



State Solutions. National Impact.

WINTER 2021

State Solutions. National Impact.

SPN's 29th Annual Meeting
Celebrated Victories in the States
You Made Possible.

Tracie

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OUR VISION

State Policy Network is pursuing a vision of an America where personal freedom, innovation, opportunity, and a more peaceful society help all Americans flourish. State Policy Network was founded to support the growth of a collaborative and entrepreneurial network of state think tanks, including 63 independent state think tank affiliates and more than 90 associate partners.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

State Policy Network's mission is to work side by side with these leaders to catalyze thriving, durable freedom movements in every state, anchored with high-performing, independent think tanks.

OUR STRATEGY

- Incubating organizations and accelerating their development through strategic planning, training, and coaching;
- Connecting talented state leaders so they can learn, challenge, and grow together, with the aim of cultivating state solutions that yield national impact; and,
- Defending the 50-state think tank network by disseminating best practices, critical resources when members are attacked, and fighting assaults on free speech and citizen privacy.

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For the full SPN staff list,
visit spn.org/staff.

Dear Friends,

As we usher in a new year, I want to thank you for your continued support of State Policy Network and our fight to protect American freedoms through the states.

We know threats to freedom won't let up next year, and we'll need to fight even harder to protect them. Our work has never been more critical as we look to make government less relevant in our daily lives.

We ended the year strong thanks to your incredible generosity and commitment to our vision of a better future for all Americans. It is truly a testament to how far we have come to end the year with over \$20 million raised to make our achievements—and those of our partners in all 50 states—possible. Thank you for your partnership in reaching this milestone.

As a result, we have proven that no matter what happens in Washington, good things can (and are) happening in the states. For example, you have helped Americans get back to work, access healthcare, vote with more confidence, and pursue better education options for their children. We also held our premier gathering, Annual Meeting, in person this year to inspire the Network to go bigger and collaborate on multi-state opportunities. You can read highlights from Annual Meeting in this issue.

Rest assured that we don't sit idly when reflecting on all the good that has been done in the states. We are hard at work honing our strategies, bringing leaders together, and gearing up for important battles ahead. You don't have to look far to see the many problems Americans still face from poor government policy—poverty, labor shortages, COVID-related issues, violations of our civil liberties, the list goes on. No matter the obstacle, the best place to solve these problems is together in the states rather than more mandates from Congress or the White House.

That's the theme of my colleague Tony Woodlief's new book, *I, Citizen: A Blueprint for Reclaiming American Self-Governance*. Tony has made rounds in the news—including the *Wall Street Journal*, C-SPAN, *National Review*, and Fox News Radio, to name a few – talking about how Americans need to reclaim their right to govern themselves and work together to solve problems rather than ascribe to the narrative that we are divided beyond repair. In this issue of SPN News, Tony explains how there is a path out of this division to one of solutions, and it starts in our own backyards.

We head into 2022 with another significant milestone—SPN's 30th Anniversary. A lot has changed in the last 30 years, and so have we, while remaining constant in our mission and founder's vision. SPN and our Network have grown in size, sophistication, and impact, all because of our loyal supporters who have been there every step of the way. I look forward to the next 30 with you.

Take care,

Tracie Sharp





Together Again

SPN's 29th Annual Meeting Brings Together State Leaders to Celebrate Victories, Plan for Greater Impact in 2022

For many Network leaders, SPN's Annual Meeting is a rare and cherished opportunity to come together, in-person, with people from across the country who, like them, are working to preserve the American ideal of individual liberty. Thanks to the generosity of supporters like you, we have been able to hold this critical gathering of the 50-state freedom movement for the last 29 years.

This year's event in Orlando promised to be truly energizing and inspirational. And it was.

Over 1,200 individuals working at 300 organizations from all 50 states reconnected at Annual Meeting—many for the first time since the start of the pandemic—to celebrate successes, learn from one another, and identify the best paths forward to achieve even greater advancements to help the American people.

Sessions during the week focused on strategies to expand **school choice** to more students and ensure teachers unions

don't force school closures once again; reforms to ensure Americans have **faith in our elections**; paths to help **state economies** recover from the recession and effectively mitigate the negative impact of federal dollars on state budgets; and make permanent the dozens of **healthcare victories** achieved during the pandemic that make it easier and more affordable for Americans to access quality care.

Annual Meeting is a unique forum that brings together both state and national leaders so they can collaborate on multi-state policy victories. As Corey DeAngelis, national director of research for the American Federation for Children, said "This is really the place where the conversations happen that spark change in policy reform in the long run, which will lead to empowering more families to have options for their children when it comes to education and other areas of life as well. This is where the magic happens, and this is why I look forward to it year over year."

Perhaps the only thing more energizing than being able to collaborate face-to-face once again was the recognition that, despite a period of tremendous governmental overreach, this Network came together at the onset of the pandemic

to find ways to protect and even advance personal freedom across the country. **At a time when Washington failed, the states—led by this Network—stepped up, and showed the country an alternative path forward to improve the lives of American families.**

Across the country, Network leaders helped secure over 200 victories in the states, serving as an important reminder that states can achieve great things—no matter what is happening in Washington. This year's **Bob Williams Awards** winners were a testament to that.

- **The Libertas Institute** is paving the way for entrepreneurs to create jobs and new businesses without unnecessary government regulations in Utah. Their idea for creating Regulatory Sandboxes, which is now spreading to other states, earned Libertas this year's "Biggest Win for Freedom."
- **The Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty's** legal expertise forced Dane County schools to reopen their doors to students, allowing them to resume in-person instruction following an arbitrary ban on learning at both public and private schools in the summer of 2020. The Wisconsin Supreme Court's 4-3 ruling earned WILL the "Biggest Home State Win" award.
- When special interests in Illinois tried to destroy the state's most important taxpayer protection, the **Illinois Policy Institute** sprang into action to stop the most expensive ballot initiative in Midwest political history. Through their comprehensive messaging campaign, Illinois Policy was able to successfully educate voters on the harm that would come by replacing the Illinois flat tax with a progressive one, earning them the "Best Issue Campaign" title.
- **The Empire Center for Public Policy** won the "Most Influential Research" award for its work that exposed the true number of COVID-19 deaths that resulted from then-Governor Cuomo's policy to require nursing homes to accept patients who'd not yet recovered from the coronavirus. Their report led to an investigation into the governor's handling of the pandemic by the US Attorney's office. Following a series of sexual assault allegations made after the scandal, the governor resigned.

SPN also presented our **Ed-Prize Awards** to accelerate ambitious, creative approaches to improve K-12 education at the state and local level. Through the generous support of the Challenge Foundation, the 2021 Ed-Prize Awards granted two organizations with \$75,000 each to bring their solutions to life.

- **Izzit.org** will use the award to provide Career and Technical Education mobile classrooms to students in Western Pennsylvania. Their mobile classroom will visit school districts and offer students access to an affordable, flexible education in dozens of high-demand vocations.



TOP TO BOTTOM: Michael J. Reitz is awarded the 2021 Overton Award for his leadership as Executive Vice President at the Mackinac Center in Michigan.

SPN's generous supporters, like Richard Lee of Florida, attended Annual Meeting to meet with leaders in the Network and hear stories of impact made possible by their support.

Racers compete at Annual Meeting's 5K for Freedom.

TOP OPPOSITE PAGE: The Libertas Institute wins the 2021 Bob Williams Award for Biggest Win for Freedom.



TOP: SPN's Annual Meeting brought together young professionals for training and networking opportunities through our Generation Liberty Fellows Program.

Above: SPN President and CEO Tracie Sharp addresses the audience at Annual Meeting's awards night reception.

- **MicroschoolingNV** is building a robust community of microschools so that students can access quality, affordable education options with the flexibility many parents need in terms of where and when school is held. They will expand this innovative solution to multiple states.

Victories like these wouldn't be possible without our generous supporters who fuel the Network's critical efforts.

It also takes innovative leaders to make an impact of this magnitude in the states. Leaders like the **Mackinac Center for Public Policy's Executive Vice President Michael Reitz**, who was honored with the Overton Award. The award — named after the late Joe Overton, who was senior vice president at the Mackinac Center when he died 18 years ago — honors Network leaders who embody Overton's spirit of humility, loyalty, leadership and a commitment to liberty. As Mackinac Center President Joseph Lehman noted, "Mike has one of those essential leadership qualities of not waiting to be told what to do, but looking around, seeing what needs to be done, and then doing it and making sure it gets done."

"The things that make America a wonderful place are the same things we love about SPN," said Reitz. "It's all about the ideas, liberty, and what can happen in the states. It's what motivated our Founders and motivates all of us to work with SPN."

The Beacon Center of Tennessee's CEO Justin Owen was honored with SPN's premier recognition, receiving the Thomas A. Roe Award for his leadership and public policy achievements. The award, named after SPN's founder, recognizes innovative leaders whose work have greatly advanced freedom. Justin, who started his career as an intern at the Beacon Center, recognized early on that building meaningful relationships was key to advancing policy reforms that truly change peoples' lives. Under his leadership, Beacon has grown exponentially and helped secure major wins for Tennesseans, including passing the state's first-ever school choice program, repealing an income tax, and protecting right-to-work in the state constitution.



THIS IS WHERE THE
MAGIC HAPPENS, AND
THIS IS WHY I LOOK
FORWARD TO IT YEAR
OVER YEAR.

"It really is the honor of a lifetime. There is no pinnacle within our world than the Thomas Roe Award. We wouldn't exist but for him and his vision. To receive an award named after him means so much to me," he said.

The state-based policy space is often lonely, and usually difficult. As this Network's leaders prepares for another year of challenges and opportunities, they do so empowered by the inspiration drawn from and relationships forged at the 2021 State Policy Network Annual Meeting. We look forward to seeing you at our 30th Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia on September 19-21, 2022 where we will celebrate what's yet to come.



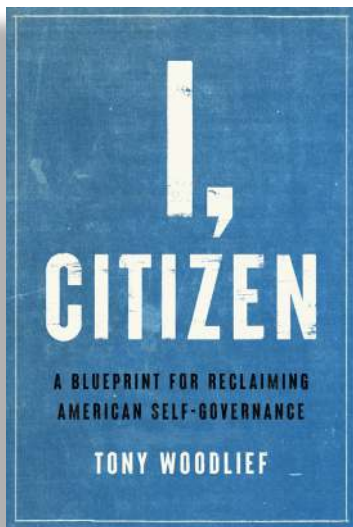
 **Annual Meeting**

**WE'LL SEE YOU IN ATLANTA, GA
FOR SPN'S 30TH ANNUAL MEETING!**

SEPT. 19-21, 2022

SPECIAL THANKS
TO OUR STATE
THINK TANK HOSTS:  **GEORGIA**
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PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION

How to Save Our Republic through the States



A new book makes the bold claim that Americans are not irrevocably divided. By focusing on solving problems together from the bottom up, we can resist the growth of top-down government.

On December 7, SPN's Executive Vice President Tony Woodlief published a new book that challenges the age-old narrative of a polarized country on the verge of collapse. *I, Citizen: A Blueprint for Reclaiming American*

Self-Governance is a story of hope for those who want to make their communities better without more intrusion from the federal government in our daily lives. The book has been featured on C-SPAN, *Newsweek*, *National Review*, Fox News Radio, and the *New York Post*.

In the below Q&A, we dive into key themes of the book and why working on the state level is critical to a more prosperous future for the country.

The book discusses how, despite what we see in the news, America isn't as divided as people think we are. Can you talk about what you learned in your research about American values and attitudes?

I spent a lot of time digging into public opinion data, and some things jumped out right away. First, a lot of surveys you look at have an ideological agenda and are trying not to understand what people really believe, but instead, to muster the case for a policy they want. But if you look at long-standing, well-run surveys out of places like the University of Michigan and Chicago that ask people where their values lie, you find something more nuanced.

Most Americans are not very ideological, and they tend to be



Author Tony Woodlief

center-right, somewhat conservative, but not libertarian, and they don't much care for politics or ideologues. They tend to vote for candidates they rate as least ideological. The picture that pundits like David French or Ezra Klein paint—that we're almost on the verge of civil war—is just not true. It may feel that way, but that's because social media and news reverberate the opinions of the loud and extreme. It's the ugly stuff that sells papers and gets clicks. While the parties may have gotten more extreme, the people have not.

When you go out and talk to people in districts and ask them about policies (healthcare, the economy, crime, taxes) they don't actually disagree that much. We all want better, more thriving communities. We all want to send our kids to good schools, make an honest living, and get access to what we need when we need it. Realizing what we have in common also illuminates our common enemy—a DC-based political class that perpetuates the myth of a divided America to justify centralizing power in the hands of unelected federal agencies and judges.

Bringing up our common enemy also raises the question of what to do when presented with harmful policies destroying lives and livelihoods. How can we reconcile the need to come together with the need to protect our values and freedoms?

I would try to view it this way – the battle shouldn't be between Team Red and Team Blue. In Washington, even Team Blue doesn't represent their own constituents anymore. The real thing to push back on is a Washington, DC political class whose members think they know what's best for every state, city, and neighborhood, and who have no regard for what the Constitution says about where authority is supposed to reside. All of this power over time has accumulated in DC, and most of it resides in unaccountable bureaucracies. We have to push back on them vociferously. Odds are if you approach your neighbor who is of a different party than you, they probably don't like it either.

Why did you decide to release this book now, in this moment in history?

Nothing has changed today because we're losing time, and all signs point to more and more attempts to grow the federal government's influence on our daily lives. You look at all the big spending in the name of COVID flowing to the states—so much that they don't know what to do with it all. I wouldn't expect the agenda for the next few years to make DC any less powerful.

The vision of the Founders was that people would come together in their communities, reason together, come to a set of choices they can mostly agree on, and move forward. Instead, we've taken all of those choices out of communities and stuffed them into the eager hands of DC politicians and bureaucrats...into the hands of people who mostly do not share our values. That is why it is important for us to preserve the protections the Founders put in place in the Constitution through the states. The states were meant to serve as that critical balance of power.

Why has America become so top down? Is this what the majority of Americans want?

What we know is that when you ask large samples of Americans who they trust and who they don't trust, you see that more decisions should be made closer to home. Trust has fallen through the basement floor with Congress, and meanwhile, people say they trust their state and local gov



THE STATES WERE
MEANT TO SERVE AS
THAT CRITICAL BALANCE
OF POWER.

ernments more than the federal. We as humans are hierarchical whether we want to admit it or not, so the question is where you want to center that leadership. Can we recenter and redistribute power so you have more local and accountable leaders? The reason for doing so is that these folks are closer to you and if the day comes when your town council is corrupt, you don't have to drive too far to let them know what you think. Just look at this playing out in real time with parents in school board meetings.

Let's talk about SPN and the Network's role in all of this. What are some ways in which this Network is working to protect federalism?

There are two key things the state groups in our Network primarily deal with. First, they are working hard to protect federalism at the state level. You see wins like the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty (WILL) making it no longer possible for the governor to use a veto as a form of policymaking. Or the Empire Center exposing corruption in the Cuomo administration, or the Mackinac Center in Michigan reigning in governors who exercise imperial powers. These end up being complex legal matters, but they are important for maintaining separate powers at the state level. Think tanks are vital if only to make it harder for politicians that shirk their responsibilities to work their way up towards Congress.

Second, we've seen state groups work together to stop bad nationwide policies. Whether it's Tarren Bragdon at the Foundation for Government Accountability and their multistate efforts to stop the welfare state from destroying human creativity, or the multistate coalition that undid dues skimming that stole millions from healthcare workers and put it in the pockets of union bosses. SPN is often the lead connector between people in DC and those on the ground in states with experience and ideas that need to be heard.

In order to reclaim American self-governance, you argue that we also need to work more closely with those directly affected by policy solutions. Why is this so important?

One thing we're really focused on at SPN is developing a "diagnostic mindset"—which means we do not want to wade into where we think we see suffering with some textbook that already has the answers. Instead, we want to embrace what economist Friedrich Hayek really advocated, which is to pay attention to "local knowledge." You go in listening to find out the reality of the problem. It has a substantial impact on how you message, implement the solution, and what partners you have along the way. There are times when we get a policy win, but we don't turn around to see if people take advantage of this freedom we helped them get. You have to spend time understanding these folks to offer the best solutions.

What is the biggest thing you want supporters of SPN and the broader Network to take away from the book?

I want them to smile. They are inundated with messages that the country is going to Hell. Know that the people who voted for Biden did not all vote for single payer. They didn't vote for the disaster in Afghanistan. They didn't vote for the package they got, they mostly voted for the guy they didn't like less. Most of America is with us, and therefore, we ought to be pushing power back down to communities. Not just because the Constitution requires it, but because that's how we're going to win.

Learn more and purchase your copy today at citizenbook.com using the discount code "SPN" when you check out at Encounter Books.

Philanthropist Finds Innovative Way to Increase Network Investment



“When I reflect on the direction of the country, we had our impact,” a longtime State Policy Network donor said, reflecting on a recent contribution he made to a dozen freedom-oriented organizations through a real estate transaction. “We did our part two years ago. Despite all the bad news, we feel that the organizations we helped are doing their best and are doing much more because of what we did, and that’s satisfying,” he added.

Paul Johnson—whose name, along with that of his wife, has been changed for this article—was recently able to donate over \$2 million to nonprofits through the sale of a property, all while lowering his tax burden.

Paul and his wife, Cheryl, have been supporting organizations in the freedom movement for twenty years, including SPN, due to their belief in the power of states. They, like so many of SPN’s supporters, believe in the power of the states and appreciate the role this Network plays in connecting leaders and organizations to advance state solutions that can be replicated throughout the country for national impact. Paul and Cheryl have proudly partnered with SPN for more than a decade.

Admittedly, when much younger, Paul considered himself a liberal, despite being an economics professor. It was after teaching economics for years and going on to be a contractor and owner of rental properties that he began to realize how government gets in the way, and his political philosophy changed. Paul and his wife have invested in real estate, providing them a revenue stream to support free-market organizations over the years.

Paul and Cheryl got involved with the Goldwater Institute in Arizona when they were living in the state and started attending the organization’s events. They remember attending one event where they learned about the organization’s innovative Right-to-Try reform and were touched after hearing the story of a family that had to travel to England to access an experimental drug not available to them at home.

The couple’s relationship with Goldwater continued to evolve over the years, and in 2019, they discovered they were in a unique situation to make a sophisticated donation through the sale of real estate.

“(It) was very beneficial tax wise and it really satisfied our desire to help different organizations,” Paul said, explaining that he was able to make a substantial contribution to the Goldwater Institute in Arizona, which helped facilitate the process, as well as significant gifts to about a dozen other nonprofits, including SPN.

“The federal government allows carry forward, which is huge,” Paul explained. “That means, after (we) gave this amount, for the next five years, (we) can deduct 20 percent of that amount, so we have lesser taxes going forward.”

SPN was one of the recipients of this gift, and used this donation to support its Annual Meeting, which brought together more than 1,200 leaders representing 300 organizations from all 50 states in Orlando this past August. A portion of the donation was also used to accelerate policies across the country that expanded educational freedom, economic prosperity, and access to healthcare.

This unique avenue for giving is a process the Goldwater Institute has incorporated into its donor program, offering to handle the heavy lifting when it comes to paperwork and legalese, and coordinating the disbursement of gifts to other organizations when requested by the donor. While Paul acknowledged it’s a complicated method of giving that requires legal expertise, the process was feasible for him because of the support Goldwater provided.

“At Goldwater, we have the capability to work very closely with our supporters to develop unique donation strategies that work best for them,” said Goldwater’s Executive Vice President Christina Sandefur.

Donors looking to include real estate as part of their philanthropic portfolio should contact their financial advisors, attorneys, and/or nonprofit beneficiaries.

ALABAMA

ALABAMA POLICY INSTITUTE • alabamapolicy.org

In fall 2021, the **Alabama Policy Institute** launched 1819 News, a full-service multimedia news organization. 1819 News provides hard-hitting news from a team of seasoned beat reporters and investigative journalists and also hosts a highly accomplished stable of opinion writers who weigh in on the most important issues facing Alabamians on a daily basis. 1819 News launched via its state-of-the-art website, 1819news.com, which is home to industry-leading content including everything from podcasts to in-depth feature stories, short videos, sports reporting, outdoor coverage, and a statewide radio network. The new multimedia company will raise the bar for journalism in the state by providing Alabamians with the vital information they want and need. The organization has over a dozen full-time staff members and is poised to become the leading source of news in the state.



ALASKA

ALASKA POLICY FORUM • alaskapolicyforum.org

The COVID-19 pandemic, and governmental responses to it, wreaked havoc on small businesses in Alaska, especially those in the restaurant and tourism industries. Another threat loomed—a business being sued by a customer, vendor, or employee claiming to have contracted the virus while in contact with that business, even if the proprietor took all reasonable and required precautions. The **Alaska Policy Forum** partnered with local business owners to write opinion pieces and make a video in which they explained how the pandemic hurt their business and that the threat of liability lawsuits made it even more difficult for them to get back on their feet. The Forum had the support of Alaska's executive branch and allied with other free-market proponents, such as the National Federation of Independent Businesses, to help draft legislation and convince lawmakers that Alaska's business owners needed protection from frivolous lawsuits. The result was the inclusion of business liability protection language in House Bill 76, a new public health declaration. This was a win for APF and, more importantly, for the people who form the backbone of free enterprise, the small businesses owners and entrepreneurs.



ARIZONA

GOLDWATER INSTITUTE • goldwaterinstitute.org

From challenging the largest tax increase in Arizona history and defending property owners and entrepreneurs across the country to championing innovations in telemedicine and launching the Right to Try 2.0 initiative, the **Goldwater Institute** has taken bold action to protect the personal and economic freedoms Americans hold most dear. By working closely with allies to provide tailored support, Goldwater has amplified the impact of its Arizona-based wins far outside of the state's borders. In 2021, numerous states enacted legislation to advance school choice, following Arizona's lead and utilizing models Goldwater developed. These victories are especially poignant in light of the 10-year anniversary of Education Savings Accounts in Arizona. Other states have adopted Goldwater's innovative licensing reform, the universal recognition of occupational licenses, which has already impacted more than 4,000 workers in Arizona alone. Goldwater's latest education reform, the Academic Transparency Act, is under consideration in multiple states and offers a template for policymakers to protect the right of parents to know what is taught in the classroom.





ARKANSAS

ARKANSAS POLICY FOUNDATION • arkansaspolicyfoundation.org

Governor Asa Hutchinson has announced his intention to call the Legislature into special session in fall 2021 to reduce the income tax. The top Arkansas income tax rate has been reduced from 7.0 to 5.9 percent. Legislators are currently negotiating a further reduction to something between 5.5 and 4.9 percent. **Arkansas Policy Foundation** research has noted that states in the region without an income tax have higher job creation rates. Research has also emphasized that the nine-state bloc without an income tax enjoyed a higher job creation rate in the last US economic expansion (2009–2020) than the top third of states with the highest rates. The Policy Foundation relied on data from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics and Federation of Tax Administrators. Both frontrunners in next year's race for Arkansas governor have called for a phase-out of the income tax.

CALIFORNIA



CALIFORNIA POLICY CENTER • californiapolicycenter.org

Over the past few years, many influential people and companies have announced their moves out of the Golden State. Many of them cite California's high tax burden and cost of living as reasons for them leaving. In 2020, California, for the first time in over one hundred years, has experienced a population decline. The **California Policy Center** is highlighting all the businesses that are leaving the state in the "California Book of Exoduses."



PACIFIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE • pacificresearch.org

In research that has garnered national attention, **Pacific Research Institute's** Dr. Wayne Winegarden has documented that 79 percent of electric vehicle plug-in tax credits were claimed by households with adjusted gross incomes of greater than \$100,000 per year. Households with incomes greater than \$50,000 per year claimed 99 percent of the credits. Elected officials are finally listening. US Sen. Deb Fischer (R-Nebraska) introduced an amendment to the Democrat budget reconciliation bill "to ensure high-income individuals do not get government subsidies to buy expensive luxury cars." Specifically, her amendment disallows electric vehicle tax credits from being claimed for individuals making more than \$100,000 per year, or if the car being purchased cost more than \$40,000. Writing about the debate, *Politico* noted that "three Democrats thought that was a good question": Why would government "subsidize luxury vehicles for the wealthy"? They joined with nearly all Republican senators in a surprising bipartisan vote to pass the amendment, by a margin of 51–48. The bipartisan Senate vote represents an important step toward ending "costly subsidies for the rich" once and for all.

COLORADO

INDEPENDENCE INSTITUTE • i2i.org

Independence Institute is again working to reduce the Colorado State income tax. The Institute has received approval from the Colorado Title Board and is now in the field gathering signatures. This measure should be on the fall 2022 ballot. The ballot language reads, "Shall there be a change to the Colorado Revised Statutes reducing the state income tax rate from 4.55% to 4.40%?"



CONNECTICUT

YANKEE INSTITUTE F • yankeeinstitute.org

Yankee Institute scored a major win for Connecticut families and businesses as Governor Ned Lamont's plan to join the Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI), a program designed to artificially hike the cost of gasoline and diesel, died in the General Assembly this spring. Yankee sounded the alarm about TCI in 2019 and worked tirelessly to make sure people understood it was a new tax. While the state's largest business organization refused to take a side, Yankee aired radio ads at hundreds of gas pumps to let people know TCI would raise the cost of filling up. Yankee's analysis revealed Governor Lamont—despite public claims—planned to bypass the state's constitutional road funding lockbox and instead put about \$100 million per year in TCI funds into a slush fund controlled by activists, a discovery that pushed Lamont to blurt, "Don't listen to what Yankee said." Meanwhile, Yankee's investigative journalism revealed special interests behind TCI, ranging from construction unions to a major oil company, were set to cash in on special provisions designed just for them. And when TCI proponents tried to sneak the plan through a special session in late September, Yankee quickly activated hundreds of residents to contact their lawmakers and successfully thwarted TCI a second time.



DELAWARE

CAESAR RODNEY INSTITUTE • caesarrodney.org

The **Caesar Rodney Institute** helped delay Delaware's offshore wind construction project (Skipjack Project). CRI, aware of other groups along the Atlantic coast that had similar concerns with offshore wind projects, wanted to share Delaware's success model, which ultimately led to the formation of the American Coalition for Ocean Protection (ACOP). ACOP consists of members from several beach community groups along the Atlantic Coast from North Carolina to Maine. It also includes the following SPN affiliates: the John Locke Foundation, the Thomas Jefferson Institute, the Mackinac Center, and the Maine Policy Institute. Currently, CRI continues to lead and spearhead the efforts of ACOP by providing its members who wish to pursue lawsuits with significant consultation and fundraising support (Ocean Environment Legal Defense Fund). The first "ACOP member" lawsuit was filed in Massachusetts by ACK Residents Against Turbines, and Vallorie Oliver on Aug. 25, 2021, to stop the Vineyard Wind Project off the coast of Nantucket. To learn more or to donate, please visit www.OceanLegalDefense.org.



FLORIDA

FOUNDATION FOR GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY • thefga.org

The Florida Governor signed legislation that includes several commonsense election integrity measures to improve transparency and restore trust in the democratic process. The **Foundation for Government Accountability** noted the bill enforces voter ID, prevents ballot harvesting, secures drop boxes, and helps ensure that voter rolls are up to date and accurate for each election.





THE JAMES MADISON INSTITUTE • jamesmadison.org

At the start of 2021, **The James Madison Institute** had a goal of increasing its owned audience by 20 percent. The email list had been hovering around 5,000 contacts. A few email addresses were added each month, but there wasn't a plan to increase this audience. Through a partnership with SPN and Iron Light, the Institute began running lead ads on Facebook on issues like campus free speech, minimum wage hikes, and a federal gas tax. The ads were hovering at around 11 cents per click, and the Institute was able to get thousands of people to sign a petition and opt in for the newsletter. To date, email audience size is now more than 20,000 contacts, far exceeding the 20 percent goal.

GEORGIA



GEORGIA CENTER FOR OPPORTUNITY • georgiaopportunity.org

As more and more people experience government services due to being out of work during the pandemic, there has been a heightened need to ensure that the system moves people forward without trapping them on government services. With this in mind, the **Georgia Center for Opportunity** has accelerated its work to identify the systems that keep people in poverty and to offer this resource to lawmakers and businesses, so that they can better serve their communities. Through its BenefitsCliffs.org site, the Center shows how well-intentioned but inadequate policies trap people on government assistance. The site was expanded to nine states in 2021. A new social media program called Dare to Climb is raising awareness about the pitfalls of welfare programs. Using data from BenefitsCliffs.org plus video and picture stories of those who attempted (some unsuccessfully) to escape the current welfare system, the Georgia Center for Opportunity was able to reach 6.4 million people and garner nearly 400,000 video views in just 30 days. This awareness campaign is just the first step in making real change to a system that traps people in dependence.



GEORGIA PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION • georgiapolicy.org

A huge **Georgia Public Policy Foundation** victory in 2021 occurred in the education arena, as COVID-19 concerns unsettled education policy across Georgia's 181 school districts. Districts grappled with pandemic responses; families struggled to maintain academic progress and schedules amid changing (and often politically motivated) health guidance. Thankfully, the Foundation succeeded in its campaign to prevent overregulation of families establishing learning pods. Learning pods are now defined in Georgia Code, which clarifies that they are not schools or child-care centers and should not be regulated as such. Learning pods are exempt from, among other things, staffing ratios and certification requirements. Nov. 3 begins the Legislature's three-week redistricting special session. The 40-day legislative session for 2022 begins Jan. 11. The Foundation will continue to promote commonsense, practical ideas for Georgia before the focus turns to the campaign trail and elections.

HAWAII

GRASSROOT INSTITUTE OF HAWAII • grassrootinstitute.org

Hawaii residents have had a rough year, with the state still suffering from continuing coronavirus lockdown measures. But adversity can bring out the best in people, as it has for the **Grassroot Institute of Hawaii**. By staying true to its mission of promoting individual liberty, economic freedom, and accountable government, the Institute has doubled its owned email audience, increased its social media presence, expanded its influence, and generated significant media coverage. In September, the state's largest weekly newspaper featured Keli'i Akina, Institute president, on its cover, with the headline, "A Voice for Unity." With its growing stable of research associates, the Institute continues to produce briefs and commentaries concerning Hawaii's high cost of living, such as housing, healthcare, taxes, and maritime policy. Earlier in 2021, the Institute produced a report outlining reform to the state's emergency powers law. It also helped Alaska obtain an exemption from the Passenger Vessel Services Act. Most recently, it produced the brief "Five Myths about the Jones Act." The newest Grassroot scholar, Colin Grabow (also with the Cato Institute), is one of the nation's foremost Jones Act experts.



ILLINOIS

ILLINOIS POLICY INSTITUTE • illinoispolicy.org

In his 2022 budget, Governor Pritzker proposed slashing the popular Invest in Kids tax credit scholarship program, deeming it a "corporate loophole" he needed to eliminate to balance the budget. In reality, the Invest in Kids program provides school choice to thousands of low-income students. After backlash from the public, Pritzker and his union allies failed to kill the program. State lawmakers not only preserved the scholarship program but extended it to 2023. The extra year offers a golden opportunity to make the credit permanent. The **Illinois Policy Institute** team worked with a broad coalition including Empower Illinois, the Big Shoulders Fund, the Catholic Conference and the Jewish Federation of Chicago—to showcase the power of Invest in Kids scholarships. Illinois Policy highlighted families who directly benefit from them and individuals who have personally invested in the program. Their experts published high-profile pieces in *Crain's Chicago Business*, *National Review* and more to help the public understand what was really going on.



IOWA

IOWANS FOR TAX RELIEF FOUNDATION • itrfoundation.org

Iowans for Tax Relief Foundation is working to advance parental choice in education. During this year's legislative session, the foundation led a state-wide educational campaign on school choice by sharing stories of parents whose children's lives were changed because of educational opportunities. ITR Foundation also partnered with the Kirkwood Institute, a nonprofit legal center, to highlight some of the wrongdoings that were occurring because of voluntary diversity laws, which in certain school districts restricted students from taking advantage of open enrollment. This research led to the Legislature repealing voluntary diversity laws that applied to five of Iowa's largest school districts. Now, 58,000 students can take advantage of open enrollment opportunities. The Legislature also approved expanding charter schools, expanding Iowa's two school choice tax credits, and removing barriers to open enrollment.





KANSAS

KANSAS POLICY INSTITUTE • kansaspolicy.org

In Kansas there are more high school students below grade level than are on track for college and career. **Kansas Policy Institute** tackled education reform in big ways this year through its Giving Kids a Fighting Chance campaign, which helped Kansans better understand the problem of low student achievement and the needed reforms centered on better educational opportunities, transparency, and accountability. KPI had a substantial legislative victory this year: expansion of a tax credit scholarship program that allows Education Savings Accounts for low-income kids below grade level. KPI also worked with a broad group of elected officials and advocates from around the state to further reform property taxes through much-needed Truth in Taxation legislation. As a result, nearly 250 local government entities have announced they are not increasing their property taxes next year. In addition, KPI launched legislative efforts to dramatically reform the state's Emergency Management Act. These efforts led to the passage of Senate Bill 40. The first-in-the-nation legislation placed county health officers in an advisory capacity and strengthened county commissions; gave legislative bodies explicit oversight of continued emergency action; and ensured that all Kansans had due process rights when subject to shutdowns, mandates, and the like during an emergency.

KENTUCKY

PEGASUS INSTITUTE • pegasuskentucky.org

For many cities, 2020 became a year of resurgence for urban violence. Unfortunately, in Louisville, Kentucky, increased violence had become the norm. Since its launch in 2016, the **Pegasus Institute** has prioritized public safety initiatives and pushed city leaders to pursue focused deterrence policing strategies, among other tools. Following multiple research papers, blogs, op-eds, podcasts, a ton of earned media, the launch of the Louisville Homicide Clock, and a short film on violent crime victimization, Pegasus is excited to say that 2021 saw the launch of Group Violence Intervention, the gold standard for focused deterrence strategies. Along with many partners, including those in federal and state law enforcement, community anti-violence groups, and civic and religious leaders, Pegasus is dedicated to successful implementation and execution of this program. The Institute will continue to give a voice to those most impacted: the families who have lost loved ones and the children who sleep in bathtubs and underneath beds at night for protection and the feeling of safety.

LOUISIANA

PELICAN INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • pelicaninstitute.org

This year, the **Pelican Institute for Public Policy** was able to secure a critical win in the Louisiana Legislature to reform an overly complex tax code that sends jobs and opportunities to other states. Pelican launched an issue campaign to simplify Louisiana's tax code and phase out the franchise and income taxes on corporations and individuals. Through a targeted email strategy, op-eds, radio interviews, one-pagers, and digital traffic ads, Pegasus informed key stakeholders about how tax reform could reignite the state's economy and help Louisiana families. One of the most effective tools was the "Take Action" website, which allowed activists to email their legislators directly. The Louisiana Legislature passed the tax simplification package that creates greater stability and predictability, lowers income tax rates, eliminates the punishing franchise tax for 85 percent of filers, and guarantees that growth of state income will be used to lower rates in coming years. The constitutional amendment now heads to voters, who will vote to approve this measure on Nov. 13, 2021.



MAINE

MAINE POLICY INSTITUTE • mainepolicy.org

Early in 2021, the **Maine Policy Institute** published “Scoring Emergency Executive Powers in All 50 States,” a first-of-its-kind, 50-state analysis of emergency power laws and the balance of power granted to the legislative and executive branches during declared emergencies. The Institute’s team worked with think tanks in other states and testified before other state legislatures about the need to respect the constitutional separation of powers, and provide adequate oversight of the chief executive, during states of emergency. *National Review*, the *Seattle Times*, Yahoo News, and numerous other state and national outlets cited the analysis. While Maine was unable to pass emergency power reform in 2021, at least 15 other states did act on the issue during their 2021 legislative sessions. The Institute will continue to press for action in Maine until the rights of all Maine citizens are protected during civil states of emergency.



MARYLAND

MARYLAND PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE • mdpolicy.org

The **Maryland Public Policy Institute** has made the case for several years that lowering Baltimore’s punishing property tax rate would be the single best way to help get the city back on its feet. It’s also the best thing we can do to *increase wealth and prosperity in the black urban community*. Many city leaders and candidates are now on board with the Institute’s idea. In April 2021, former Democrat Baltimore City mayoral candidate Thiru Vignarajah wrote an article for *The Wall Street Journal* making the case that property tax reform is how you encourage wealth creation in the black community and draw more people back into the city. This June, the *Baltimore Sun* editorial board commentary challenged the mayor with its piece “Mayor Scott, what’s your plan for lowering Baltimore’s property tax rate?” The Institute’s ideas are spurring debate in other suffering cities as well. For instance, *City Journal* published a piece by MPPI’s chief economist Dr. Stephen Walters about Detroit’s wealth tax. Because so many people called in to a Detroit radio station to discuss the idea afterwards, Dr. Walters was asked to appear on a half-hour podcast to further lay out his idea. And in September 2021, the Baltimore Development Corporation’s latest economic development plan lists developing a plan to use a referendum to lower Baltimore’s real property taxes.





PIONEER INSTITUTE
PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH

MASSACHUSETTS

PIONEER INSTITUTE • pioneerinstitute.org

Pioneer Institute has notched major victories in each of its three priority policy areas: first-rate educational options for all children; medical care options and biomedical innovation; and economic opportunity for all. Pioneer's decades of work on expanding school choice culminated in the landmark *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue* decision at the US Supreme Court. Following the news, the Institute successfully worked with local partners to promote policy changes that expanded parents' school options in 10 states. Pioneer has publicized and filed a new amicus brief in the *Carson v. Makin* school tuition case from Maine, which the Supreme Court will take up this year. Locally, Governor Charlie Baker announced \$18 million in new funding to expand voc-tech education, a Pioneer recommendation that the Institute has advanced through extensive research, events, and media. In the healthcare arena, Massachusetts removed bureaucratic barriers for 4,000 physicians after Pioneer proposed retaining telehealth flexibility and other pandemic-era healthcare changes. The state Department of Public Health made meaningful changes to its Covid reporting, as proposed by Pioneer, most importantly by providing absolute numbers instead of reporting cases in ranges. Finally, state transportation officials adopted Pioneer's recommended overall of a multibillion-dollar multimodal construction project that will shorten construction time, lower longterm costs, and create fewer negative economic and congestion impacts.

MICHIGAN

MACKINAC CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • mackinac.org

Since its founding in 1987, the **Mackinac Center for Public Policy** has been committed to expanding opportunities for Michigan students by empowering families with access to a variety of educational options. The past two years have demonstrated that the need for school choice has never been greater. Policies enacted in response to COVID-19 have set back learning for many students and frustrated many parents. Families have been left without support to pursue education options outside of the conventional public school system. That's largely because of Michigan's anti-aid amendment. The state's Blaine Amendment restricts families from using Education Savings Accounts or other forms of state aid to help them pay for private schools, religious or secular. Five Michigan families, with the help of the Mackinac Center Legal Foundation, are fighting to change that. In September, the Mackinac Center Legal Foundation filed a groundbreaking lawsuit that challenges the constitutionality of the state's archaic amendment. Families should be equipped with the resources to help them access the best education possible for their children.

MINNESOTA

CENTER OF THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT • americanexperiment.org

The **Center of the American Experiment's** biggest success of 2021 was elevating critical race theory (CRT) to one of the most talked-about issues in Minnesota. Phase one of the Raise Our Standards tour hit 17 cities this summer and attracted more than 2,000 participants. Phase 2 began in September and includes stops in five more cities. Educating and empowering parents around this issue has led to several positive outcomes. More than 23,000 comments were sent to the Department of Education from the Center's call to action to remove the influence of CRT from the new draft of social studies standards and the Legislature passed a bill to delay implementation of the social studies standards.



A record number of school board directors across the state resigned or decided against running again because of the intense scrutiny placed on them over this issue. The Center held its first campaign school for prospective school board members, teaching them how to talk about CRT to voters. In response, the Minnesota teachers union published materials for their members to fight back against the anti-CRT narrative, specifically attacking the Center—high praise, indeed! There is no fight more important in 2021 than the battle over what children are being taught in schools, and the Center’s campaign against CRT and the draft social studies standards has put the spotlight on Minnesota schools and energized citizens to affect real and lasting change.

FREEDOM FOUNDATION OF MINNESOTA • freedomfoundationofminnesota.com

Sunshine is the always the best disinfectant when a government program doesn’t smell right, and that’s the cure the **Freedom Foundation of Minnesota** has prescribed to eliminate the two “special assistant attorneys general” that are currently working in the attorney general’s office. These individuals are paid by New York University School of Law’s State Energy and Environmental Impact Center (funded by Michael Bloomberg), and much of their work and job descriptions remain secret. Furthermore, investigations by the FFM showed that under this job classification, these special attorneys general are not required to file the same conflict of interest and financial disclosure information required of other state government employees. To prevent other special-interest foundations from providing grants to state government offices to hire staff that advance their agendas, the FFM drafted legislation and Minnesota legislators in both bodies have signed on as sponsors. Hearings will likely be held as soon as the next regular legislative session begins in January. “Passing this legislation gives us hope that our state government isn’t for sale to the highest bidder,” said Annette Meeks, CEO of FFM. The Foundation is also sharing draft legislative language that prohibits this practice with the other 10 states that have these Michael Bloomberg-funded special assistant attorney generals embedded in their state government offices.



MISSISSIPPI

EMPOWER MISSISSIPPI FOUNDATION • empowerms.org

Empower Mississippi helped drive passage of the Mississippi Earned Parole Eligibility Act as part of the organization’s Second Chances campaign. This legislation expanded the number of people eligible for parole. Like many states, Mississippi adopted a number of “tough-on-crime” reforms in the 1990s. Today, the state has the second-highest incarceration rate in the country. Over the last decade, Mississippi spent more than \$3 billion in corrections, not to mention benefits to affected families. Even with this substantial outlay, prisons have faced significant scandal with dozens of inmate deaths and a Department of Justice investigation launched by the Trump administration. The reform, which offers parole to those who have earned it, was certainly needed. But reform was set back last year when the governor vetoed similar legislation. While many thought this was dead moving forward, Empower began working with a broad coalition, including prison officials, parole board members, prosecutors, sheriffs, Republican lawmakers, and conservative organizations, shortly after the veto. Combined with a strong media and editorial presence as well as personal stories, Empower was able to drive the message that this was conservative reform that will provide second chances to those who have earned it—while saving taxpayer dollars.





MISSISSIPPI CENTER FOR
PUBLIC POLICY

MISSISSIPPI CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • mispolicy.org

The **Mississippi Center for Public Policy** released the Mississippi Fat Cat report, exposing the highest paid public officials in the state. The report received massive coverage across the state and nationally, generating enormous public interest and helping shift the narrative about public-sector pay. Instead of public-sector pay always being a conversation about higher taxes and spending, the Center's report has shown that there is money in the public sector. It is just not always spent in the best interests of the public. In addition, the Mississippi Governor signed the Universal Occupational Licensing Act into law, thus removing restrictions on dozens of occupations in Mississippi. The Mississippi Center for Public Policy attended the governor's signing ceremony.

MISSOURI



SHOW-ME INSTITUTE • showmeinstitute.org

The **Show-Me Institute** had a great success with the passage of House Bill 349, which creates an empowerment scholarship account program (similar to an Education Savings Account) for select students in Missouri. Thousands of families will now have greater opportunity to get their children into settings where they can learn and grow. Before HB 349, Missouri's school choice options were limited to charters in St. Louis and Kansas City. Now alternatives will be available to families outside those areas. Missouri has taken a real, if modest, step toward joining other states that have comprehensively adopted school choice. The passage of HB 349 also reflects the changed attitude toward educational policy. The pandemic forced the legislature to think outside the box where schooling is concerned, and its leaders found out there are well-tested alternatives that constituents all across Missouri need and want. HB 349 shows everyone what the Institute knew all along: school choice is an idea whose time has come, and persistence, facts, and fair arguments can persuade even the most reluctant that parental choice is the key to better education and a better Missouri for everyone.

MONTANA



FRONTIER INSTITUTE • frontierinstitute.org

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, Montana has taken dramatic steps to aid the public health response by reducing regulations. However, without further action from policy-makers after emergency orders expire, Montanans could lose access to their healthcare as red tape and paperwork once again creep back into the picture. In the case of Montanans accessing healthcare virtually, just one word change in an obscure passage of regulation could make all the difference. The **Frontier Institute** dives into this in their latest policy brief.

NEBRASKA

PLATTE INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC RESEARCH • platteinstitute.org

The **Platte Institute for Economic Research** has been selected as one of three Nebraska organizations to lead the implementation of Blueprint Nebraska, a statewide economic growth initiative with the goal of making Nebraska a regional leader for opportunity by 2031. Launched in 2018 by the governor and the president of the University of Nebraska system, Blueprint was turned over to volunteer boards of business and community leaders involved in 15 economic issue areas, from agriculture to workforce development. These working groups conducted surveys and held forums throughout the state, developing non-partisan, market-based recommendations for improving the Nebraska's economic policies. The president of Blueprint Nebraska, former Nebraska state Sen. Jim Smith, has also joined the Platte Institute as its chief strategy officer. The Platte Institute is advancing the Blueprint Nebraska tax modernization framework. The plan would transform Nebraska's approach to taxes that affect the workforce, investment, and wealth the state needs to grow.



NEW JERSEY

GARDEN STATE INITIATIVE • gardenstateinitiative.org

In a year when New Jersey's governorship and all seats in the Senate and General Assembly are on the ballot, the **Garden State Initiative** launched the "Middle Class Makes, Trenton Takes" campaign. The effort, named after iconic signage on the Lower Trenton Bridge, was intended to elevate economic issues and fiscal responsibility to the top of the public debate in those campaigns. Utilizing targeted social media ads and virtual town hall meetings along with earned media highlighting the research, GSI encouraged residents to share their stories of how New Jersey's tax burden and lack of affordability has them concerned for their personal future in the state. In the closing weeks of the campaign season, public polling among likely voters indicated that taxes and affordability issues ranked as the second most important issue for voters, behind only the pandemic.



NEW MEXICO

RIO GRANDE FOUNDATION • riograndefoundation.org

The **Rio Grande Foundation** and friends at the Institute for Justice achieved what ended up being a bipartisan win for food freedom in New Mexico with the adoption of legislation that allows people to make and sell nonperishable food items in their homes. The Foundation also played an integral role in support of liquor license reform in 2021. The reform dramatically reduced the price of liquor licenses. Additionally, while the votes are yet to be finalized in this Fall's election, the Foundation led the charge against the City of Albuquerque's proposed taxpayer-funded soccer stadium, which has received widespread opposition—in part due to the Foundation's efforts.





NEW YORK

EMPIRE CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • empirecenter.org

The **Empire Center for Public Policy** held one of the nation's most powerful governors accountable through their comprehensive campaign to reveal the true number of coronavirus deaths in New York nursing homes. On March 25, 2020, the New York Governor issued a controversial executive order that required the state's nursing homes to accept coronavirus-positive patients from hospitals, even if they had not fully recovered yet. As the weeks passed, nursing home deaths climbed. Empire argued this suggested the state was not revealing the true death toll of nursing home residents. Empire filed a Freedom of Information Law request to give New Yorkers the accurate picture of nursing home deaths. New York released the data, and the document listed the dates and locations of nearly 16,000 deaths involving long-term care residents—six thousand more deaths than the New York government had claimed. Thanks to the work of the Empire Center, the US Attorney's office in Brooklyn investigated the New York Governor's handling of nursing homes during the pandemic. And after that scandal broke, the governor was subject to several sexual assault allegations that led to his resignation on August 10, 2021.

NORTH CAROLINA

JOHN LOCKE FOUNDATION • johnlocke.org

As the North Carolina General Assembly session winds down, the **John Locke Foundation** is poised to secure numerous victories on behalf of North Carolinians. Most significant are the transformational tax cuts. These cuts stand to be the largest taxpayer savings package since the watershed reforms of 2013. The Foundation has secured a number of other victories this session, including a Regulatory Sandbox bill (awaiting the governor's signature), election integrity rules prohibiting use of political data when drawing redistricting maps, limits on North Carolina's arcane certificate-of-need law, a multistate occupational therapy compact, expanded scope of practice for dental hygienists, and tax cuts that are still being refined. Locke has fought for policies that keep North Carolinians free. The state continues to shine as an example of what a fiscally responsible environment can do for citizens.

OHIO

THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE • buckeyeinstitute.org

In April 2021, Congressional Democrats attempted one of the most sweeping takeovers of state policy making in American history. The ill-conceived American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) offered states nearly \$200 billion in emergency pandemic-relief funding, but there was a catch. In exchange for the aid, states were prohibited from directly or indirectly using the funds to offset a reduction in taxes. Ohio stood up for itself and taxpayers, immediately bringing the first lawsuit against the Biden administration's tax mandate. In *Ohio v. Yellen*, the US District Court for the Southern District of Ohio blocked the Biden tax mandate in a ruling that relied extensively on **The Buckeye Institute's** two amicus briefs arguing that the tax mandate was fundamentally unclear and therefore unenforceable, and that the treasury secretary cannot fix Congress's error through regulatory action. The decision was a huge victory for federalism and democratic accountability, and the court's scholarly decision vindicated Buckeye's strategic approach to the case.



THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE

OKLAHOMA

OKLAHOMA COUNCIL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS • ocpathink.org

Without question, 2021 has been the year of school choice. Whether it's because of public schools' COVID-19 overreaction, woke indoctrination, or some other reason, political leaders are now acknowledging that parents need options. Previously, the Oklahoma Equal Opportunity Education Scholarship program was limited to \$3.5 million in tax credits, which allowed around 3,000 students to receive a quality, private-school education. Now, as many as 22,000 children may do the same. The **Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs** has fought for school choice for more than a decade, and now 2021 will go down as one of the most transformational years for students in Oklahoma. But the work is not done, as the Institute is looking forward to advancing universal school choice in 2022.



OREGON

CASCADE POLICY INSTITUTE • cascadepolicy.org

Earlier this year, **Cascade Policy Institute** published a report in response to Oregon's homeless crisis entitled, "Homelessness in the Portland Region: Some Straightforward Solutions to a Complex Problem." For the community at large, the unsheltered population is an overwhelming public concern. While a majority of Portland-area voters have compassion for the homeless, they also want an end to overnight camping. They want to feel safe walking down the streets or in their parks. They want their city's businesses to flourish. But cities are bound by the Ninth Circuit Court's decision in *Martin v. City of Boise*. This ruling prohibits city anti-camping ordinances from being enforced if sufficient emergency shelter space isn't available. In the report, Cascade urged the Metro regional government to convert its underused Expo Center—shuttered during the pandemic—into a temporary homeless shelter. After a series of op-eds, radio interviews, and public testimony, local leaders are now in discussions to open the Expo Center's parking lot for homeless campers and their vehicles. Op-eds and testimony by Cascade policy analysts have caused several elected leaders to question where and how money for homeless services is being spent. Cascade's successes on this seemingly intractable problem prove that data-driven research supporting straightforward solutions can move the needle, even in deep-blue states.



PENNSYLVANIA

COMMONWEALTH FOUNDATION • commonwealthfoundation.org

This year, the Pennsylvania state senate made school choice its number-one priority for the regular legislative session by designating an omnibus education choice reform Senate Bill 1. SB 1 did not pass, but resulted in a negotiated \$40 million expansion of tax credit programs, enabling approximately 13,000 additional scholarships. Now, state representatives are following the senate's lead and reintroducing the same omnibus bill as their legislative priority for the fall. HB 1, termed the "Excellent Education for All Act," expands several different forms of parental choice: tax credit scholarships, charter schools, and learning pods. When working with lawmakers to craft this legislation, **Commonwealth Foundation** staff proposed a much larger increase to Pennsylvania's tax credit scholarship programs than ever before—enough to serve another 40,000 students currently on waiting lists—and included automatic increases based on future demand. The bill also incorporates independent charter authorization and expanded resources for charter students. And for learning pods, whose popularity skyrocketed during the pandemic, it offers specific exemptions from the regulatory and surveillance reach of state, local, and district regulatory agencies. HB 1 is now poised to push the ball further than ever before in making Pennsylvania a strong school choice state—despite resistance from anti-choice Governor Tom Wolf.





SOUTH CAROLINA

PALMETTO PROMISE INSTITUTE • palmettopromise.org

The push to repeal South Carolina's certificate-of-need (CON) statute took another huge step with the South Carolina Legislative Audit Council (LAC) deciding in August to conduct an audit of the state's CON program. **Palmetto Promise Institute** worked with lawmakers on drafting a letter to the LAC, explaining why an audit is necessary to determine the most important research questions the council should answer. The audit, which is ongoing, resulted from a bipartisan letter signed by 13 South Carolina state senators requesting a review, including state Sen. Wes Climer (R-York), who sponsored legislation that would repeal CON regulations. This move also comes after Palmetto Promise's new report on South Carolina's CON program, which revealed that the state has some of the most restrictive laws in the country. The PPI report also explored current applications, noting CON's anti-competitive effect that results in barriers to entry for new healthcare providers. The results of the audit may provide momentum on the bill to fully repeal CON at the beginning of January's session.



TENNESSEE

BEACON CENTER OF TENNESSEE • beacontn.org

Over the last few years, the **Beacon Center of Tennessee** has taken on the task of protecting worker freedom in Tennessee against threats from the national level. Right-to-work has been a fundamental ingredient in Tennessee's success, so a federal override of this important policy would be devastating economically. Tennessee legislators saw this looming threat to the state's right-to-work law, which has protected individual workers' freedoms for more than seven generations, and began the process of giving voters the option to enshrine right-to-work in the state constitution to defend against these new attacks. Amending the Tennessee Constitution is not an easy task. Legislators must twice pass a resolution to place a constitutional amendment on the ballot, the second time by a two-thirds majority. Earlier this year, the Legislature completed its part of the process, and now right-to-work protections will be placed on the November 2022 ballot as Amendment 1. If voters ratify Amendment 1 next November, it will send a strong message to Washington that the states—not the federal government—should govern workplace freedom. And it will protect not only present-day workers but generations of workers to come.



TEXAS

TEXAS PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION • texaspolicy.com

The **Texas Public Policy Foundation** congratulated its CEO Kevin Roberts for being selected as The Heritage Foundation's next president. Under Roberts' leadership, TPPF has grown its influence in numerous policy issues not only within Texas but at the national level. Roberts successfully steered the organization through the past three legislative sessions, coming away with historic reforms, such as lowering property taxes, securing Texas' election system, and passing responsible state budgets. During Roberts' tenure as CEO, TPPF opened a branch in Washington, DC, known as States Trust, to effectively advocate for national criminal justice, energy, immigration, and healthcare policy, to name a few. Under Roberts, TPPF has significantly grown its ability to influence policymaking at the federal, state, and local levels, increased its portfolio of issues, and dramatically expanded its communications operation.

UTAH

LIBERTAS INSTITUTE • libertasutah.org

It has been an exhilarating and productive year for **Libertas Institute**. Earlier this year, Utah passed *two* first-in-the-nation bills, including an all-inclusive opportunity sandbox. This forward-looking approach to fostering innovation and reducing unnecessary regulation doesn't discriminate based on industry and sets Utah apart as being truly open for business. This policy was voted SPN's Biggest Win for Freedom in 2021. Libertas is deeply honored to have even been nominated, especially given other outstanding policy achievements by fellow Network members. Libertas will continue supporting other SPN organizations as they work to implement similar legislation in their own states, with the ultimate goal of sandbox legislation at the federal level to unleash the innovative solutions of entrepreneurs nationwide.



VIRGINIA

THOMAS JEFFERSON INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • thomasjeffersoninst.org

The **Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy** fended off the Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI)—an interstate compact of 14 states that would raise gas and diesel taxes, ration fuel at the wholesale level, and divert funding away from road repair and construction and toward “green goals” like electrical vehicle subsidies. From the start of the Virginia General Assembly session, Jefferson Institute Senior Fellow Steve Haner laid the intellectual groundwork to block the TCI proposal, and the Institute filmed a 90-second video advertised to key constituencies on social media. More than 40,000 Virginians in strategic areas viewed the video. In the end, Governor Ralph Northam quietly let it be known he would not be asking the Legislature to approve the Commonwealth's participation in TCI.



VIRGINIA INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • virginiainstitute.org

As the Old Dominion is one of only two US states with off-cycle state elections this year, the **Virginia Institute for Public Policy** has kept busy this past quarter addressing the issue of election integrity. This summer, the Institute's Virginia Fair Elections (VFE) coalition hosted a statewide election integrity summit, facilitated more than 50 election integrity-related workshops and training sessions, and helped to organize approximately 3,000 election integrity volunteers. In partnership with the Leadership Institute and Conservative Partnership Institute, the Institute developed a professional production of one training workshop. In preparation for 2022, the Institute's Legislative Impact Program has produced 29 legislative models, 10 of which are planned for use by issues-based coalition members during the 2022 legislative session, and 14 of which are being factored into the long-term strategies of strategic partners in multiple states. Additionally, the Institute initiated a pilot project to train students and young professionals in legislative bill drafting. This small maiden class is ongoing and includes six young adults from three different states.





WASHINGTON

FREEDOM FOUNDATION • freedomfoundation.com

Since announcing national expansion in June 2021, the **Freedom Foundation** has expanded outreach activities into 20 additional states beyond Washington, Oregon, California, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. The organization is well on its way to reaching the ultimate goal of expanding to every state in the nation. Following the 2018 Supreme Court ruling in *Janus v. AFSCME* that recognized public employees' First Amendment rights not to be forced to fund a union as a condition of employment, the Freedom Foundation focused its efforts on educating those public employees about their rights, because the unions and the government employers certainly weren't going to. The Freedom Foundation launched a comprehensive campaign that included office canvassing, door-to-door visits, mailings, emails, media, and information online at www.optouttoday.com. Currently, the Freedom Foundation has approximately 80 lawsuits against unions that refuse to comply with *Janus*, including two federal Racketeering Influenced Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act suits against Service Employees International Union (SEIU) in Oregon and Washington. Today, the Freedom Foundation is taking its message of freedom from union tyranny to all public-sector employees, so they know they have a choice when it comes to funding government employee unions.



WASHINGTON POLICY CENTER • washingtonpolicy.org

The most successful and durable environmental policies combine incentives to conserve and the local knowledge to act effectively. Across Washington state and the West, tribes are using their knowledge and incentives to improve forest health, innovate the science of salmon hatcheries, and manage aquaculture. The **Washington Policy Center** produced a series of videos with the Nisqually, Jamestown S'Klallam, and Colville Confederated tribes to highlight their stewardship of natural resources. WPC also partnered with the Inter-tribal Timber Council to publish an analysis of policies to improve the health of federal forests that border tribal lands. The study pushed for expansion of a federal law allowing tribes to thin and harvest unhealthy forests on Forest Service land that put tribal forests at risk.

Finally, working with tribal scientists across the Northwest, WPC published a piece explaining how the process of traditional tribal knowledge—of observation, learning, and adjustment—should act as a model for a more dynamic and effective climate policy. When so much of public policy is stuck in a quagmire of identity politics that pit people against each other, WPC's work with tribes shows that market solutions and incentives can be applied in a wide range of circumstances, benefitting people and the environment.

WEST VIRGINIA

CARDINAL INSTITUTE FOR WEST VIRGINIA POLICY • cardinalinstitute.com

The **Cardinal Institute for West Virginia Policy** released its latest research paper, “Bad Returns,” written by senior fellow Adam Kissel. The paper explores the debt-to-earnings comparisons of recent college graduates in West Virginia. More than 90 degree programs in West Virginia leave students with troubling levels of student debt, affecting approximately 5,500 students per year. The US Department of Education (DOE) College Scorecard reports program-level outcomes for student earnings and debt two years after graduation. Of the 203 assessed programs from West Virginia’s colleges, 21 would fail and 64 would be on probation, according to the DOE’s gainful-employment rule. On the basis of total debt per graduate, an additional eight programs produce graduates with concerning levels of debt. “Degree programs should be held accountable for student outcomes,” Cardinal Institute Executive Director Garrett Ballengee said. “This report empowers stakeholders to know which programs in West Virginia should be investigated and potentially improved or canceled.” The report shows that by these measures, West Virginia’s public institutions of higher education collectively rank 48th among the 50 states. In sharp contrast, associate degree programs perform extremely well in West Virginia, since their graduates’ debt is affordable in relation to their income.



WISCONSIN

BADGER INSTITUTE • badgerinstitute.org

In July, Governor Tony Evers surprised many by signing into law tax reform that reduced Wisconsin’s second-highest individual income tax rate, for a total of \$2 billion in savings. This reform was one of the recommendations the **Badger Institute** and the Tax Foundation put forth in a joint 2019 report, “Wisconsin Tax Options: A Guide to Fair, Simple, Pro-growth Reform.” Wisconsin’s second-highest rate was higher than the top marginal rates in 23 other states (not counting the eight states with no income tax). It kicks in at just more than \$24,000 in taxable income for single filers and \$32,000 for married couples, meaning there will be significant savings for most of the state’s taxpayers as well as small businesses, most of which pay taxes under the individual rather than corporate income tax code. The Institute also led the charge to kill a \$100 million state venture capital program included in the governor’s budget. While Republican legislators stripped most of the governor’s priorities, this one remained until the Badger Institute published an analysis of its shortcomings and organized a free-market coalition in opposition. The measure was quietly dropped.





INSTITUTE FOR REFORMING GOVERNMENT • reforminggovernment.org

The **Institute for Reforming Government** helped advance the “Roadmap to Reading Success” bill out of both chambers of the Wisconsin Legislature and to the governor’s desk. The bipartisan, childhood literacy bill would improve screening in public schools, give parents more information about their children, and increase interventions on children.



WISCONSIN INSTITUTE FOR LAW & LIBERTY • will-law.org

The **Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty** launched the Equality Under the Law Project in 2021 to challenge unconstitutional race discrimination, quotas, and critical race theory. This project aims to uphold the rule of law and ensure that all Americans can confidently trust their rights are not dependent on the color of their skin, their nation of origin, the God they worship, or whom their ancestors happened to be. WILL sued the federal government, twice, challenging unconstitutional race discrimination in programs associated with the federal COVID-relief bill passed in March 2021. WILL represented twelve farmers from nine states in a challenge to a farmer loan forgiveness program available only to members of certain races. Similarly, WILL filed a federal lawsuit, on behalf of a Tennessee restaurant owner, against the US Small Business Administration over race and gender discrimination in the administration of the \$28.6 billion Restaurant Revitalization Fund. In both lawsuits, federal courts halted the programs citing unconstitutional race discrimination.

AMERICAN CONSUMER INSTITUTE • theamericanconsumer.org

In 2021 the **American Consumer Institute** has continued to meet its mission of identifying how government policies (proposed or implemented) will affect consumers. In undertaking this work, ACI has engaged on a wide range of issues, from data privacy to food delivery fees and environmental regulations. ACI staff have published op-eds in national outlets such as *RealClearPolicy*, *Townhall.com*, *Forbes*, *The Hill*, and *The Morning Consult*. The national impact of these outlets and the ideologically diverse audiences they reach enables ACI to educate a significant number of American consumers. This year, ACI successfully launched a podcast, *Policy-ish Talk*, that raises awareness on major policy issues. ACI has also undertaken several research projects that highlight the dangers of government intervention to American consumers. In September, for example, ACI released a study that showed municipal broadband, or government-operated networks, will “do little to lower their costs or increase broadband subscribership,” raise prices, and leave “taxpayers on the hook for millions of dollars in government debt.” ACI has studies scheduled that outline the purpose of for-profit colleges and demonstrate the profound damage further freight rail regulation could cause to the American economy.



AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE • aei.org

Over the past year, the **American Enterprise Institute** continued to lead the most important debates facing the nation during this unprecedented time. AEI's scholars fought for good ideas, beat back bad ones, and informed policy responses to some of today's most pressing challenges. AEI's Scott Gottlieb released *The New York Times* bestselling book, *Uncontrolled Spread*, on how to better prepare for the next pandemic. The education team launched the Conservative Education Reform Network and the Return to Learn Tracker, a first-of-its-kind tool that provided the most timely and comprehensive information on how schools were operating during the pandemic. The defense team created the Defense Futures Simulator, which is informing policymakers and the public about how various defense strategies are translated into concrete budget choices. AEI also launched a vital center of ideas for advancing constitutionalism and a principled governing agenda in the now fully established Social, Cultural, and Constitutional Studies department. Across research areas, AEI welcomed more than 20 new resident and visiting scholars and fellows who will help position the Institute to continue having a major impact on the policy debates in the years ahead. At a time when the tide in America appears to have briefly turned against the nation's core values, AEI remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing free enterprise, individual liberty, and opportunity for all. To learn more, please contact AEICoalitions@aei.org.



AMERICAN LEGISLATIVE EXCHANGE COUNCIL • alec.org

The 2021 **American Legislative Exchange Council** Annual Meeting boasted more than 1,600 attendees, including 500 state legislators, representing 49 states. ALEC Annual Meeting attendees gathered to discuss and debate some of the most important policy challenges facing states today, and legislators proffered nearly 40 solutions as ALEC model policy, 24 of which were enacted. New model policies include deregulating technology innovation (based on Arizona law), encouraging a cost-effective and energy efficient economy (based on Utah law), and encouraging physician and medical school collaboration to improve access to primary care. All 24 model policies are ready to be introduced in state legislatures to promote limited government, freer markets, and federalism across the states. These policies and more can be found at <https://www.alec.org/tag/am-2021/>.





AMERICA'S FUTURE • americasfuture.org

America's Future exists to develop the next generation of freedom's leaders across civil society, business, culture, and media. For more than 25 years, AF has cultivated the media careers of budding journalists, first through various publications and, since 2017, through the Writing Fellows Program. Now in its fifth year, this program has trained hundreds of young writers to communicate effectively and to get their work published, as well as developed the deep networks that allow journalists to rise through the ranks. In 2021 so far, AF has trained 104 young writers, and alumni have been publishing their op-eds at a rate of more than 1,000 a month since June. If the pace keeps up, AF Writing Fellows alum will have published at least 10,000 articles by the end of this year. Program director Matt Purple, online editor of the *American Spectator*, curates a list of expert instructors that include editors, communications directors, and media influencers. Participants include junior staff at state-based and national think tanks, aspiring journalists, and press secretaries for members of Congress.



BECKET • beckletlaw.org

In June, the Supreme Court handed **Becket** a 9–0 unanimous decision in *Fulton et al. v. City of Philadelphia* protecting faith-based foster and adoption agencies from being shut down because of their traditional views on marriage, making it crystal clear that the government can't discriminate against faith-based groups for their beliefs. In August, Becket won a major ruling from an Indiana district court in *Starkey v. Roncalli High School and Archdiocese of Indianapolis* which protected a Catholic school's right to choose its guidance counselors. At stake were ministerial exception and church autonomy, the principles by which a religious school—just like a church—must be free to make its own decisions when it comes to choosing its religious leaders. Becket also blocked the Biden administration's transgender mandate, which would have forced doctors and hospitals to perform gender transition procedures on their patients (including children) even if it violated their best medical judgment and sincere religious beliefs. In 2020, Becket became the first nonprofit law firm to be placed on the *National Law Journal's* "Hot List" for its "success before the Supreme Court and federal appeals courts." In 2021, Becket earned the honor again. It is the only nonprofit to earn the honor in two consecutive years.



COMPETITIVE ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE • cei.org

The **Competitive Enterprise Institute** has weighed in against civil asset forfeiture in a report aimed at helping motorists avoid or curtail problematic interactions with law enforcement officials. Adjunct senior fellow Dan Greenberg authored the report, entitled "They're Taking My Stuff! What You Need to Know about Seizure and Forfeiture." New to CEI's legal team is Robert Carter, senior attorney, whose research focuses on civil forfeiture and property rights. CEI is also happy to welcome Paul H. Jossey, adjunct fellow and cryptocurrency policy expert, and Ryan Nabil, research fellow with CEI's Center for Technology and Innovation who advocates domestic and international technology policies that promote freedom to innovate. View CEI's roster of experts by visiting <https://cei.org/about/team/>.

DONORSTRUST • donorstrust.org

Where can donors find new groups to support? While *SPN News* is a good place to start, how can a donor with a particular interest area see who rises to the top? **DonorsTrust** has launched the Giving Ventures podcast to help charitable givers discover new opportunities to change the world for the better. Twice a month, the Giving Ventures podcast will highlight several nonprofit efforts, initiatives, and projects that leverage private philanthropy to solve public problems. In the first two episodes, Giving Ventures explored “New Approaches to Reducing Poverty” and heard from “Happy Warriors in the Tax Fight.” Episodes on education, marriage and family, magazines, passing on the ideas of liberty, and much more are in the works. Visit donorstrust.org/podcast or search for Giving Ventures in your favorite podcast app.



EDCHOICE • edchoice.org

EdChoice is grateful to be back to attending conferences and hosting trainings in person to better support state and national partners in pursuit of expanded educational opportunity for all families. EdChoice looks forward to building on the “Year of School Choice” in 2022 and beyond.



FIRST LIBERTY INSTITUTE • firstliberty.org

First Liberty Institute filed a friend-of-the-court brief at the US Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit on behalf of the Babylon Bee, LLC, and Not the Bee, LLC, in *NetChoice, LLC, et al. v. Attorney General of Florida, et al.* In that case, the court will review a Florida law that prohibits social media platforms from inconsistently applying their content standards to target disfavored speakers or viewpoints. “Social media giants have lied to the public about allowing intellectual diversity on their platforms and are selectively applying their standards to censor disfavored conservative and religious speech,” said Jordan Pratt, senior counsel for First Liberty Institute. “Florida’s law is a basic consumer-protection regulation that simply holds social media platforms accountable to the image of neutrality that they project, and it is consistent with federal law and the First Amendment.” The Babylon Bee, LLC, is a Florida-based Christian satire website that sheds light on faith, politics, and culture through humor and parody. Not the Bee, LLC, is a Christian news website that runs entirely accurate headlines one might expect to find in The Babylon Bee. Both sites have experienced censorship and shadow-banning by social media platforms.



THE FREE STATE FOUNDATION • freestatefoundation.org

The **Free State Foundation** was proud to celebrate its 15th anniversary on Oct. 15, 2021, at a luncheon held at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. Speakers at the event included Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Commissioners Brendan Carr and Nathan Simington, former Acting FCC Chairman and Commissioner Mignon Clyburn, former FCC Commissioner Michael O’Rielly, and former FCC Cable Bureau Chief Deborah Lathen. The event also featured a special commemorative video, in which many friends of FSF offered their congratulations on the anniversary and on FSF’s impact advancing free-market, property-rights-protective, and rule-of-law-oriented principles and policies. The commemorative video featured Sen. Marsha Blackburn; Congressman Bob Latta; former Congressman Greg Walden; former Acting Attorney General of the United States Jeffrey Rosen; former FCC Chairmen Richard Wiley, Mark Fowler, William Kennard, Michael Powell, and Ajit Pai; and former FCC Commissioners Robert McDowell, Meredith Attwell Baker, Kathleen Abernathy, and Harold Furchtgott-Roth; former Register of Copyrights Karyn Temple; and many other special friends.





FREE TO CHOOSE NETWORK • freetochoosenetwork.org

Free to Choose Network is releasing a new documentary film, creating a dynamic online civics education course, and producing a new web series featuring Johan Norberg. Wealth distribution and inequality are hotly debated topics. But who supports government policies that shift money and power from the poor and middle class to the wealthy? FTCN explores the many strands of cronyism in *Corporate Welfare: Where's the Outrage?* Scheduled to air on PBS-World Sept. 5 at 7 p.m. EST, the program takes viewers across America to talk with individuals whose lives and livelihood have been directly affected by the outrages of corporate welfare. FTCN can create customized kits for SPN affiliates to host a film screening in your state. Civics Fundamentals with Judge Douglas Ginsburg is a series of 100 two-minute videos that answer and provide context to the 100 questions on the US citizenship test. Civics Fundamentals also features a teacher's guide, discussion questions, downloadable flash cards, and more, all available at no cost at www.civicsfundamentals.org. This resource can be used as a turnkey civics class or as a study guide for immigrants seeking citizenship through the naturalization exam. The project is being released through izzit.org, FTCN's education initiative.



INSTITUTE FOR FREE SPEECH • ifs.org

In the most important ruling for freedom of association in more than six decades, the Supreme Court struck down a California mandate that nonprofits soliciting funds in the state reveal their major donors to state officials. The decision in *Americans for Prosperity Foundation v. Bonta* is the culmination of years of litigation begun by the **Institute for Free Speech** in 2014. The Institute filed amicus briefs at multiple stages in the case, and its brief to the Supreme Court was one of only four discussed by the justices at oral argument. In addition, the Institute organized a large coalition of groups spanning the ideological spectrum to file or join amicus briefs in support of the challenge, which the Court noticed. Following the decision, many laws requiring the exposure of nonprofit donors to the government are vulnerable to a legal challenge. To explain the Court's landmark ruling and its impact, the Institute published a detailed primer at link.ifs.org/AFP. While the decision is by no means an end to the fight to defend privacy in association, the ruling will hopefully lead to more First Amendment victories.



THE JESSE HELMS CENTER
ESTABLISHED 1988

THE JESSE HELMS CENTER • jessehelscenter.org

The Jesse Helms Center concluded a successful summer leading training camps for high school students on principles of leadership, free enterprise, and America's founding. Camps are held on college campuses around the southeastern United States. The Free Enterprise Leadership Challenge, known as FELC, is in its 27th year. During that time, FELC has graduated more than 10,700 young people in 35 states and 18 countries around the world. Last year the coronavirus pandemic forced the cancellation of in-person camps. The Center introduced a virtual experience of FELC, offering the same training and also expanding the program's reach. The fifth virtual camp in Aug. 2021 attracted students from five countries in the Americas, Europe, and the Middle East. One of the graduates said, "I've learned more about leadership in the past five days than I feel I've learned my whole life." For more information, visit www.felcexperience.org. The Free Enterprise Now program, which provides curriculum, tools, and resources to teachers and home-school educators, celebrated Constitution Day on Sept. 17. Team members mailed more than 2,400 pocket-sized copies of the US Constitution to dozens of classrooms.

LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE • leadershipinstitute.org

Americans want public school reform. Conservatives have turned to **Leadership Institute's** School Board Campaign Training for help. Already, more than 1,220 activists and leaders have signed up to learn how to win back their local school boards. Sen. Ted Cruz, in his School Board Campaign Training lecture, said it well: "Together, standing up for common sense—for the values that built our nation—we can defend against our children being taught hatred and discrimination and lies." Partner with Leadership Institute to run an in-person School Board Campaign Training or send your conservative friends to the online training via <https://teachable.leadershipinstitute.org/p/schoolboard>. Please share this free resource with quality conservatives in your network.



PROPERTY AND ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH CENTER • perc.org

Property and Environment Research Center's biggest success this year was putting its private, market-based wildlife conservation solution into action through the first Elk Occupancy Agreement in Montana. With this agreement, PERC partnered with a ranching landowner outside of Yellowstone National Park and the Greater Yellowstone Coalition to reduce human-wildlife conflict and conserve elk migrations. This exciting opportunity brings together private landowners and organizations to advance a conservation outcome without relying on government interference, regulation, or funding. To conserve wildlife migration pathways in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, wildlife must be a benefit, not a cost, for the private landowners who provide critical habitat. Yet migrating elk eat the forage ranchers need for their livestock and can spread disease to cows. With the Elk Occupancy Agreement, PERC and supporters are paying a rancher to allow elk to graze a section of the ranch while fencing cattle out of the elk-occupied area to reduce the risk of disease spread. This innovative agreement is financially rewarding the landowner for providing habitat for the elk of Yellowstone as they move along their migration corridor—a win-win for the ranch and the elk.



STEAMBOAT INSTITUTE • steamboatinstitute.org

Because of the relentless efforts of one of **Steamboat Institute's** Emerging Leaders Council (ELC) members, 21,000 college students in South Carolina will study the US Constitution, Declaration of Independence, and Federalist Papers this fall. For his efforts, Jameson Broggi, member of SI's ELC since 2019, was recognized with Steamboat Institute's Courage in Education award, presented at SI's Annual Freedom Conference in Beaver Creek in August. This award is given annually to an institution or member of academia who demonstrates a commitment to open inquiry, free speech, and intellectual diversity. Jameson is the first student to receive this award. Jameson succeeded in getting South Carolina to pass the Reinforcing College Education on America's Constitutional Heritage (REACH) Act. This law, which Jameson championed tirelessly for eight years, beginning when he was an undergraduate student at the University of South Carolina, requires all first-year students at public colleges in South Carolina to receive a course in which they will read America's founding documents. Governor Henry McMaster invited Jameson to the bill signing in May, and the South Carolina Legislature recognized him for his efforts.



THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION • heritage.org

The Heritage Foundation and SPN have a long history of working together to advance conservative policy solutions that help fellow Americans flourish. This partnership sustains as new tools and technologies proliferate. For example, Heritage has developed robust engagement across its social and digital platforms, reaching more than 120 million followers, fans, viewers, and visitors. A recent snapshot shows that this powerful reach has included 58 features of SPN and affiliates, 19 SPN-authored pieces, and numerous podcast interviews with SPN leaders. In other words, roughly twice a week, Heritage's audience got a taste of the amazing work SPN does—through bylines, quotes, and links back to sites and projects. Heritage celebrated this partnership as the sponsor of the SPN Communications Excellence Awards at SPN's Annual Meeting. "We're proud to do our part to build your brands, amplify your storytelling, and expand your audiences," said Andy Olivastro, Heritage's Director of Coalition Relations. "Thank you for the trust you have in us to help tell your stories. Thank you for your leadership in your homes, states, and across the country. We're thrilled to sponsor this evening and celebrate the award winners."

THE PHILANTHROPY ROUNDTABLE • philanthropyroundtable.org

Philanthropy Roundtable presented investor and philanthropist William E. "Bill" Oberndorf with the 2021 Simon-DeVos Prize for Philanthropic Leadership, an award that recognizes a living philanthropist who has shown exemplary leadership through charitable giving. Oberndorf is chairman of the American Federation for Children and the American Federation for Children Growth Fund, the nation's largest school choice advocacy and education organizations. The American Federation for Children is "a merger of a number of predecessor organizations, which empowers families, especially lower-income families, with the freedom to choose the best K-12 education for their children. The organization accomplishes this mission by electing education reformers, passing high quality education reforms and advocating for families, telling their stories and informing them of their education options. Oberndorf credits the organization with changing the trajectory of students' lives, and AFC points to research that shows students who participate in school choice programs have higher test scores and better outcomes. Learn more about Oberndorf and the Simon-DeVos Prize for Philanthropic Leadership at philanthropyroundtable.org.

Safeguard the Future with Your Legacy



■ **Thomas Roe**, a successful businessman and advisor to President Reagan, created the State Policy Network so there would be a champion for freedom and opportunity in every state. With your partnership, we can preserve the power of state solutions and the profound impact they have on the lives of Americans now and into the future.

Joining the Thomas Roe Legacy Society

Become a member of our legacy society by making your estate plans known to SPN, such as:

- A **simple bequest** that remembers SPN in your will.
- An estate gift of **publicly traded stock**.
- A **life insurance policy** that designates SPN as a beneficiary.
- A **bank, investment, or retirement account** that designates SPN as a beneficiary.
- A **gift in trust**.
- Other estate gifts in accordance with SPN's gift acceptance guidelines.



We would love to speak with you and help you clarify the legacy you'd like to leave. To begin this conversation, please contact Cindy Kilduff at 703-243-1655 or kilduff@spn.org.

Learn More: [SPN.org/Legacy](https://spn.org/Legacy)


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As a member, you will be recognized on a plaque at SPN's headquarters and will receive special event invitations, a token of our appreciation, and the peace of mind that comes with knowing you are making an extraordinary impact on the future of our country.



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