navigate future challenges and opportunities, your continued support remains indispensable.

I want to express my gratitude for your unwavering commitment to shaping the future of finance. I am confident that together, we will continue to advance the cause of global innovation, ensuring that the United States leads the world for decades to come.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement.

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# ABOUT BLOCKCHAIN ASSOCIATION

Blockchain Association is the collective voice for the blockchain and cryptocurrency industry.

We are the leading nonprofit membership organization dedicated to promoting a proinnovation policy environment for the digital asset economy.

The Association endeavors to achieve regulatory clarity and educate policymakers, regulators, and the courts about how blockchain technology can pave the way for a more secure, competitive, and consumerfriendly digital marketplace. The Association represents some 100 member organizations reflecting the wide range of the dynamic blockchain industry, including software developers, infrastructure providers, exchanges, custodians, investors, and others supporting the public blockchain ecosystem.

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# OUR APPROACH

#### RELATIONSHIP BUILDING AND EDUCATION

Blockchain Association staff pound the pavement to meet with key decision makers, educate them on our industry and issues, dispel myths, and build relationships necessary to push pro-crypto policy and grow our industry.

#### COMMUNICATIONS

We maintain close relationships with leading reporters and help shape media narratives around our issues. Additionally, we promote our issues through regular media appearances, written communications, and a robust digital presence.

#### **POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

Our team of crypto policy experts work directly with members to craft smart policy solutions that will provide greater regulatory clarity, nurture innovation, protect consumers, and secure America's future as the world's crypto leader.

#### **EVENT MANAGEMENT**

Blockchain Association staff regularly speak at leading conferences and events to spread the word about crypto and engage with the crypto community to share ideas and resources. We also partner with top organizations to host our own events and bring together top minds of the industry.

#### GRASSROOTS ORGANIZING

Crypto's strength is its community, and no organization is more connected to the community than we are. We help keep our grassroots community informed on the issues, share valuable resources, and mobilize activists to help promote our issues and grow the movement.

#### LEGAL ENGAGEMENT

As regulation by enforcement has increased, Blockchain Association works to combat regulatory overreach by advocating on behalf of its members and industry stakeholders in the courts. In addition to filing lawsuits on behalf of the industry, we recently expanded our amicus practice and frequently file briefs in strategic litigation when the outcome of the lawsuit may impact the broader industry.

#### **MEMBER RELATIONS**

We keep in regular, close contact with all of our members to keep you up to date on the latest policy developments, answer questions, seek your guidance, and ensure that your voice is amplified. 10

# MEET THE TEAM

### **EXECUTIVE OFFICE**



KRISTIN SMITH Chief Executive Officer



ANNMARIE BROCKHOUSE Executive Assistant and Director of Operations



ALLIE PAGE Chief of Staff and Political Director

### **MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS**



**CURTIS KINCAID** Executive Vice President, Marketing and Communications



**CHRIS JONAS** Director of Industry Communications



**ROBIN ROSS** Policy Communications Associate



TARYN WOLF Creative Director

#### **GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**



DAVE GRIMALDI Executive Vice President, Government Relations



RON HAMMOND Director of Government Relations

### **INDUSTRY AFFAIRS**



**DAN SPULLER** Senior Director of Industry Affairs



MARA ABIERA Industry Affairs Associate

#### **POLICY & LEGAL**



MARISA COPPEL Head of Legal



SARAH MILBY Head of Policy



MADISON PARKER

**Operations Coordinator** 

SALAH GHAZZAL Policy Analyst



MICHAEL POSTUPAK Policy Analyst



LAURA SANDERS Policy Counsel

# MEMBER BENEFITS

Blockchain Association is a member-led, member-driven organization. We aim to provide representation, guidance, and community for the industry – our team is here to work for you.

We pride ourselves on working hard in Washington on behalf of

the industry, and we hope that you will consider our team an extension of your own.

Thank you to all of our members for being a part of Blockchain Association.



#### **AROUND WASHINGTON**

The policymaking process, shaped by the interplay of politics, government, and industry players, and the structural processes available to achieve change, is decidedly messy. Our team knows and works with the right people to advance smart policies and block harmful ones. Through education, direct advocacy, congressional testimony, and coalition building, we work to ensure the industry's priorities are reflected in policy, which we can do on your behalf or alongside you.

- Representation before Congress and key regulators when you're too
  - busy to advocate.
- Policy analysis of key legislation.
- **Summary memos** following critical hearings on Capitol Hill.
- Lobby days, Hill visits, and educational briefings for you and your team to directly engage with Washington policymakers.
- **Political strategy** for you and your organization's executives.

# IN THE COURTS

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The crypto industry faces wide-ranging public policy challenges, and digital assets and blockchain technology do not fit neatly into existing legal and regulatory frameworks. We serve as the voice of our members in the courts by filing affirmative litigation, amicus briefs, and by submitting comments in response to proposed regulations.

- Amicus briefs to educate judges on core industry issues.
- Active litigation to protect our members and industry when government oversteps.
- Engagement with regulators through comment letters and the regulatory process.
- Opportunity to participate in industry feedback on draft comment letters, legislation, amicus briefs, and other advocacy tools.
- Regular members-only briefing calls to provide the latest information regarding major legal and policy developments.
- Continuing Legal Education for topics relevant to our industry.

#### ACROSS THE INDUSTRY

Media and public attention around our industry continues to grow. We're here to keep you informed, make strategic media connections, and provide valuable resources for your internal team.

- Monthly calls with the full Blockchain Association staff.
- Working Groups to develop smart policies with industry consensus.
- Member-only website portal to access the latest memos and newsletter and to stay up-to-date on upcoming events and calls.

Weekly member-only

**newsletter** to stay up-to-date on the state of play in Washington, upcoming events, and other news of the day.

- Thought leadership and networking opportunities in Washington, D.C., and at industry events.
- Access to a members-only jobs board to post your open positions and reach industry job seekers.

- Office space in Washington, D.C., when you're in town.
- Invitation to BA's annual Policy Summit, an exclusive membersonly event, featuring discussions with key policymakers, regulators, and industry leaders.



# **WORKING GROUPS**

# GREATER ENGAGEMENT, INCREASED COORDINATION: 2025 roadmap for member opportunities

As the nation's leading crypto trade association, we strive to engage Blockchain Association members as industry leaders and experts in Washington. Our commitment is now focused on elevating that leadership through an upgrade and expansion of our working groups program. We are taking a proactive role in aligning industry stakeholders, fostering collaboration, and providing thought leadership initiatives. By identifying key industry needs and leveraging diverse expertise and perspectives, we will drive enhanced collaboration and deliver industry consensus on our most pressing issues. This evolution signifies our commitment to not just be part of the conversation, but to shape the industry's future.

#### 2024 WORKING GROUP ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#### **INVESTMENT FUND**

BA coordinated several engagements with our investment fund working group to discuss pressing issues and develop appropriate policy and legal responses. During 2024, BA consulted with investment fund working group members on strategy for the SEC's Proposed Safeguarding rule, including by tapping into membership expertise to help develop BA's supplemental comment letter on the rule.

#### NATIONAL SECURITY

As part of a continuation of BA's work on national security issues, BA sent a second letter in February to members of the Senate Banking Committee and the House Financial Services Committee, signed by a coalition of military and national security professionals. This letter built upon BA's 2023 advocacy that included a BA-hosted fly-in where signatories from our first NatSec letter met with congressional offices for a productive day of conversations, education, and advocacy.

#### MINING/POW AND SELF-CUSTODY

To coordinate Capitol Hill education and messaging, BA revamped its educational resources with our Mining/PoW and Self-Custody working groups. Through this process, BA engaged with these working group members to produce six new educational materials. We are excited to continue collaborating with various sectors of the digital asset industry to coordinate and build effective education for a government audience.

# TIMELINE

## OF CRYPTOCURRENCY AND BLOCKCHAIN ASSOCIATION

Bitcoin, the world's first cryptocurrency, launches **2009** 

Congressional Blockchain Caucus founded during the 114th United States Congress 2016

### 2009

#### 2015

Ethereum, the second largest cryptocurrency, launches

#### 2018

SEPTEMBER

Blockchain Association is founded. Executive Director Kristin Smith was its first employee 2022 NOVEMBER Inaugural BA Policy Summit in Washington BA relaunches website
NOVEMBER
2022

BA publishes NatSec letter with 80 distinguished signatories FEBRUARY 2024

### 2023 DECEMBER

BA hosts National Security (NatSec) fly-in, meeting with 30 offices on Capitol Hill

### 2024

#### JANUARY

BA submits comment letter in response to FinCEN's proposed mixing rule 2024 FEBRUARY

BA files amicus brief in support of Kraken against the SEC 2024

# TIMELINE

OF CRYPTOCURRENCY AND BLOCKCHAIN ASSOCIATION

> BA and the Crypto Freedom Alliance of Texas sue SEC over Dealer Rule **APRIL** 2024

BA submits comment letter in response to the Department of Commerce's proposed rule on IaaS providers APRIL 2024

### 2024

2024

APRIL

BA files amicus brief in DOJ's case against Tornado Cash developers

### 2024

#### APRIL

BA files amicus brief in support of Coinbase's interlocutory appeal to the Second Circuit

#### 2024 MAY

BA writes letter to President Biden encouraging passage of H.J.Res. 109 to strike down SAB 121 BA submits supplemental comment letter in response to the SEC's proposed Safeguarding Rule MAY 2024 BA files amicus brief in support of Custodia Bank's appeal against the Fed JULY 2024 BA and the DeFi Education Fund file amicus brief to support challenge against SEC's Consolidated Audit Trail AUGUST 2024

2024

### 2024

#### JUNE

BA submits comment letter addressing the IRS's proposed Broker Rule under the Paperwork Reduction Act

#### 2024

#### AUGUST

SEC files Reply Brief in Blockchain Association and the Crypto Freedom Alliance of Texas dealer suit

# TIMELINE

### OF CRYPTOCURRENCY AND BLOCKCHAIN ASSOCIATION

BA and Crypto Council for Innovation submit amicus brief in support of Beba and DeFi Education Fund's lawsuit against the SEC OCTOBER 2024

BA hosts DePIN fly-in, meeting with sixteen offices on Capitol Hill OCTOBER 2024

A pro-crypto president and the most pro-crypto Congress ever is elected **NOVEMBER** 2024

# 2024

2024

#### OCTOBER

BA and DeFi Education Fund submit comment letter in response to joint agency proposal under the Financial Data Transparency Act

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### 2024

#### NOVEMBER

RegulationbyEnforcement.com is launched, publicizing the SEC's targeted campaign against the industry BA and CFAT prevail against the SEC – Dealer Rule is struck down by US District Court of the Northern District of Texas **NOVEMBER** 2024

### Third annual Policy Summit takes place in Washington, D.C. DECEMBER 2024

### 2024 NOVEMBER

BA submits supplemental comment letter regarding the IRS's proposed Broker Rule under the PRA

# 2024

DECEMBER

BA submits comment letter in SEC's lawsuit against Ian Balina 2024 DECEMBER

BA relaunches working groups with new member-run structure 2025

# STATE OF THE DEPARTMENTS POLICY AND LEGAL

Our policy and legal teams are more prepared than ever to engage with lawmakers and in the courts on critical crypto legislation, regulation, and litigation.

This year marked a significant turning point in crypto policy, with numerous legislative initiatives gaining momentum on Capitol Hill. We've actively collaborated with a diverse group of bipartisan lawmakers on key bills, including comprehensive frameworks for market structure, advancements in stablecoin legislation, and measures addressing national security implications of digital assets. Our advocacy efforts extend beyond Congress; we've submitted extensive comments in response to rulemaking proposals by administrative agencies, filed amicus briefs that added important industry context to specific legal conflicts, and filed our own lawsuit against the SEC in response to its dramatic overreach and failure to comply with regulatory guardrails. Blockchain Association is dedicated to zealous advocacy on behalf of its members in and out of the courtroom.

As the most recent election cycle proved, the dialogue around cryptocurrency is intensifying. Politicians from both sides of the aisle recognize the importance of blockchain technology and its potential impact on the economy. Blockchain Association is committed to ensuring that our collective voice is heard on a bipartisan stage, and we're engaging in discussions that highlight the benefits of a responsible, future-forward regulatory environment.

Your continued support and engagement are vital as we navigate these crucial conversations. Together, we can ensure that crypto not only survives but thrives in the changing political climate. Our collaborative efforts will secure a bright future for digital assets in America.

Marisa Coppel

Head of Legal

Sarah Milby Head of Policy

### THUS FAR IN 2024, BLOCKCHAIN ASSOCIATION STAFF...



21 Led 21 legislative feedback engagements with Capitol Hill







**7** Filed 7 comment letters



# BLOCKCHAIN ASSOCIATION AND THE CRYPTO FREEDOM ALLIANCE OF TEXAS

# **PREVAIL AGAINST SEC**

On Nov. 21, the United States District Court of the Northern District of Texas ruled the SEC's dealer rule must be struck down, stating the SEC exceeded its statutory authority.

BA and CFAT first brought this challenge against the SEC in April 2024, arguing the SEC's misguided attacks against the industry amounted to arbitrary and capricious rulemaking.

This court ruling was a victory not just for Blockchain Association – but for the entire digital asset industry. The Dealer Rule was an attempt by the SEC to advance the agency's anti-crypto crusade, unlawfully redefining the boundaries of its statutory authority granted by Congress. ON BEHALF OF OUR MEMBERS – AND THE ENTIRE INDUSTRY – WE WILL CONTINUE FIGHTING AGAINST REGULATORY OVERREACH IN THE COURTS.

> "Litigation isn't always the preferred path, but in some cases it's critical to defending the industry against overzealous regulators, and at those moments we have a responsibility to challenge such actions. The SEC clearly exceeded its authority by adopting a definition of 'dealer' that is, in the Court's words, 'untethered from the text, history, and structure of the Exchange Act.'" – Marisa Coppel.

# STATE OF THE DEPARTMENTS GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

2025 looks to be a year of both challenge and opportunity, as a new president and a new Congress take over in January. With the election cycle dominating the end of the year and crypto taking the spotlight like never before, this year highlighted crypto's growing role in Washington. Following a turbulent 2023 for our issues in the House and Senate, our industry has emerged as a front-page example of a driving force in political conversations across Capitol Hill.

As some of the first digital asset bills progress through the committee process, BA has remained a trusted resource for lawmakers, actively engaging in the legislative process and providing valuable insights that shape policy outcomes. Our team has worked closely with committee staff to ensure that our members' voices are represented and that the language in these bills promotes innovation while addressing regulatory concerns. And next year will bring even more momentum, with newlyelected members of Congress ready to engage on crypto and blockchain issues. Additionally, our team met with and educated senior staff of both presidential campaigns on the power and benefits of crypto technology.

BA has been at the forefront of explaining and amplifying evolving concerns, identifying key players, and interpreting the implications of various proposals. Our DePIN fly-in in October was a major success, with members meeting with sixteen offices on Capitol Hill. Education like this is key, and will be something we continue to build on in the year to come.

As the year unfolds, we anticipate both regulatory challenges and opportunities. BA's established access, credibility, and expertise will position us to navigate this landscape effectively, advocating for sensible policies that support the growth and innovation of the crypto industry. Together, we'll ensure that the voices of our members continue to resonate in Washington as we shape the future of digital assets.

-Dave Grimaldi, Executive Vice President, Government Relations

### THUS FAR IN 2024, BLOCKCHAIN ASSOCIATION STAFF...





**11** Co-hosted 11 policy-focused breakfasts, gathering hundreds of academics, industry attendees, and more





200 Engaged in more than 200 House and Senate meetings



**19** Hosted 19 meet-andgreets with Congressional candidates

# CASE STUDY ON DePIN FLY-IN

In October, Blockchain Association hosted the first-ever DePIN fly-in, bringing together our members for back-to-back meetings in the House and Senate. BA members discussed the rapidly emerging non-financial uses of blockchain technology, explaining how DePIN uses physical infrastructure, blockchain tech, and digital asset incentives to provide services that are disrupting industries – from wireless and geospatial networks to digital compute and digital storage networks. The fly-in was a resounding success, counting meetings with 16 offices and a standing-room-only staff briefing in the House Financial Services Committee room.









# STATE OF THE DEPARTMENTS MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

In 2024, leading into a consequential election, the spotlight on our industry continued to grow across Washington, the media, and in the court of public opinion. Blockchain Association's marketing and communications team remained committed to addressing key industry developments and tackling misinformation. We improved member resources through a revamp of our weekly update to ensure our members are receiving the most pressing news in a succinct, easily accessible format and launched several key projects to promote our members in the media. Our leadership frequently engaged with major media, industry events, and policymakers, amplifying the industry's voice on critical issues. Momentum is on our side – and your team at Blockchain Association will ensure the industry continues to have a strong voice in the media.

-Curtis Kincaid, Executive Vice President, Marketing and Communications

### THUS FAR IN 2024, BLOCKCHAIN ASSOCIATION STAFF...



# STATE OF THE DEPARTMENTS

In 2024, Blockchain Association reached unprecedented influence in Washington, D.C., as our industry's role in policymaking grew to new heights – thanks to the steadfast support of our members. We are now better positioned than ever for a transformative 2025.

Throughout the year, we engaged with members worldwide, amplifying the blockchain industry's potential across various sectors. Our members joined us for fly-ins and strategic opportunities to advance commonsense policy solutions in Washington. As the fastestgrowing and most influential crypto trade association, we continued advocating for proinnovation policies that fuel the broader digital asset economy and serve many new, fastgrowing segments, including Decentralized Physical Infrastructure Networks (DePIN), Zero-Knowledge Proof (ZKP) technology, Real-World Assets (RWAs), and the robust ecosystem of investment and venture capital funds.

Blockchain Association has expanded its efforts into these evolving areas, ensuring that our industry's diverse landscape is represented as we move into the middle of the decade.

We're deeply grateful for our members' trust and support, and together, we look forward to shaping a bold future for crypto with optimism and resolve.

#### -Dan Spuller,

Senior Director, Industry Affairs

### 2024: STRENGTHENING OUR CORE AND ELEVATING MEMBER IMPACT

In 2024, Blockchain Association focused on cultivating a resilient core membership, prioritizing shared goals and meaningful engagement.

With members who have stood by us since the association's inception six years ago, we're witnessing the establishment of a truly loyal and deeply experienced membership base. This longevity is invaluable, with:

- 9 members celebrating their sixth year with us,
- 6 members at the five-year mark,
- 4 members at four years, and a strong midtenure group, including 21 members who have been with us for three years and 18 for two years.

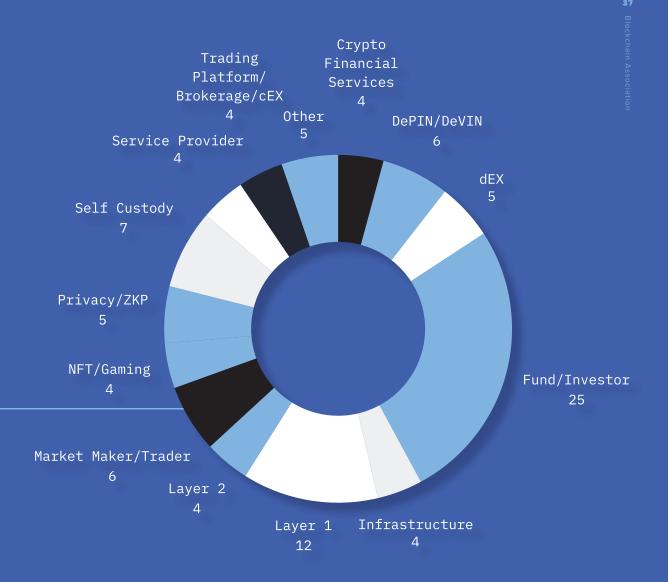
The remainder of our members, newer to Blockchain Association, have joined in the past two years, bringing fresh perspectives and enthusiasm that fuel our mission forward. Together, they're helping shape a dynamic and forward-looking member base. Our member retention rate remains pivotal to the Blockchain Association's mission, providing us with a foundation of trust, consistency, and active participation. Beyond membership longevity, 2024 marked a year of collaborative achievements within member services. Notable projects included more than **five investor and portfolio company days**, more than **10 BA member events** where Blockchain Association staff supported or spoke, and **four X Spaces** for our members, amplifying voices across the community.

This focus has positioned us not only as an advocacy powerhouse in Washington but as an indispensable extension of our members' teams.

Together, we're shaping a future-ready industry while honoring the commitment of our longeststanding members. This progress underscores our mission: building a pro-innovation policy environment that empowers the digital asset economy to thrive in the United States.

#### 2024: MEMBERS BY SECTOR

Blockchain Association members span a range of sectors, reflecting the diversity and broad scope of the digital asset industry. Many members align with multiple categories, underscoring the interconnected nature of our community. The chart to the right illustrates the extensive range of sectors represented within our membership, showcasing the collective strength and versatility that each brings to the association.



# REGULATION by ENFORCEMENT



Under Chair Gary Gensler, the SEC deployed a "regulation by enforcement" approach against America's leading crypto companies. Just before the 2024 Election, Blockchain Association launched a dashboard to track the key figures behind this targeted campaign against the digital asset economy and publicize its impact.

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Voters prefer clear rules and regulation over enforcement by a factor of two-to-one.

Crypto voters make up 18% of the electorate and are even more winnable than other voters on issues concerning an overreaching SEC.

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SEC ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS BROUGHT AGAINST THE DIGITAL ASSET INDUSTRY UNDER CHAIR GENSLER THROUGH 2023

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(Self-reported data by Blockchain Association member companies to HarrisX. This figure will continue to be updated as legal proceedings continue.)



Two-thirds of voters agree the SEC should wait for clearer guidelines from Congress.



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Blockchain Association's 2023 Policy Summit welcomed hundreds of BA members, dozens of speakers, and top-tier media from across the country.

The Summit is an exclusive members-only event, convening Congressional leaders, federal and state regulators, federal law enforcement agencies, and international luminaries to discuss the current and future state of the digital asset economy. As the industry's landmark event in Washington, the Policy Summit provides a venue for critical conversations on the future of crypto policy in the United States and abroad.

Thank you to our 2023 Summit sponsors and attendees. We look forward to welcoming you to our 2024 Summit!

















# **BLOCKCHAIN ASSOCIATION**

The Blockchain Association Political Action Committee (BAPAC) mirrors and amplifies Blockchain Association's core mission to support pro-crypto lawmakers. Crypto is, by nature, nonpartisan. To support and advance that idea, BAPAC supports pro-crypto candidates across the political spectrum who use their platforms to promote this transformative technology.



We encourage you to learn more about BAPAC.



## **JOIN US**

Help us shape the future

of crypto policy.









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