



## THE NATIONAL INDEPENDENT VENUE ASSOCIATION APPOINTS STEPHEN PARKER AS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Photo credit: Elijah Griffin

***Veteran Federal and State Advocate, Advisor to Governors and Music Policy Champion  
Tapped to Lead NIVA***

January 11, 2023 – [The National Independent Venue Association](#) (NIVA) today announces the appointment of Stephen Parker to Executive Director. Parker brings expertise to NIVA which includes experience as a national association leader, a music policy champion, a senior advisor to governors across the U.S., a federal advocate before Congress and the Executive Branch and a national coalition builder across diverse communities.

Parker's broad career includes nearly a decade at the National Governors Association where he directed intergovernmental and congressional affairs. He served as liaison between governors and the federal government and led education, labor, economic, and workforce policy development.

As Executive Director, Parker will work with NIVA's board and staff to grow the association's membership, expand national partnerships that advance the live entertainment sector, and empower members with resources to strengthen the future of live entertainment. Parker will also work to promote diversity and equity across independent venues and ensure that music and comedy venues, festivals and promoters have a voice at the federal, state and local levels.

"Independent venues and festivals are a platform for artists, an inspiration for fans and an economic driver in every state and community," said **Stephen Parker, Executive Director of NIVA**. "It is an honor to be selected as NIVA's Executive Director and to join an incredible team that has been working to preserve and promote the stages where music and comedy live. I look forward to working with the Board of Directors to ensure that live entertainment venues, festivals and promoters have the resources they need to survive and thrive, to advocate for equity across music and comedy ecosystems and to place NIVA at the forefront of policy discussions nationwide."

Previously, Parker served as an advisor and consultant at the Country Music Association, Senior Special Assistant to Virginia Governor Tim Kaine, Senior Policy Advisor at the National Guard, and, most recently, as Vice President of Public Affairs and Communications at an organization focused on entrepreneurship and the creative economy. Parker serves on several non-profit boards, including the Country Music Association Foundation Board of Directors. He received his bachelor's degree from Longwood University and his master's degree from Harvard University. Additionally, he was a Sorensen Political Leadership fellow at the University of Virginia.

"It's hard to believe that NIVA didn't even exist just three years ago," said **Dayna Frank, CEO of First Avenue Productions and Board President of NIVA**. "We're all very grateful for the founding executive director, Rev. Moose. His efforts and guidance during those incredibly frightening and formative times helped us pass the largest arts funding program in U.S. history. Now, we look forward with immense optimism to NIVA's next crucial chapter of growth and development to best serve members who fight tirelessly to improve their communities, workplaces and entertainment experiences. With Stephen's leadership, energy, and enthusiasm we are in the best possible hands. His experience with advocacy and relationship development in a longtime-successful association will ensure we flourish together today, tomorrow and in the future. We're so lucky to have his determination and expertise."

**About NIVA:**

Formed at the onset of the COVID-19 shutdown, National Independent Venue Association (NIVA), represents independent music and comedy venues, promoters and festivals across the country. NIVA created and led the #SaveOurStages campaign, resulting in landmark legislation establishing the \$16 billion "Shuttered Venue Operators" Grant. NIVA's mission is to preserve and nurture the ecosystem of independent live venues, promoters and festivals throughout the United States.

The National Independent Venue Foundation (NIVF) was founded to further this mission by also seeking to support a transparent, competitive marketplace serving a diverse and inclusive community of artists, fans, and industry workers.

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