



State Solutions. National Impact.

WINTER 2023



Celebrating 30 Years of Impact

At SPN's 30th Annual Meeting, we celebrated the success of the 50-state Network and the victories 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 64 independent state think tank affiliates, over 66 state partners in key capacities, 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 I look back and take stock of all you made possible in 2022, I am so grateful for your partnership with SPN and this incredible 50-state Network. From pushing back against federal government overreach in the courts to advancing much-needed education reforms, you've helped us achieve critical policy victories that lead to transformational change in the states.

While there is still much work to be done, SPN is prepared to continue this momentum into 2023. Because of you, our Network has never been better positioned to provide state leaders with the strategies, plans, and customized policy solutions necessary to win in the states. While DC is spinning its wheels, the states are getting in gear to accelerate pragmatic, commonsense solutions that work for everyday Americans.

In this issue of *SPN News*, we're celebrating the growth and impact of our movement by giving you highlights from SPN's 30th Annual Meeting. Annual Meeting gathers leaders from across the country to solve the biggest challenges facing Americans. Annual Meeting is where the "magic happens" each year and the strategies are set that propel victories in the states the next year. In 2022, we had record-breaking attendance, with over 1,400 attendees from 440 organizations and 48 states (as well as DC and Canada).

After two years of historic progress, momentum for K-12 education reform will only continue in 2023. Once a state passes a school choice program, we need fertile ground for education providers to come in and offer alternatives for families without facing government red tape. In this issue, SPN education policy fellow Kerry McDonald discusses how the education landscape is changing, the rise of education entrepreneurs, and how states can help cultivate innovation and new ideas in the education space.

As we celebrate our 30th anniversary, we're remembering a leader in the liberty movement and longtime Network supporter, Dick Jackson, who sadly passed away in 2020. Dick was the co-founder of the Maine Policy Institute and a champion of free-market solutions that promote opportunity and economic prosperity. We spoke with Dick's son, Bill Jackson, on his father's legacy, why he supported SPN, and why he believed so deeply in preserving the American Founders' vision of a limited, constitutional government.

Thanks to your partnership, we have laid the groundwork for good policies to take root and create meaningful change. Thank you for all that you do to support freedom and opportunity in the states.

Take care,

Tracie Sharp

President and CEO
State Policy Network





Celebrating 30 Years of Changing Lives

Annual Meeting serves as a powerful reminder of the strength and connectivity of the 50-state Network.

Thirty years ago, a small group of policy visionaries came together with a purpose: to advance state policy solutions that would improve American lives and prove that we do not need top-down mandates from Washington, DC, to solve our problems. Today, State Policy Network includes 64 state think tanks, 66 state partners in key capacities (such as litigation, investigative journalism, and leadership academies), and more than 90 national partners dedicated to advancing policies that provide Americans more personal freedom and opportunity.

Each year, Annual Meeting serves as the premier conference for leaders and organizations in the liberty movement. Thanks to SPN's generous supporters, Annual Meeting provides the Network with opportunities to build meaningful connections, sharpen strategies, and share ideas to leverage state solutions that have national impact. Network leaders also use Annual Meeting as a time to look at the national landscape to chart a course forward, driving the policy agenda and debate in the states in the coming year. This year, we had record-breaking attendance, with over 1,400 individuals representing more than 440 organizations from 48 states (in addition to two Canadian provinces and Washington, DC). Because of your partnership, this Network has become better, faster, and stronger, and has created durable freedom movements capable of lasting change.

By the Numbers:

1,421

total attendees

440

organizations representing

48

states (in addition to two Canadian provinces and Washington, DC)

43

Generation Liberty Fellows representing 23 states (in addition to Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico)

Over \$1 million

in sponsorships raised

Annual Meeting Highlights

Keynote sessions inspire leaders and organizations: A key theme at this year's Annual Meeting was the role of individuals in creating powerful movements for change. At the keynote sessions, Annual Meeting attendees heard from talent experts, renowned speakers, and Network leaders who shared stories of inspiration and the impact of state policy solutions. As a Chick-fil-A employee for over 30 years, Dee Ann Turner helped to shape the company's well-recognized culture and talent programs. Attendees walked away from the session with a deeper understanding of how to recruit, select, and keep extraordinary talent, and how to advance their organization's mission to have maximum impact. In another keynote, Ron Tite, entrepreneur and best-selling author, shared how organizations can adapt and grow to meet the challenges the future brings.

SPN also featured a panel of leaders from the Network whose stories got to the heart of our work—helping real people solve real problems in communities across the country without federal government intrusion. Taylor Dawson, director of outreach and digital media at the Beacon Center of Tennessee, shared the value of listening to the needs of those in our communities and how to elevate their voices to effect meaningful change. Tony Kitchens, a member of the Georgia Center for Opportunity's board of directors, told his inspiring story of going from incarceration to helping other former prisoners transition into society and find meaningful work. And David Kirby, the founder of Acton Academy, spoke about the importance of challenging the status quo, especially when it comes to the education of our children.



Timely policy discussions: Annual Meeting featured numerous sessions that covered key issues like education policy; state budget policies; Environmental, Social, and Governance investing (ESG), and environmental policies; federal oversight; and state-level healthcare reform. Sessions provided attendees with ways to expand education reform in the states and use the power of the courts to check the federal government. Other sessions shared policy recommendations that have helped strengthen state economies and offered ways to cut red tape to address housing crises in the states.



Generation Liberty Fellowship Program: Recruiting the Next Generation of Leaders

SPN's Generation Liberty Fellowship program invites select young professionals to Annual Meeting for a unique opportunity to connect with Network leaders and explore curated professional development. These individuals come from diverse backgrounds, including public policy, government, and corporate industry. The program brings individuals together to solve the unique challenges that states face, and to learn about how other participants are tackling similar issues in their communities.

"The Generation Liberty Fellowship and attending the SPN Annual Meeting really gives you a sense that you are a part of something greater—that your work is part of a larger movement to boost our nation one state at a time."

— André Béliveau, 2022 GLF fellow

"The Generation Liberty Fellowship helped me understand the breadth and depth of the liberty network and opened up a new world of opportunities. Ten years after doing the fellowship, I run a nonprofit organization that collaborates with many of the groups that I first became familiar with at GLF. I am forever grateful for GLF!"

— Casey Given, GLF alumnus

This year's program hosted 43 Generation Liberty Fellows from 23 states (in addition to Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico).

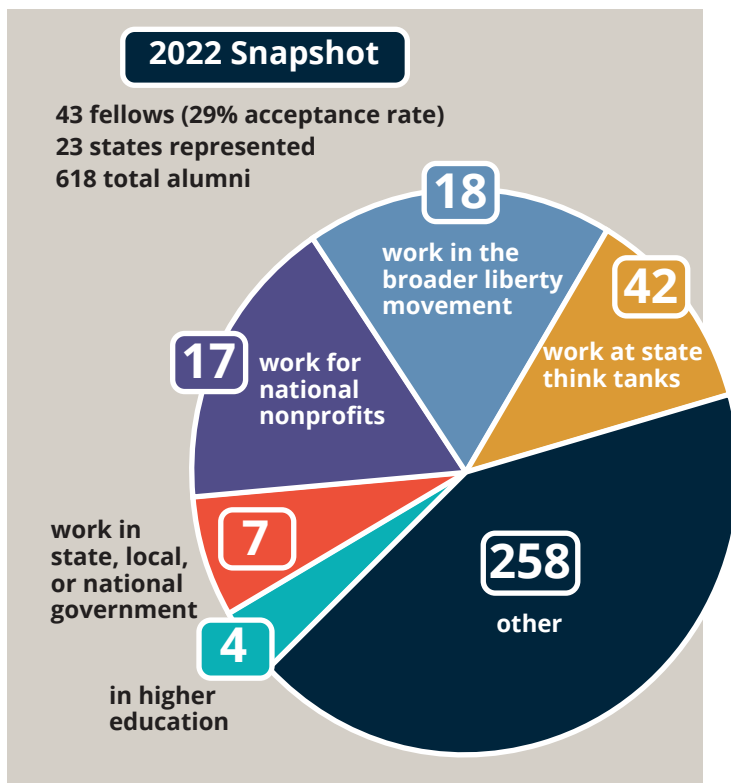


Celebrating Policy Wins and Outstanding State Leadership

2022 THOMAS A. ROE AWARD: Named after Thomas A. Roe, founder of State Policy Network, this award honors leaders whose achievements have advanced and expanded free-market policy solutions in the states. This year, SPN recognized the leadership of Georgia Center for Opportunity (GCO) CEO and president **Randy Hicks**. Randy has led the GCO team to create successful statewide initiatives that improve education outcomes and connect members of the community, regardless of their past or where they come from, with opportunities for meaningful work.



2022 OVERTON AWARD: This award recognizes nonprofit leaders in the Network who embody the qualities of leadership, loyalty, humility, and support for the cause of liberty. This year's recipient was **Greg Sindelar**, CEO of the Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF). Greg has served at TPPF for over 15 years and is responsible for overseeing TPPF's policy, communication, development, and engagement efforts.



"Every year the State Policy Network Annual Meeting is the go-to event on my calendar. My colleagues and I always return to Michigan with new ideas, new connections, and renewed motivation. Thank you to all who put on the conference and all who make it possible!"

— Michael Reitz, Mackinac Center for Public Policy



Bob Williams Awards for Outstanding Policy Achievement

This year's Bob Williams Awards were especially memorable as we honored policy maven Bob Williams, who sadly passed away earlier this year. Bob was a dedicated public servant and a nationally recognized expert in the areas of fiscal and tax policy. But perhaps more importantly, he was a mentor and friend to many members of this Network. SPN's vice president of programs Todd Davidson recalls the impact Bob had on him when he first entered the liberty movement: "Every time I talked to Bob, he would ask me, 'How can I help you?' It was a simple question, and it was so powerful. He helped me become a better policy wonk, a better advocate, and most importantly, Bob helped me become a better person." Bob's legacy of service inspires us to forge ahead with our work in the states, no matter the challenges we might face.

BIGGEST HOME STATE WIN: The **John Locke Foundation** was recognized for critical efforts that helped to pass North Carolina's First in Freedom Budget, putting more money back into the pockets of hardworking North Carolinians. The budget reduces the personal income tax rate, increases the standard deduction, eliminates the state's corporate income tax by 2029, and expands the Opportunity Scholarship Program and Educations Savings Accounts for special needs students.

BIGGEST WIN FOR FREEDOM: **Empower Mississippi** and the **Mississippi Center for Public Policy** received the award for their efforts to pass the Mississippi Tax Freedom Act, the largest tax reform in Mississippi history. Both organizations launched rigorous messaging campaigns, which helped convince state lawmakers to pass tax reform.

MOST INFLUENTIAL RESEARCH: **Georgia Center for Opportunity** was recognized for a study that highlighted the impact of stringent government lockdowns during COVID on employment and the long-term recovery of local economies.

BEST ISSUE CAMPAIGN: The **Commonwealth Foundation** was recognized for its work advancing the Lifeline Scholarship Program, which gives nearly \$7,000 to low-income students to spend on approved education expenses.

NETWORK AWARD: The **Buckeye Institute, Pelican Institute for Public Policy, Liberty Justice Center, Mississippi Justice Institute, Texas Public Policy Foundation, and Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty** won the Network Award for their momentous victory against the Biden administration's vaccine mandate for large businesses. The debate wasn't about vaccines but about forcing employees to make private healthcare decisions at the risk of losing their jobs. The litigation efforts of these organizations paid off when the US Supreme Court ruled that employers were no longer forced to make personal medical decisions for their employees.

Championing Education Innovation in the States

Thanks to the generosity of the Walton Family Foundation, SPN recognized the achievements of education innovators through our 2022 Ed Prize Awards:

ASU Prep for its toolkit, "Microschool in a Box," which will allow ASU Prep to collaborate with local entrepreneurs, parents, and education leaders to launch microschools.

Great Hearts Academies, which plans to recruit, train, and license a microschool founder this year and establish 10 microschools by the 2023–24 school year.

Hearts of Empowerment in Washington, DC, for its PACT Community Hub, which seeks to offer educational opportunities through mentorship programs.

RESCHOOL in Colorado, which will launch a local learner advocate network and a Design Lab, opening up digital resources to the public.



Powerful Messaging Creates Powerful Change

At our Communications Excellence Awards reception, communication experts from across the Network gathered to celebrate the importance of sharing stories and elevating the voices of those in their communities.

The **Pacific Research Institute** received the Bold Brand Boost award for in-depth research and campaigns that exposed the impact of failed California policies.

The **Commonwealth Foundation** won the Expanding Your Audience Award, which highlighted how Commonwealth reached new audiences to support education freedom and the Lifeline Scholarship Program.

The **Goldwater Institute** won the Powerful Storytelling Award for an op-ed, "Teacher Blows the Whistle on Critical Race Theory in California Schools," which followed a California teacher's discovery of what was being taught in the classroom.



"Annual Meeting has been fantastic. There's so much youth and energy, and people communicating effectively, working together, and they love America."

— Paul Farago, SPN supporter



"State Policy Network's Annual Meeting is the one conference that I never miss. Annual Meeting is an explosion of hope, ideas, and community. The future of our country depends on the success of our state, and State Policy Network is leading that effort at their Annual Meeting."

— Matt Paprocki, CEO, Illinois Policy Institute

"If you want to surround yourself with the people and ideas that are truly changing the world, SPN's Annual Meeting is absolutely the place to be."

— Bethany Marcum, CEO, Alaska Policy Forum

"SPN's Annual Meeting is homecoming for the liberty movement. There is no more important gathering to inspire action and deepen the intellectual and personal bonds across those who get up each day to expand liberty for all."

— Peter Lipsett, DonorsTrust

"I think Tom Roe would probably cry seeing all of you here. What a testimony to what his vision was and what you all are doing at the state level."

— Barbara Gaby, Richard and Barbara Gaby Foundation

Removing Barriers to Education Innovation



started an initiative with nationally recognized education expert and *Forbes* columnist Kerry McDonald to better understand what barriers entrepreneurs face when trying to make new education models. McDonald, who is SPN's new Education Policy Fellow, conducted focus groups with real-world education entrepreneurs to find out what stood in their way. She then published a menu of policy recommendations that SPN and our state partners can take and run with in 2023 to remove government barriers to education innovation.

The following is an interview with Kerry McDonald about her work with SPN expanding education innovation in the states.

Why did you partner with SPN on this project?

I've been interested in K-12 innovative learning models for over a decade now. My book *Unschooling: Raising Curious, Well-Educated Children Outside the Conventional Classroom* talks about the growth of the microschool movement and the diversification of the homeschooling population, which is often an experimental ground for entrepreneurship. Through my time pre-2020 and since 2020 talking to education entrepreneurs and writing about them, I heard over and over about various challenges they were encountering to starting and scaling these non-traditional learning models.



GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS OFTEN FAIL TO KEEP UP WITH THE PACE OF INNOVATION.

SPN's Education Entrepreneurs project aims to make it easier for people to create new education models in response to growing demand from parents for more education alternatives.

In the last few years, there has been historic progress for education reform. This year, Arizona passed the largest school choice program in the country, with over 1 million students eligible for the program. West Virginia upheld its expansive Education Savings Account program—the nation's largest as of 2021—in court, and it is now open for students. As more states pass education reforms, are there adequate options to meet parent demand?

The short answer is, not always. In some states like Florida, there are a multitude of education alternatives to the traditional public-school model. But in states that have just passed education reform, there may only be one private school, no charter schools, or laws preventing the formation of hybrid schools or learning pods.

Government regulations often fail to keep up with the pace of innovation. This has been true with new platforms like Uber and Airbnb, and it's also true for education. This year, SPN

Education today is so much broader than schooling, and yet we have regulations that look at educational entities as either "school" or "homeschool." These co-learning, hybrid programs, and learning pods are not either of those things. Many of these learning models are low-cost, private options, often at a fraction of the cost of traditional private schools.

We need to support permissionless innovation and realize by removing regulatory barriers, policymakers can encourage the diversification and growth of these models. We need to be careful around defining what these learning programs are because the benefit of these models is that they don't fit into these neat boxes. They are incredibly creative and agile. We

shouldn't define them so narrowly that we end up preventing whatever's next.

What did you find from your conversations with entrepreneurs?

As part of the project, we conducted focus groups with two dozen entrepreneurs, along with follow-up interviews. One of the major pain points they mentioned was zoning issues. Many of them struggle to find desirable locations suitable for children. They are often thrust into commercial spaces, limited outdoor access, or near busy streets. Childcare licensing laws can be a challenge, too, for learning pods if they are held to the same measures as daycares. This creates headaches and hassles.

Through these conversations, I developed seven concrete policy recommendations that I published in an SPN paper:

1. **Reduce early childhood care licensing requirements for emerging learning models.**
2. **Expand exemptions to childcare licensing regulations.**
3. **Create "innovation tracks" for alternative licensing.**
4. **Ease zoning restrictions.**
5. **Expand homeschooling freedoms.**
6. **Make it easier to start a private school.**
7. **Loosen compulsory school attendance laws.**

What was surprising to me is that these entrepreneurs are so tenacious that they are willing to work through these challenges. In both red and blue states, where they have local approval of private schools instead of the state, there were some locations that simply said, "We don't want any private schools in our communities." Despite that, these entrepreneurs pushed through.

Where are we seeing education entrepreneurship flourish?

We are seeing a concentration of education innovation in states that have fewer regulations in areas like homeschooling and learning pods, and in states that have more school choice.

We are already seeing a flood of entrepreneurship in Arizona. New Hampshire passed an income-based ESA program last fall and now we're seeing growth there. So far 3,000 students have taken advantage of the program, but there are not enough spots for the 40,000 remaining students because there are not enough options.

For policymakers who are hesitant, part of our approach is to show that this is already happening and there is demand for this. These programs exist, they are safe, and students and parents are happy.

You brought education entrepreneurs to SPN's Annual Meeting to meet with SPN supporters and education reformers. Can you tell us their stories?

We brought three entrepreneurs to Annual Meeting to illustrate what we mean by "education entrepreneurs" and how this policy work affects real families.



WE ARE SEEING A CONCENTRATION OF EDUCATION INNOVATION IN STATES THAT HAVE FEWER REGULATIONS IN AREAS LIKE HOMESCHOOLING AND LEARNING PODS, AND IN STATES THAT HAVE MORE SCHOOL CHOICE.

Lorianne Bolotin, an immigrant from the Dominican Republic, became an education innovator during the pandemic when seeking education options for her children amid lockdowns. In the fall of 2021, she turned her New Jersey "pandemic pod" into a microschool when she opened Independence Day Academy in a nearby office park. Lorianne and her husband wanted to create something bigger than just one microschool, so they launched Metsada as a private membership association to cultivate a network of similar learning centers and microschools across the country.



Now that you have published your policy solutions, what is next?

SPN is putting together an action plan with education experts, our state partners, and education supporters to pursue reforms in 2023 and beyond. 2022 was the “discovery” phase and policy development phase. Now, we will work with groups that are ready and willing to remove these barriers to innovation. I have also been working on state-specific analyses that have custom recommendations, for states including Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, West Virginia, and Utah.

In some states, it’s about cultivating a cohort of education entrepreneurs and encouraging it through community support. And those entrepreneurs can potentially be involved in efforts down the road to push for policy change.

SPN’s comparative advantage in doing this is its Network of state partners who are already really interested in this work, who are more familiar with the regulatory challenges on the ground in their states, and who, in many cases, have played a central role in expanding choice policies at the state level.



**THESE PROGRAMS EXIST,
THEY ARE SAFE, AND
STUDENTS AND PARENTS
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Tiffany Pierce began to explore schooling alternatives when her son Liam went to kindergarten in a New York City public school. It wasn’t a good fit, so she pulled him out for homeschooling. That was going well, but she found that she wanted a more collaborative learning option for him. So she built it. In the fall of 2019, Tiffany hired a teacher and created an art-inspired, homeschool learning pod run out of her Queens apartment that brought together local families who wanted a more personalized approach to education. When COVID hit, the co-op doubled in size, pivoting to a fully outside model with pop-up tents in local parks. In 2021, she left New York City and relocated to Charlotte, North Carolina, where she replicated her co-learning program. Now, she hopes to scale her model with mobile classrooms, and help more communities build schooling alternatives.

Jill Perez, a mother of four, pulled her children out of school in the fall of 2020 due to various COVID-related school policies, and launched a “pandemic pod” with other local parents. The pod was so popular that she launched Tranquil Teachings, a formal microschool in rented commercial space in the fall of 2021, serving approximately 40 school-age children with both part-time and full-time options. She recruited former public school teachers from New York and New Jersey who were burnt out with conventional classroom teaching, especially during the COVID response, and wanted more freedom and flexibility. Her microschool continues to grow, and in the spring of 2022, she purchased a building to provide a permanent location for her microschool.

These entrepreneurs collaborated with SPN supporters at Annual Meeting, and we walked away with more ideas to reform the system going forward.

Donor Spotlight:

Dick Jackson

In celebration of our 30th anniversary, SPN is highlighting inspiring supporters who fuel critical work in the states.

As SPN reflects on the accomplishments of this Network over the past 30 years, we are reminded that we are standing on the shoulders of the policy visionaries and giants of the liberty movement who came before us.

One of those visionaries was Dick Jackson.

Born in 1933 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Dick was an entrepreneur and an engineer at heart from an early age. He loved tinkering and even refurbished an old Model-T Ford that had been sitting in a junk pile. He would go on to receive his formal education from Iowa State University and become a mechanical engineer. Dick's entrepreneurial spirit and love of engineering were inherited family traits, as his grandfather founded the steel fabrication company, Pittsburgh Des Moines Steel. The family company was a key contributor to building America's infrastructure from the late 1890s until the early 2000s and served as the steel fabricator and erector for the Gateway Arch in St. Louis and the forked columns of the World Trade Center. After serving as a pilot in the Navy where he flew an anti-submarine aircraft, Dick joined the family business and helped it continue to grow.

Dick and his wife, Anne, imparted the values of hard work and commitment to family to their four children, Lee, Bill, Carol, and David. These lessons were taught on the family property in Sewickley, Pennsylvania, where the family spent time together maintaining the property by putting up split-post fences and raking leaves.



The late Dick Jackson

The Jackson family embodied a culture of philanthropy and instilled this in each of their children by engaging in local community associations and organizations. Dick also shared many of his hobbies, which included flying, sailing, photography, and amateur radio, with his children.

After a successful 30-year career in the steel fabrication business, Dick and Anne retired to Maine, where they remained deeply involved in the community. Anne served as the board chair of the Maine Community Foundation and president of the Portland Museum of Art, and Dick was a staunch advocate for STEM education in schools and coached small business owners in the community.

While living in Maine, Dick realized the need to provide the citizens of Maine with a model that empowered communities and encouraged free-market solutions in the heavily regulated state. He believed that a strong state think tank could provide the intellectual capital to advance substantial policy change. "My dad wanted to preserve and advance the idea that problems were best solved by citizens, communities, and local government," said son Bill Jackson.

Around his kitchen table, along with co-founder Ron Trowbridge, Dick formed the Maine Heritage Policy Center, now known as the Maine Policy Institute, which focuses on promoting individual liberty, economic freedom, and the power of the free-market system. Maine Policy Institute's director of operations, Heather Noyes, remembers Dick as a passionate advocate not only for



Dick Jackson changed Maine, bettered America, and mentored me to work hard and do big things. He was a builder—of people and of institutions. But most of all, Dick loved his family, his country, and the freedom and free markets that built America into the greatest country on earth.”

the Maine state think tank but for the ideals of individual freedom, liberty, and natural rights.

“Dick believed in organizations that came together to fight on behalf of the individual,” she said. “He had a deep love for this country and was invested in its future.” Maine Policy Institute celebrated its 20th anniversary this November and credits much of its success to Dick’s leadership and guidance through the years.

Dick was a loyal donor to SPN for over a decade and believed in its mission to return power to communities and localities. He attended many of SPN’s Annual Meetings over the years and was inspired that the Annual Meeting continually convened leaders from across the country who were actively working together to solve problems at the state level.

“My dad recognized SPN as action-oriented, where a good idea in one state could be shared and then built upon in another state,” said Bill. “He viewed SPN as critical infrastructure for organizations like Maine Policy Institute to learn how to advance policies further and faster.”

Dick was also deeply invested in cultivating the next generation of leaders. Tarren Bragdon, now CEO of the Foundation for Government Accountability, shared the impact that Dick had on him as a young leader when he became CEO of the Maine Policy Institute in 2008. “Dick gave me my first CEO job and saw potential in me I didn’t yet see in myself. Like so

many, I was blessed by his mentorship and generosity and forever changed as a result,” said Tarren. Under Tarren’s leadership, Maine Policy Institute flourished, and he received SPN’s prestigious Thomas Roe Award, which recognizes leaders who have advanced free-market principles.

“Dick Jackson changed Maine, bettered America, and mentored me to work hard and do big things. He was a builder—of people and of institutions,” said Tarren. “But most of all, Dick loved his family, his country, and the freedom and free markets that built America into the greatest country on earth.”

Leaders like Dick Jackson are the cornerstone of the 50-state Network and fuel critical work in the states. Dick’s legacy of philanthropy and love of country inspires us to forge ahead and secure a path to personal freedom and economic opportunity for all Americans.

STATE THINK TANK AFFILIATE UPDATES

*The updates provided reflect activities by the time of submission for publication.
For real-time updates from the Network, please visit SPN.org.*



ALABAMA

ALABAMA POLICY INSTITUTE • alabamapolicy.org

In 2021, the leadership of the **Alabama Policy Institute** formed 1819 News, Rightside Radio, and the Alabama Center for Law and Liberty (ACLL). A year later, API (and its three affiliated organizations) is seeing the fruit of its labor. 1819 News has quickly become a leader in unbiased, quality news reporting and conservative opinion writing; Rightside Radio has become the highest rated afternoon conservative talk show in north Alabama; and ACLL has quickly made an impact in the state by taking on cases and policy positions that were designed to rebuff government overreach and civil liberties encroachment. API continues to hold the state government accountable and recently called on state legislators to provide at least \$750 million in permanent tax relief for Alabamians.



ALASKA

ALASKA POLICY FORUM • alaskapolicyforum.org

The Alaska Reads Act is **Alaska Policy Forum's** biggest success of 2022. This nonpartisan bill was a historic victory and the culmination of nine years of work by APF conveying the extent of state's early literacy crisis. APF was recognized for this achievement as a finalist for SPN's Bob Williams Award for Outstanding Policy Achievement—Biggest Home State Win. But most important, the reforms included in the Alaska Reads Act can change the lives of Alaska's children, equipping them with the foundation they need to be successful adults, leading not only to their personal success but to healthier communities and a more vibrant economy. Another achievement is the launch of APF's Alaska Leadership Academy (ALA), an eight-session program designed to educate, equip, and connect experienced and emerging leaders in Alaska. The program is based on the enduring freedom principles of America, and graduates will be positioned to grow as visionary and principled thought leaders who can guide Alaska's future. The inaugural session was held in October, and topics included the free market, ethical leadership, on-camera media training, and crisis management. APF also commissioned a comprehensive study from the Tax Foundation, "Unsustainable Spending." The study, released in October, considers what personal taxes would mean for Alaska's economy. APF shared this report with policymakers to ensure they have the most up-to-date information, and its author has also been featured on local media, to better inform Alaska's citizens.



ARIZONA

GOLDWATER INSTITUTE • goldwaterinstitute.org

This year, the **Goldwater Institute** enacted first-in-the-nation legislation to expand Right to Try to include individualized treatments. Championed by policymakers and patient advocates alike, this essential expansion allows patients to access cutting-edge treatments that are tailored to their individual needs. Additionally, Goldwater received the Atlas Network's prestigious North America Liberty Prize for its Breaking Down Barriers to Work project, an effort to expand the universal recognition of occupational licenses to all 50 states. Goldwater's project is also a finalist for the 2022 Templeton Freedom Award, which recognizes excellence in policy reform.

ARKANSAS

ARKANSAS POLICY FOUNDATION • arkansaspolicyfoundation.org

The **Arkansas Policy Foundation** reports acceleration of the income tax reduction enacted by Gov. Asa Hutchinson and the state legislature. The action reduces the state income tax from 5.5 percent to 4.9 percent, retroactive to Jan. 1, 2022. It means the income tax rate is the lowest in Arkansas state history. Throughout its 28-year history, the Foundation has advanced two policy arguments for reducing the income tax rate. First, Arkansas payroll employment growth has trailed states in the region without an income tax through multiple business cycles. These states are Florida, Tennessee, and Texas, with cycles occurring from 1991–2001, 2001–2007, and 2009–2020. Second, state surpluses tend to occur in periods of economic expansion, not recessions. Arkansas ended the 2021–22 fiscal year with a record \$1.6 billion surplus because the US economy is in an expansion. Since Gov. Hutchinson took office in 2015, the top Arkansas income tax rate has declined from 7 percent to 4.9 percent. The first phase of the income tax cut in 2015 was targeted to benefit low- and middle-income taxpayers, while later parts reduced rates for upper-income counterparts. A video of Gov. Hutchinson speaking at the Policy Foundation's 20th anniversary event is posted at arkansaspolicyfoundation.org.



CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA POLICY CENTER • californiapolicycenter.org

Membership in California's government unions has hit a 20-year low since the 2018 Supreme Court decision in *Janus v. AFSCME*. Documents from over 100 government agencies obtained by **California Policy Center** (CPC) show 27 percent of California's government employees have decided to opt-out of union membership. This is a huge decrease since the landmark decision, which held that governments cannot require their employees to join unions as a condition of employment. CPC has invested \$4.5 million in helping California government workers resign from their unions and estimates that the state's public sector unions have lost a total of 330,000 potential members, annually diverting an estimated \$300 million away from government unions. Documents show a steep decline in union membership where CPC has deployed its resources; without intervention, union membership remains even or in some cases increases as government employment across the state balloons. The unions' massive loss of dues is money the unions no longer have to finance campaigns, engage in political activism or lobby government officials, a key purpose of CPC's *Janus* project.



PACIFIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE • pacificresearch.org

Pacific Research Institute's 2022 policy agenda shows that even in a blue state, bipartisan consensus can grow around market-based ideas. PRI's top priority was fixing the costly and burdensome California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). PRI's "The CEQA Gauntlet" report, which includes a map illustrating the law's outrageous bureaucracy, showed how the legislation holds up new housing and wildfire prevention and climate change projects. Following the report's publication, lawmakers acted to close a CEQA loophole threatening the admission of thousands of prospective University of California—Berkeley students. PRI's Lance Izumi shows in his new book, *The Homeschool Boom*, that homeschooling is a realistic option for families across religious, racial, and political divides—even for special needs students. The book has drawn national attention as public school enrollment continues to decline. SPN recognized PRI's communications efforts promoting these two projects with a prestigious Communications Excellence Award. Another key priority for PRI was stopping a push by liberals in the California Legislature for government healthcare.





COLORADO

INDEPENDENCE INSTITUTE • i2i.org

Independence Institute continues to oppose progressive policies in Colorado. The Institute is running a 2023 ballot initiative to lower the state income tax as part of the Path to Zero project, designed to eliminate the Colorado income tax. A similar initiative passed in 2020. Additionally, the Institute has published several reports holding Gov. Jared Polis and his legislative allies accountable for the damage their fiscal policies have done to Colorado citizens and businesses in a difficult economy. On energy, Independence remains opposed to costly “green” building codes, began research on how nuclear power could help solve Colorado’s looming energy crisis under the governor’s plan to switch entirely to renewable energy sources by 2040, and worked to bridge the gap between the Eco-Left and the Center Right on energy issues. On education, Independence has continued to fight for transparency and reason in PK–12 classrooms—both legislatively and before the Colorado State Board of Education. The Institute’s Education Policy Center played a major role in securing an additional \$2 million in leftover stimulus funding for private schools statewide and continues to champion the charter school sector. Finally, the Institute’s own media outlet, Complete Colorado, has been producing high-quality investigative reporting that mainstream media refuse to run. Complete is a go-to source of information for candidates, lawmakers, and thought leaders statewide.

CONNECTICUT

YANKEE INSTITUTE • yankeeinstitute.org

In preparation for new legislative and gubernatorial terms, the **Yankee Institute** prepared and delivered its *Charter for Change*, a compendium of policy recommendations for the governor and Legislature. Yankee also published *Left Behind: Connecticut’s Lost Decade*, a report on the state’s economic performance over the past decade, generating multiple media interviews and a widely circulated op-ed in the *CT Mirror* and coverage in *National Review*. Meanwhile, Connecticut Inside Investigator, a project of Yankee Institute, broke news of abuse within the state’s Department of Transportation that led both to a lawsuit and calls for reform in the agency. Yankee also continues to partner with Constitution State Educators, a grassroots initiative of teachers educating their counterparts about their *Janus* rights. The quarter’s highlight of the quarter was the “Champions of Freedom” Gala, featuring special guest Megyn Kelly.



DELAWARE

CAESAR RODNEY INSTITUTE • caesarrodney.org

In 2019, **Caesar Rodney Institute** pulled together a coalition from Delaware beach communities to oppose offshore wind development off the coast and to stop power from coming to shore in a state park. Thanks to their efforts, the on-shoring site was rejected and the wind project delayed from a 2022 start to 2025. Similar projects were being planned along the east coast that would harm sea life, commercial fishing, safety, and pristine views. CRI reached out to beach communities and SPN affiliates from North Carolina to Maine based on the success in forming the American Coalition for Ocean Protection (ACOP). ACOP now has key groups fighting ten planned projects representing thousands of people. CRI continues to share information, resources, and strategies. This is especially important in writing public comments on federal Environmental Impact Statements that are essential to establish legal standing in case lawsuits are needed as a last resort. The first major approved project, Vineyard Wind off Nantucket, has five lawsuits filed against it, with the coalition supplying critical technical support to the suits. A potential win on this lawsuit in the first quarter of 2023 could stop other projects nationwide. There is also a lawsuit against how wind lease areas were established. As each new project becomes ripe for comments, our experts file timely public comments. A joint Ocean Environment Legal Defense Fund has been created with good progress in accumulating funds.



FLORIDA

FOUNDATION FOR GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY • thefga.org

Foundation for Government Accountability's success is determined by the number of policy reforms enacted and lives impacted as a result of its work, and so far this year FGA has racked up 141 individual policy wins total! However, three big accomplishments stand out above the rest. The first are comprehensive election packages enacted in Missouri via House Bill 1878 and South Carolina via Senate Bill 108 with over 30 of FGA's election reforms passed between the two bills. Second, in FGA's home state of Florida, the State Board of Administration voted to update the board's Investment Policy Statement to only invest in funds that prioritize the highest return on investment for beneficiaries—without considering political factors like ESG criteria. This was a critical step to ensure the state's retirement system and other investments serve their beneficiaries, not ideologues. FGA also focused heavily on unemployment solutions in states across the nation, and so far this year has seen 31 unemployment reform wins in six separate states, (Kentucky, Oklahoma, Iowa, Louisiana, Wisconsin, and Mississippi), including reforms like cross-checks, a flat duration of benefits, overpayment recovery, data sharing, and other program integrity measures.





THE JAMES MADISON INSTITUTE • jamesmadison.org

Florida has once again illustrated that policymaking and governing from conservative principles are possible. The Florida Legislature responded to growing parental concerns about the dangers of promoting cultural Marxism in the classroom. It also addressed the need for greater instruction in practical money management skills for students. Florida continues to be a national leader in empowering parents to play a greater role in their children's education, and **The James Madison Institute** hopes the meaningful gains of this legislative session will continue. Florida is demonstrating that the ideals of free-market capitalism, limited government, and economic liberty are the fuel that drives an economic engine.

GEORGIA



GEORGIA CENTER FOR OPPORTUNITY • georgiaopportunity.org

The **Georgia Center for Opportunity** has stepped up efforts to expand its impact across the country and address the issues that trap people in poverty. The Center's community-focused BETTER WORK program, which connects the unemployed to nonprofit services and local business opportunities, has helped hundreds find rewarding work in their communities. The program's success has led to requests to bring the model to other communities around the state and country. In addition, GCO's modeling of the pitfalls of the safety net system, dubbed Benefits Cliffs, is shedding light on long-term dependencies on government services. Currently, the model includes state and county safety net programs and demonstrates how an individual might traverse these programs in 10 states, with more being added every few months. For many people, especially those in poorer communities, public safety is a top concern, and crime is a barrier to opportunities. GCO has welcomed Senior Fellow Josh Crawford to help identify and address local and state policies affecting these communities. Addressing lack of access to quality education, work opportunities, and family stability will chart a path out of poverty for the underserved while building a flourishing society for all.



GEORGIA PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION • georgiapolicy.org

Amid a banner year that includes the launch of the Housing Affordability Initiative and welcoming everyone to Atlanta for SPN Annual Meeting, the **Georgia Public Policy Foundation** is proud to have checked a long-desired item off its policy wish list: income tax reform. The Georgia General Assembly collapsed the state's cumbersome six brackets into one flat rate for all personal income-tax filers. Lawmakers also set in motion a schedule of reforms that will bring the tax rate down to 4.99 percent from the current 5.75 percent, while exempting more of Georgians' hard-earned earnings from the taxman. Families will save hundreds of dollars per year, and Georgia will remain competitive in what has become a tough southeastern neighborhood from a tax perspective. The Foundation's research, briefings, and counsel helped inform these changes, and lawmakers continue to seek input for ways to go further and faster with cuts, as the state is sitting on a \$6 billion surplus.

HAWAII

GRASSROOT INSTITUTE OF HAWAII • grassrootinstitute.org

The **Grassroot Institute of Hawaii** celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2022—postponed from 2021 due to the coronavirus lockdowns. Several hundred attendees enjoyed good food, inspirational speakers, terrific entertainment, and great camaraderie. The Institute has also expanded its donor base, staff, and owned audience; brought the average email open rate up to about 35 percent; increased Facebook readership; added a “Hawaii Matters” channel on YouTube; and led SPN members in using TikTok. At the Legislature, the Institute helped defeat every major tax bill and a massive public housing initiative, defended cryptocurrency, and supported a “YIMBY” resolution. The Institute has been building relationships with lawmakers and community groups to ensure future legislative successes both at the Capitol and Hawaii’s four county councils. On the research front, a policy brief demonstrating that out-of-state buyers are not the main driver for high median home prices—in Hawaii or anywhere else—garnered significant media coverage locally and nationally, including in *The Wall Street Journal*. Because of recent developments in Puerto Rico and New England, the Institute’s extensive Jones Act research has been cited nationally—and even internationally.



IDAHO

IDAHO FREEDOM FOUNDATION • idahofreedom.org

In January, the **Idaho Freedom Foundation** launched its Center for American Education (CAE), a research hub dedicated to promoting transformational change to the state and national education system so that it best serves the families and students who use it. During the legislative session, the CAE administered the Idaho Education Index, which provides thorough and timely analyses of education-related legislation in the statehouse. The CAE developed the interactive Idaho K–12 LEAD Map, which evaluates every major school district in Idaho based on academic performance and the number of critical social justice incidents. The map also catalogs information like superintendent salaries and rainy-day fund balances. CAE staff drew attention to the role that federal grants play in corrupting sex education programs in red states nationwide. They exposed the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare’s role in the state’s purchase of materials from ETR, a nonprofit that promotes queering education and normalizing porn literacy among students. This research was highlighted on *The Ingraham Angle* and *The Matt Walsh Show*. IFF’s research on the higher-ed system in Tennessee contributed to legislation that protects free speech and viewpoint diversity at public colleges, and its reporting on the University of North Carolina (UNC) system contributed to resolutions on academic freedom and viewpoint-neutral access to student fees at UNC. IFF’s research spurred Idaho’s Legislature to cut \$307,000 in funding for the Idaho Digital E-Book Alliance, which offered books promoting critical race theory and transgenderism that students could access through their school accounts.





ILLINOIS

ILLINOIS POLICY INSTITUTE • illinoispolicy.org

The **Illinois Policy Institute** has stood as the lone champion of taxpayers in a true David versus Goliath fight against big labor: the battle against Amendment 1, a proposed constitutional amendment that would give government unions in Illinois the most extreme powers in the country. Illinoisans will vote on this amendment in November. On the heels of voters' sound rejection of a tax hike proposal on the 2020 ballot, IPI has proven to taxpayers that Amendment 1 is a hidden tax hike. Because of IPI's research, education, media efforts and public outreach, five independent news editorial boards or their columnists—from *The Wall Street Journal*, the *Chicago Tribune*, *Crain's Chicago Business*, the *Daily Herald*, and the *Champaign News-Gazette*—studied Amendment 1 and came to the same conclusion: Illinois voters should reject it. Notably, The *Herald's* editorial board said of the term "Workers' Rights Amendment": "We are disinclined to refer to it by that name, partly because the language is intentionally loaded, mainly because it is inaccurate . . . for purposes of the text of this editorial, we will stick with Amendment 1." The Illinois Policy Institute originated the term "Amendment 1."

IOWA

IOWANS FOR TAX RELIEF FOUNDATION • itrfoundation.org

In 2022, **Iowans for Tax Relief Foundation** celebrated the passage of the largest tax cut in Iowa history. This was not just a singular rate reduction but a comprehensive tax reform package. Iowa's progressive income tax with nine rate brackets will be gradually replaced until 2026, when a flat rate of 3.9 percent will be implemented. Iowa's high corporate income tax will also be gradually reduced until it reaches a flat 5.5 percent. The tax on retirement income has been eliminated as well. In a year full of tax reforms across the country, Iowa's was the most significant and the Hawkeye state is now a leader in the flat tax revolution. The Foundation was on the front lines helping to get this tax reform package through the legislature. The Foundation not only had a seat at the table with key policymakers but, through op-eds, blog posts, and social media interactions, was able to educate Iowans and key stakeholders on the need for pro-growth tax reform. Another historic precedent was that the bill was passed even before the budget, which meant that legislators considered taxpayers before spending interests. As the Foundation promoted pro-growth tax reforms, it also pushed for conservative spending. This year Gov. Kim Reynolds and the Legislature continued prudent budgeting. Iowa's budget has a surplus of \$1.9 billion, reserve funds are at their statutory limits, and the Taxpayer Relief Fund will have an estimated \$3 billion balance. This means that corporate tax rate reductions will begin sooner than anticipated, with the top rate dropping from 9.8 percent to 8.4 percent in 2023. Fiscal conservatism is working in Iowa.



KANSAS

KANSAS POLICY INSTITUTE • kansaspolicy.org

Kansas Policy Institute was instrumental in bringing educational opportunities to students in a triple policy win this year. After a year of school closures, online classes, and substantial learning loss in Kansas, KPI took a bold stand to ensure parents had a strong voice when it came time to enact change in Topeka. KPI helped pave the way for three landmark victories in K–12 policy, starting with a bill that promoted transparency by requiring school boards to annually review state academic assessments and conduct a building needs assessment in all schools, publicizing both to ensure accountability, before approving the district's annual budget. KPI helped pass a law which includes the Every Child Can Read Act. This will require every school district in the state to implement a literacy program designed to ensure all students learn to read by third grade. KPI also helped pass the public-school open enrollment law. Now, if a public school has space, any child in the state may choose to attend. This provides more opportunities and options for students. In Kansas, 35 percent of high school students read below grade level and 47 percent of high school students are below grade level in math. Education spending makes up more than half of state spending, yet student achievement remains stubbornly flat for all children and low-income kids remain at least two grade levels behind their peers. KPI will continue to fight in the next legislative session for solutions that keep schools accountable and provide more opportunities for Kansas students.



KENTUCKY

BLUEGRASS INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY SOLUTIONS • bipps.org

After West Virginia's Supreme Court overturned a lower court's decision blocking a public scholarship fund for use at nonpublic schools, Kentucky's highest court heard arguments regarding the constitutionality of a bill allowing families to use Education Opportunity Accounts (EOAs) to cover tuition at nonpublic schools in the state's largest counties. Each year, the court chooses to take one case "on the road" as an educational opportunity, allowing a greater number of citizens to observe its work than the chambers at the Capitol allow. Justices chose to hold the hearing on the school choice bill at the new Shelbyville Convention and Welcome Center, which was filled with supporters of educational liberty—including several students from area private and parochial schools—wearing their yellow scarves. One of those scarf-wearers was Akie McNeary, a northern Kentucky mother who wanted to use EOAs to send her children to a better school this fall—a dream dashed by Franklin Circuit Judge Philip Shepherd's ruling that such a policy would be unconstitutional. McNeary was an intervening defendant in the lawsuit heard by the Supreme Court. An all-star legal team that included Kentucky Solicitor General Matthew Kuhn and Ben Field of the Institute for Justice opposed claims made by school-choice opponents that the policy would take money from government in general and public education in particular. Instead, they argued, funds voluntarily donated to account granting organizations belong to the individuals and businesses who give them, not to government.



LOUISIANA



PELICAN INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • pelicanpolicy.org

In 2022, the **Pelican Institute for Public Policy** celebrated the passage of the Fair Chance Act (HB 639), the Right to Earn a Living Act (HB 1062), and the Licensing Transparency Act (HB 555). These were massive victories that will remove employment barriers for thousands of Louisianans. Before Pelican started focusing on occupational licensing reform, the licensing boards in Louisiana remained unchallenged for years—occupational licensing reform was not even a topic of conversation in the state. Yet Pelican’s strategic efforts pushed it to the forefront of the state conversation with stories of men like Daltonio, who was prevented from pursuing his dream by the board of barbers. Visual storytelling, traditional media, op-eds, and targeted messaging made this topic salient. The next step was bipartisan consensus-building at the Capitol, and eventually these bills passed. Pelican was honored to be nominated for a communications excellence award for its efforts. Pelican also shared the Network Award at the 2022 SPN Annual Meeting for their work in blocking the Biden administration’s overreaching OSHA mandate. Pelican represented Brandon Trosclair, a second-generation grocer who employs nearly 500 people and owns 15 grocery stores across Louisiana and Mississippi, in his fight against the mandate. The Institute is now laying the groundwork state tax code reform and universal school choice.

MAINE



MAINE POLICY INSTITUTE • mainepolicy.org

Maine Policy Institute prevented the expansion of government-owned networks throughout Maine in 2022. As a result of the pandemic and other spending, states received millions of dollars from the federal government to expand broadband services. Rather than pursuing free-market solutions as a use for these funds, such as vouchers to unserved areas or underserved households, Maine went down the path of doling out grants to towns seeking to establish their own government-owned networks. Maine Policy’s director of policy, Nick Murray, has followed these projects and proposals closely and has written extensively about them and their potential burden to taxpayers. Residents in towns like Hampden, Southport, and Readfield ultimately rejected local initiatives to approve bonds to purchase these systems. Many of the arguments against these projects relied on Maine Policy’s analyses of them, and now those local broadband committees have been forced to scrap their proposals altogether or go back to the drawing board to develop plans that are less expensive and create greater value for residents. Maine Policy is prepared to keep fighting against government-owned networks on behalf of the taxpayers who are often left holding the bag when these projects inevitably go underwater.

MASSACHUSETTS

PIONEER INSTITUTE • pioneerinstitute.org

In spring of 2022, **Pioneer Institute** launched a litigation center, PioneerLegal, which has already filed suits and amicus briefs defending and promoting school choice, property rights, and access to public information. In July, the US Supreme Court ruled in favor of expanding access to school choice, in *Carson v. Makin*, a case that Pioneer supported with an amicus brief. The ruling marked a victory, following on the 2020 *Espinoza* decision, for students seeking to attend religiously affiliated schools. Pioneer played a leadership role in promoting best practices for establishing high-performing vocational-technical programs, issuing a book featured in numerous papers, including the *Washington Post*, and radio programs across a dozen states. Back in Massachusetts, Gov. Charlie Baker awarded \$30 million in new funding to expand vocational-technical and agricultural school programming. A Pioneer report on the Boston Public Schools' chronic underperformance prompted increased scrutiny by the state education commissioner and a state-enforced school improvement plan. Pioneer has been a leading voice in the effort to educate the Massachusetts public about a state ballot initiative to significantly increase income taxes, especially on small businesses and retirees. The Institute published and distributed a book compiling two years of research on the topic; published numerous op-eds, including in *The Wall Street Journal*; and debated the issue on TV and radio, and in webinars, across Massachusetts. Following recommendations in several papers and media campaigns, a Greater Boston transit arbitrator insisted on important reforms that will save the authority's pension plan \$166 million.



PIONEER INSTITUTE
PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH

MICHIGAN

MACKINAC CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • mackinac.org

Thanks to a lawsuit brought by the **Mackinac Center**, the Michigan Supreme Court in 2020 struck down the emergency power law that the governor was abusing. But there are still a number of laws on the books that give broad emergency powers for an indefinite period. To ensure no state official can ever again wield nearly unrestricted power because of an emergency, the Mackinac Center provided extensive research and support for a bill package that would set up guardrails of scope, duration, and timing. The Mackinac Center was instrumental in helping pass legislative reforms to emergency powers, but unfortunately Gov. Gretchen Whitmer vetoed the bills. Mackinac also achieved several victories for transparency in the courts. The Michigan Supreme Court asked Mackinac to submit an amicus brief in a transparency lawsuit involving General Motors. Drawing on the Center's exact arguments, the Court ruled unanimously that the public has a right to know the details of the state's deals with selected businesses involving billions of dollars in tax credits. In October, a judge ruled in favor of a Mackinac Center lawsuit against Michigan State University after the university heavily redacted documents requested under the Freedom of Information Act.





MINNESOTA

FREEDOM FOUNDATION OF MINNESOTA • freedomfoundationofminnesota.org

When the 2023 legislature is sworn into session on Jan. 3, more than 50 percent of the membership will be serving their first term in either the House or the Senate. This is the largest turnover of the legislature since 1972, the year legislative candidates first ran with political party designation. To prepare for this large incoming class of legislators, the **Freedom Foundation of Minnesota** has spent much of 2022 hosting policy briefings on some of the most important topics that the legislature will confront. These day-long educational sessions allowed candidates to hear from nationally recognized experts on solutions to Minnesota's dramatic rise in violent crime, what to do about declining K-12 test scores, and how to expand school choice, among others. The events also gave candidates the opportunity to socialize and get to know their future colleagues. This was an important element of these policy briefings, since the progressive leadership of the Minnesota House of Representatives hasn't held an in-person session since March of 2020! "It is crucial that our entire legislature return to in-person and public meetings starting on Day 1 when they are sworn in next January," said CEO Annette Meeks. "We are thankful for the opportunity to begin that process during this interim period and look forward to welcoming all 201 new members in-person at the Capitol on January 3." The policy briefings will continue into the new year when the Freedom Foundation hosts the annual Session Solutions day-long policy briefing and dinner for legislators and Freedom Foundation members.

MISSISSIPPI

EMPOWER MISSISSIPPI • empowerms.org

Empower Mississippi saw its multi-year plan to reduce Mississippi's income tax and make the Magnolia State more business friendly signed into law earlier this year. The Mississippi Tax Freedom Act of 2022 phases in the more than \$500 million tax cut over the next four years as the state moves to a flat 4 percent income tax rate. Under the change, individuals will not pay income taxes on their first \$18,300 of taxable income, and families will not pay taxes on their first \$36,600 of income. A worker who makes \$40,000 per year will see their taxes reduced by \$417 a year, while a married couple making \$80,000 would save \$834 a year. Empower has worked tirelessly to build the case for substantive tax reform in Mississippi, from issuing the first dynamic economic modeling of income tax elimination plans to testifying at joint legislative hearings, from engaging the media with more than 1,100 mentions to reaching the general public with at least 4.3 million views of Empower's web and social media content, and from designing alternate policy suggestions to activating citizens to send more than 9,200 emails in support of tax reform.



MISSISSIPPI CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • mispolicy.org

The **Mississippi Center for Public Policy** will soon host its first session for the Mississippi Leadership Academy. This program will teach college students about public policy, provide them with skills necessary to become effective change agents in Mississippi, and introduce them to some of our state's key leaders. This program aims to develop the next generation of free-market thinking Mississippians. In other efforts to reach economic freedom and individual liberty in the state, MCPP is publishing a Conservative Platform for Mississippi to provide conservative lawmakers with policy guidance. MCPP plans to use the Platform to draft legislation and work with allies to create a coalition around these conservative goals. MCPP will also publish a detailed, carefully costed draft budget in December 2022, which will propose specific reductions in both the personal income tax and corporation tax. In 2023, MCPP will begin work on school funding reform as well. Creating a funding formula that funds students, not systems, is the key to more individualized education in the state.



MISSISSIPPI CENTER FOR
PUBLIC POLICY

MISSOURI

SHOW-ME INSTITUTE • showmeinstitute.org

The **Show-Me Institute's** biggest victory in 2022 was a significant income tax cut passed by the Missouri Legislature and signed by the governor. The tax cut bill was passed in a special session in September, and it lowers the income tax rate from 5 percent to 4.5 percent over a period of years based on revenue triggers. In addition, the first \$1,000 of income is now exempted from income taxation. This is a big step in the right direction, especially in Missouri, which until recently has resisted the idea of cutting income taxes. This tax cut will follow on the heels of similar step-by-step cuts, which have to date reduced the tax rate by 16 percent. Persuading the legislature to reduce the income tax is a sea change. It demonstrates the power of good ideas, or what the Institute calls "facts and fair argument." The Institute would prefer to move faster, but incremental progress will be harder for big government fans to target and reverse. In the Show-Me State, the Show-Me Institute is showing them the path to greater growth and prosperity.



MONTANA

FRONTIER INSTITUTE • frontierinstitute.org

After publishing the Montana Zoning Atlas, **Frontier Institute** President and CEO Kendall Cotton was invited to be on the governor's new housing task force. The Housing Task Force included Frontier's proposals and statistics in its recommendations, spurring a statewide conversation. The Montana Department of Labor and Industry proposed a huge revision to licensure, including Frontier's recommendation to expand universal licensure recognition, after extensive engagement from Frontier Institute with the department's policy staff. Despite the department's initial hesitancy, Frontier Institute's educational work demonstrated that cross-state licensure is a significant barrier to healthcare access in Montana that needs to be addressed. One year after the Montana Legislature passed Frontier Institute's healthcare policy proposals, access is expanding throughout the state. The number of direct patient care clinics has doubled, and home health is expanding. Frontier has also hired a communications and outreach director and a tech and innovation policy analyst.





NEBRASKA

PLATTE INSTITUTE • platteinstitute.org

Nebraska just wrapped up its first Truth in Taxation season and the results are in. Nebraska property taxpayers want their voices heard when it comes to the budget process for their local political subdivisions. They also relied on the information and education that the **Platte Institute** offered throughout the process. Platte's Truth in Taxation community engagement campaign used various communication channels to educate taxpayers about the process and empower them to engage with their elected officials. Platte published blog posts and podcasts, executed a media tour which resulted in several radio interviews and more than 30 print newspaper articles that quoted the Institute. A weekly Truth in Taxation email alert kept more than 350 people across the state engaged and informed throughout the eight-week campaign period. Platte also piloted an in-person Property Taxpayer Training Camp in Norfolk, Nebraska, which helped more than 40 attendees learn how to maximize the impact of their testimony at public hearings. The Madison County joint public hearing for Truth in Taxation had at least 300 taxpayers participate and give feedback on the budgets of their local governments. All this positioned the Platte Institute as an advocate for the overburdened Nebraska taxpayer, an accessible and helpful resource for quality information.

NEVADA

NEVADA POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE • npri.org

Since the beginning of 2022, **Nevada Policy Research Institute** has focused on election integrity issues. This year the research team has written 17 stories on many of them, ranging from problems associated with universal mail-in balloting and ballot harvesting, both of which became Nevada law recently, to concerns connected with same-day voter registration to delving into ranked-choice voting, a 2022 ballot initiative. Nevada Policy also put together podcasts and webinars on election integrity and ranked-choice voting. The latter featured individuals from states where ranked-choice voting is already the law, so Nevadans can learn about the problems associated with this method of voting. To better understand Nevadans' thoughts on changes to election law, Nevada Policy polled them early in the year and then used that information in its content. To reach as many people as possible, the election integrity content was emailed to all subscribers and posted on Nevada Policy's website and social media platforms.



NEW HAMPSHIRE

JOSIAH BARTLETT CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • jbartlett.org

The **Josiah Bartlett Center for Public Policy** scored a victory on occupational licensing through the Center's original reporting, which showed that during the pandemic the number of licensed physicians in New Hampshire doubled when temporary licenses were given to out-of-state doctors. The Center's coverage helped secure permanent licensure for out-of-state providers who'd been given temporary licenses. When passing a business tax cut, the Legislature cited Josiah Bartlett tax analysis showing that the cut would not blow a hole in the budget. And research on the immense cost of subsidies for a single biomass plant led legislators to extend those subsidies for one more year, rather than permanently.



NEW JERSEY

GARDEN STATE INITIATIVE • gardenstateinitiative.org

Back in October 2021, the **Garden State Initiative** sponsored a forum, in partnership with the New Jersey Urban Mayors' and Sheriffs' associations, with former New York Police Department Commissioner and Los Angeles Policy Department Chief Bill Bratton to address violence from illegal guns in New Jersey's cities and to adjust the state's 2017 bail reform law to allow prosecutors and judges to keep defendants accused of committing crimes with illegal guns remanded while awaiting trial. This amendment is intended to reduce the incidence of defendants being released only to be re-arrested for violent crimes. That forum led to bipartisan legislation (A 2426; S 513) that was introduced in the Legislature in early February, passed both houses, and was signed into law by Gov. Phil Murphy on June 30.



NEW MEXICO

RIO GRANDE FOUNDATION • riograndefoundation.org

Represented by the Liberty Justice Center, the **Rio Grande Foundation** and its president, Paul Gessing, have filed a lawsuit against the City of Albuquerque Council. After the leak of the US Supreme Court's *Dobbs* decision, the Council "donated" \$250,000 to the local Planned Parenthood chapter in direct violation of New Mexico's "anti-donation" clause. Unlike some government contracts entered into with nonprofits, this one did not require the nonprofit in question to provide any services. The Rio Grande Foundation vigorously supports strengthening the anti-donation clause, which was enacted along with the state's constitution back in 1912 to protect New Mexico taxpayers. With the Liberty Justice Center's help, the Foundation will defend this clause and, by extension, prevent tax dollars from being "donated" to politically active nonprofits of any ideological stripe.





NEW YORK

EMPIRE CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • empirecenter.org

The **Empire Center for Public Policy** is taking the New York State attorney general to task after a national nonprofit's protected tax documents showed up in a newspaper article with the attorney general's stamp on them. Last month, *Politico* released an unredacted Schedule B, including a list of donors to former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley's organization, Stand for America—marked with the official stamp of Attorney General Letitia James' office. As the top legal officer in the state, James is charged with protecting the rights of all New Yorkers—including charitable donors. The Empire Center submitted several Freedom-of-Information-Law (FOIL) requests after the story broke, asking to see the attorney general's document retention and document destruction policies, any FOIL requests for Schedule B documents received by the office, the attorney general's policy on employee access to Schedule B documents, and a list of employees who had access to the documents. So far, the requests have been met with predictable delays and obfuscation, and—astonishingly—illegal procedural moves by the attorney general. Whether the leak was a matter of malfeasance or ineptness, it's a serious affront and diminishment of New Yorkers' constitutional rights. Instead of working quickly to get to the bottom of the leak and restore credibility to the office, James' office follows in a long, unproud history of New York politicians using their political power to hide problems and protect themselves. The Empire Center is working to reverse this trend—and expose the truth.

NORTH CAROLINA

JOHN LOCKE FOUNDATION • johnlocke.org

North Carolina has experienced one of the most liberty-forward years in 2022, thanks in part to policy wins the **John Locke Foundation** has championed. Energy Solutions for North Carolina (HB 951) is a transformational piece of energy legislation that stands to be the conservative response to the costly and unreliable Green New Deal. The policy promotes a reasonable and responsible pathway to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. During a time of rising energy costs and economic uncertainty, choosing affordable and reliable energy sources is the right choice for North Carolinians. In addition, essential reforms to the Emergency Management Act secured in the First in Freedom state budget led to a rescission of Gov. Roy Cooper's 888 days long state of emergency. This was a monumental victory for all North Carolinians, particularly families and business owners. Finally, in an effort to engage a wider audience with freedom-oriented ideas, the John Locke Foundation has just launched *Policy Pizza*, an infotainment video series that takes on a *Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee* vibe. Season 1 is now being finalized.



OHIO

THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE • buckeyeinstitute.org

The Buckeye Institute has been running up the score and enjoying all the wins this year. Buckeye celebrated after a judge ruled in favor of Buckeye's client, Eric Flannery, owner of a Washington, DC, neighborhood bar and grill, The Big Board. Buckeye immediately filed a new federal lawsuit—*Flannery v. D.C. Department of Health*—challenging the District of Columbia's unconstitutional use of emergency orders to shut down The Big Board. The case was widely covered in the media, including television appearances on The Ingraham Angle and Fox News @ Night. Buckeye also won a municipal income tax case after a Cuyahoga County court ruled in favor of Buckeye's client Dr. Manal Morsy in *Morsy v. Dumas*. The court denied the City of Cleveland's motion to dismiss the case and ordered Cleveland to issue a full refund to Dr. Morsy and to pay her court costs. In *The Wall Street Journal*, The Buckeye Institute's President and CEO Robert Alt argued that California's Proposition 12 not only violates the US Constitution but also threatens state sovereignty, which is why Buckeye filed an amicus brief in this infamous "bacon case," *National Pork Producers Council v. Ross*. The US Supreme Court heard oral arguments on October 11.



THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE

OKLAHOMA

OKLAHOMA COUNCIL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS • ocpathink.org

Over the last year, the **Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs** has worked diligently to shift the focus of lawmakers and Oklahomans to real education and tax reform. Thanks to OCPA's effective journalism, comprehensive research, strategic social media campaigns, and robust grassroots efforts, Oklahomans are no longer accepting the status quo of abysmal education outcomes and the penalizing tax structure that disincentivizes productivity. OCPA's policy products and policy campaigns for universal school choice and comprehensive tax reform to eliminate the income tax have dominated the 2022 campaign cycle in Oklahoma and legislative work on education and taxation. Lawmakers can no longer ignore their duties to produce consequential legislation to free constituents of burdensome regulations that have long affected Oklahoma. OCPA believes that this will culminate in significant policy achievements and two wins in the 2023 legislative session.





OREGON

CASCADE POLICY INSTITUTE • cascadepolicy.org

Advancing educational choice for all Oregon students has been central to **Cascade Policy Institute's** mission since 1991. For three decades, Cascade has engaged in policy research, educational outreach, and advocacy to expand options for Oregon families. In addition to promoting school choice at the policy level, Cascade also runs the Oregon partner program of the national nonprofit Children's Scholarship Fund (CSF). Along with local partners, CSF offers educational choice to low-income parents through partial scholarships for tuition-based elementary schools. CSF-Oregon has funded scholarships worth more than \$3.5 million since 1999, in support of more than 800 local children. The Oregon program has added new scholarships every year for almost a decade, and the number of annual scholarship awards has doubled in five years. CSF-Oregon partners with parents as the "last dollar in." That is, scholarships help families afford tuition after their own financial responsibility and school-based financial aid have been considered. All participating parents pay tuition themselves. This partnership between family investment and scholarship support keeps education decision-making in the hands of parents, where it belongs. The events of the last two years have made it even clearer that parents urgently need more choices in education, and students need options that meet their learning needs. The core value of CSF programs is that parents are the first educators of their children. When parents are offered scholarships that empower them to make education choices for their own children, options open for a better future for their students.

PENNSYLVANIA

COMMONWEALTH FOUNDATION • commonwealthfoundation.org

This past year, the **Commonwealth Foundation** made strides toward advancing educational opportunity for K-12 students and their families. Despite the governor's hostility to school choice, Commonwealth helped expand Pennsylvania's tax credit scholarship programs by \$125 million in the 2023 state budget. This expansion will provide approximately 31,000 additional K-12 students with scholarships and the life-changing opportunities that come with a better education. Commonwealth also championed the Lifeline Scholarship Program, which the Pennsylvania House of Representatives passed in April. The Lifeline Scholarship Program will give students in underperforming public schools direct access to education funding to pay for tuition, tutoring, curriculum, and other educational expenses. This historic vote was the first time a bill providing Education Opportunity Accounts has ever passed the House. What's more, these legislative victories are laying the groundwork for transformative education reforms in 2023. Both gubernatorial candidates in Pennsylvania now support Lifeline Scholarships—underscoring the importance of education reform to Pennsylvania families and voters. The Commonwealth Foundation will continue to fight for educational freedom until every child has access to an education that best fits their needs.



TENNESSEE

BEACON CENTER OF TENNESSEE • beacontn.org

Election Day was a great day for Tennessee employees and employers. With the successful passage of Amendment 1, the voters have firmly secured Tennessee's right-to-work laws in our state constitution to guarantee all Tennessee workers have the freedom to decide for themselves whether or not to pay union dues or join a union in their workplace. Amending the constitution is a long, multi-year process, and something that both the **Beacon Center** and Beacon Impact worked tirelessly on to finally put the question on the ballot. And Tennesseans overwhelmingly approved! Right-to-work states like Tennessee have higher real income growth, employment growth, and population growth than non-right-to-work states—and this vote once again ensures Tennessee will continue to be among the top states in the nation to live, work, and run a business. Beacon is thankful that voters stood up for this Tennessee tradition by enshrining it in the state constitution. Tennessee will be a model for the rest of the nation.



TEXAS

TEXAS PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION • texaspolicy.com

Throughout 2022, the **Texas Public Policy Foundation** (TPPF) has worked diligently to lay the foundation for a successful 88th Texas Legislature and maximize liberty for all. Among the most significant successes have been TPPF's efforts to fight energy discrimination in the form of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) investing. In 2022, TPPF's Life: Powered initiative helped provide the research and messaging needed to pass anti-ESG bills in Tennessee, Oklahoma, West Virginia, and Kentucky. Life: Powered continues to work with states nationwide to export similar legislation that ensures reliable, affordable energy. Also in 2022, TPPF launched two new campaigns to move the needle on liberty in Texas and nationwide. Emerging challenges related to technology policy led to the establishment of TPPF's new Better Tech for Tomorrow campaign, which provides innovative solutions grounded in conservative principles for technology issues like privacy, social media for minors, and broadband expansion. TPPF also launched the Secure and Sovereign Texas campaign, which provides the legal framework for Texas to lead the charge in handling the border crisis while simultaneously reasserting its sovereignty for the preservation of liberty for generations to come. TPPF CEO Greg Sindelar presented our policy recommendations during a speech in Mexico City to the American Society of Mexico in September 2022.



UTAH

LIBERTAS INSTITUTE • libertas.org

This year has been an exciting one for the team at **Libertas**—particularly when it comes to regulatory sandboxes. During 2022, Utah lawmakers overwhelmingly passed a bill that brought the state's insurance and financial technologies (fintech) sandboxes into its universal sandbox, which passed unanimously last year. Additionally, lawmakers gave education the sandbox treatment to allow teachers to create and implement innovative curriculums. The sandbox successes aren't limited to the Beehive State. Thanks to Americans for Prosperity Arizona and the John Locke Foundation, Arizona expanded their existing fintech sandbox to include all industries, while North Carolina implemented its first sandbox targeting financial technologies and insurance. This momentum for regulatory reform is only growing. Just this year, upward of thirty sandbox-related bills were introduced in states from New York to Nebraska. Congress is following the states' lead, with Senator Mike Lee introducing a universal sandbox and Senator Marsha Blackburn introducing an agriculture technologies sandbox.





VERMONT

ETHAN ALLEN INSTITUTE • ethanallen.org

This year, the **Ethan Allen Institute** (EAI) embarked on a five-year strategic agenda to expand the Institute's public policy research and investigative reporting, annual budget, and followers. EAI began a comprehensive process to rebuild its organizational infrastructure by implementing innovative technologies and outcome-focused internal systems. EAI is increasing its operational capacities with a new website that supports multimedia content sharing, safe and convenient fundraising, and an updated data center and government accountability tool called "VT Votes" through which citizens can access carefully researched information to hold politicians accountable. EAI created a formal grants program to grow funding sources and engage with charitable foundations and the conservative grant-making community by demonstrating the ways in which EAI's projects serve families and workers in Vermont. An efficient technology infrastructure and data-driven culture will enable EAI to build a powerful knowledge-sharing network, and lay a solid foundation to strategically expand engaged audiences and influence fundamental policy reform in the region. This process of systemic restructuring represents EAI's most significant organizational success in 2022.

VIRGINIA

VIRGINIA INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • virginiainstitute.org

The **Virginia Institute for Public Policy** has introduced regulatory sandboxes to the public policy and legislative community in Virginia. A regulatory sandbox creates a space and time for innovators to offer new goods and services to consumers without the initial burden of some regulations. Virginia Institute's director of policy, Caleb Taylor, was invited by the Libertas Institute to join a panel at the Wyoming Global Technology Summit in Jackson, Wyoming, about the promising reforms offered by regulatory sandboxes. The panel was an instant success, becoming the talk of the Summit. Headlined by Virginia's Lt. Gov. Winsome Sears, the Virginia Institute joined with the Virginia Education Opportunity Alliance to host an event discussing a series of policies focused on educational opportunity in the Commonwealth. The lead issue: ensuring that education dollars fund students and not systems as the Virginia General Assembly prepares to consider a new Education Savings Account program. The bill creates a budget-neutral program for choice in education that funds students without defunding the public school system. The Virginia Institute is also leading on election integrity, mentoring 15 (and growing) robust state election integrity coalitions around the country based on the "Virginia Model" grassroots training and citizen engagement program created by the Institute and other partners in 2021 and 2022. In Virginia, the Institute continues to facilitate and provide training, workshops, and informational coalition meetings for election officials and poll watchers around the state. The 2022 election is shaping up to be the most secure election in Virginia's history. The growing appetite for regulatory reform staked out by both parties in the Commonwealth is an exciting trend. While the Regulatory Budget Bill was narrowly defeated in Senate committee after passing the House, it drew interest from Republicans and Democrats in both chambers and ultimately failed due to a political hitch having little to do with the policy itself. The Regulatory Budget Bill is coupled with a bill introducing a universal regulatory sandbox into Virginia's governing structure. This initiative will allow regulators to engage in perpetual pilot programs and eliminate or adjust regulations as best practices are revealed.



THOMAS JEFFERSON INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • thomasjeffersoninst.org

It was 1986 when Virginia last approved a major tax reduction, but thanks to the **Thomas Jefferson Institute**, it happened again this year. Key among the changes was a proposal to double the standard deduction, originally proposed by the Jefferson Institute three years ago. After the Institute briefed candidate Glenn Youngkin, the proposal made its way into Youngkin's official platform. To ensure tax reduction remained a high priority for voters, the Jefferson Institute created a 30-second video highlighting recent tax increases. Targeting 150,000 Virginians, it was seen by 250,000 an average of four times, keeping tax reform in the spotlight. The bill proposed by Gov. Youngkin passed the House, but failed in the Senate, setting the stage for closed door conference committee negotiations. The Institute created another advertisement reminding Virginians of the \$16.7 billion budget surplus and demonstrating the difference between the House and Senate proposals. That ad reached nearly a million Virginians, engaging thousands more to take action. Institute Senior Fellow Steve Haner noted in newspapers across Virginia, "Given that the state treasury is bursting at the seams with cash flow, it would be tragic if the final agreement does not include significant tax reform, especially a major increase in the state standard deduction." Signed into law, the bill returns more than \$400 to each Virginia working couple every year. The Thomas Jefferson Institute now turns to the next step: indexing for inflation.



WASHINGTON

FREEDOM FOUNDATION • freedomfoundation.com

The **Freedom Foundation** prepares to close 2022 having helped more than 135,000 public employees leave their unions and costing the unions nearly \$250 million since June 2018. In Ohio, the Freedom Foundation experienced a record summer vacation opt-out campaign, directly helping more than 1,200 people leave teachers' unions between July and September. In Oregon, a similar campaign in August and September helped nearly 375 Oregon Education Association (OEA) members resign their membership. The exodus of members caused OEA to email its remaining members cautioning them against spam from the Freedom Foundation. At least one Oregon teacher noted that they opted out of the union after receiving OEA's warning email. The Connecticut Education Association has begun sending warning emails to its membership roll, telling recipients to ignore any communication from the Freedom Foundation or Opt Out Today after several hundred teachers signed up for and attended an opt-out webinar. In California, nearly 10,000 members of the California Teachers Association have dropped their union membership through optouttoday.com. The Freedom Foundation helped the Le Roy School District in central Illinois part ways with the National Education Association and instead form an independent, unaffiliated union to represent their interests at the bargaining table. The Freedom Foundation also helped nearly 1,000 home care providers leave the Service Employees International Union in 2022. As it continues its national expansion, the Freedom Foundation has launched a cable television advertising campaign in a number of states.





WASHINGTON POLICY CENTER • washingtonpolicy.org

When Washington state passed a new carbon emissions tax, advocates promised minimal impact on the price of gas. From a state Department of Ecology report, **Washington Policy Center's** Todd Myers used the projected cost of a metric ton of carbon to calculate the impact on a gallon of gas. Based on the state projection, Washington drivers can expect a 46 cents per gallon hike to 2023 gas prices and even more for diesel. Using social media, op-eds, gas station toppers, and a new deepsixthe46.com landing page to alert the public, WPC forced the governor and other prominent officials to respond in media coverage. WPC has reversed the narrative from a supposedly low-cost environmental triumph to a story about potentially crippling costs for drivers. Another WPC recommendation became law when the state expanded the number of occupational licenses available for those with a nonviolent criminal record. Recidivism rates show a strong relationship to unemployment, yet the state has been blocking those who've paid their debt to society from obtaining several categories of jobs. WPC is proud to aid in the expansion of opportunity for those eager to change their lives. WPC has also expanded its use of Reels and TikTok, receiving more than 200,000 Facebook Reels views and more than 83,000 TikTok views on an investment of just \$500.

WEST VIRGINIA

CARDINAL INSTITUTE FOR WEST VIRGINIA POLICY • cardinalinstitute.com

The **Cardinal Institute for West Virginia Policy** is thrilled to announce that West Virginia's Hope Scholarship program, the nation's second most expansive Education Savings Account, has been ruled constitutional by the West Virginia Supreme Court. The Hope Scholarship coalition has been hard at work all year defending the program and helping parents navigate the application process. More than 3,100 families have been approved to participate, receiving \$4,300 per year per child to put toward an individualized education. In response to the injunction which halted the program in early July, Cardinal's team launched Hope in the Hills, a project telling the stories of families who desperately wanted and needed Hope Scholarships. The Cardinal Institute will continue to highlight the stories of participating families and the impact it is having on their lives. Between the Hope Scholarship, charter schools, learning pods, micro-schools, open enrollment, innovation zones, and more, West Virginia is poised to lead the nation in education choice and entrepreneurship. Keep your eyes on the Mountain State!

WISCONSIN

BADGER INSTITUTE • badgerinstitute.org

In October, the **Badger Institute** published *Mandate for Madison*, a policy blueprint for the 2023 legislative session and beyond. This 300-page book provides lawmakers with Wisconsin-focused research and recommendations on issues including tax reform, education freedom, crime trends, free-market healthcare solutions, road funding, and more. The Badger Institute pulled together some of the best minds in the state and nation to explore what it will take to make Wisconsin among the best places to live, work, and do business. Contributors include Katherine Loughead, Tax Foundation; Angela Rachidi, American Enterprise Institute; Sean Kennedy, Maryland Public Policy Institute; welfare reform pioneer Eloise Anderson; Robert W. Poole Jr., Reason Foundation; Jeremiah Mosteller, Americans for Prosperity; Andrew Hanson, University of Illinois at Chicago; professors Dan Sem and Scott Niederjohn, Concordia University Wisconsin; longtime Georgia policy analyst Benita



Cotton-Orr; James Bohn, former assistant vice president with the Federal Reserve Bank in Boston; and freelance journalist and editor Ken Wysocky. Additional chapters were authored by Badger Institute President Mike Nichols, Policy Director Patrick McIlheran, Education Consultant Jim Bender, and Editor Mark Lisher. Badger unveiled the book at its Annual Dinner featuring former Heritage Foundation President Ed Feulner as the keynote. The Heritage Foundation's *Mandate for Leadership* was the inspiration for *Mandate for Madison*. Badger has distributed hundreds of copies to lawmakers, media, thought leaders, and supporters. Thousands more received access to the PDF version. Tim Michels, the Republican candidate for governor, has adopted some elements and discussed proposed policies at length on Wisconsin talk radio. In the coming months, Badger plans to host symposia and public education events, and produce videos, podcasts, commentaries, and social media related to *Mandate* content.

INSTITUTE FOR REFORMING GOVERNMENT • reforminggovernment.org

The **Institute for Reforming Government** continued its strong efforts this year to connect with Wisconsinites of all walks of life, and is on pace to conduct more than 40 town halls in 2022. To complement that work, IRG built a premier team of policy experts to help turn ideas brought forward into actionable reforms. In doing so, IRG grew from three to seven full-time employees and worked with six policy fellows throughout the year. Additionally, the policy team has been analyzing Wisconsin state agencies and state agency budget requests, has released a "State Agency 101" series to inform the public on what state agencies actually do, and is preparing a sweeping set of reforms to make Wisconsin a model state for conservative policies. The team conducted a deep analysis into education testing and rankings and is creating a playbook for turning around failing schools. In the Wisconsin Capitol this year, IRG and its advocacy partner, IRG Action Fund, were able to move several education and welfare reforms forward to the governor. That included addressing "ghosting" by unemployment insurance claimants and tackling the failed Milwaukee Public School system. While those bills were vetoed, they have framed the public discussion for the 2023 session. IRG also continued building support for eliminating the state's income tax.



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

In 2022, the **Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty** launched its Restoring American Education (RAE) initiative to engage parents, school board members, and teachers with resources, model policies, and alternative curricula for the classroom. In addition, WILL joined other leading education, policy, and advocacy organizations to form the Wisconsin Coalition for Educational Freedom and engage state policymakers on expanding educational options for Wisconsin families. WILL attorneys have scored major victories in the US Supreme Court, Wisconsin Supreme Court, federal district courts, and circuit courts on issues ranging from redistricting to election law to taxes and open records. In March, WILL joined the Wisconsin Legislature in a successful appeal to SCOTUS regarding racially gerrymandered legislative maps drawn by Gov. Tony Evers and selected by the Wisconsin Supreme Court. In a 7-2 decision, the Supreme Court reversed the Wisconsin Supreme Court's decision and remanded the issue back to the Wisconsin Supreme Court. The Wisconsin Supreme Court later adopted race-neutral legislative maps put forward by the Legislature. WILL also successfully sued the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) on behalf of two voters over the legal status of absentee ballot drop boxes that were widely used in the 2020 election. The Court held that the drop boxes had no statutory authorization and WEC's guidance encouraging their use was unlawful. Finally, WILL brought the first lawsuit to the US Supreme Court challenging the Biden administration's "One Time Federal Student Loan Debt Relief" plan.



STATE THINK TANK AFFILIATES

Our Network of 64 independent state think tanks plays a vital role in society by providing reliable research, analysis, and education to help lawmakers develop and advance policies that serve their communities, create good jobs, and establish economic security.

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Center of the American Experiment
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Stand Together Trust

SPOTLIGHT PARTNERSHIP: Stand Together Trust

As our society faces challenges from poverty to education inequality, the need for partnerships with both state and national leaders is key to driving substantive change.

Stand Together Trust (STT) is a philanthropic community that works to develop and invest in organizations that are driving the most impact in their communities. Through their affiliate partners, STT works on a wide range of issues including criminal justice, immigration, trade, foreign policy, education, and technology.

Often, SPN partners with experts from STT on key issues, like education policy, to help scale practical solutions that work to solve the different challenges Americans face today.



This year at SPN's 30th Annual Meeting, we were honored to have STT as an Enterprise-level sponsor partner. STT works with social entrepreneurs to leverage the good work they are doing in the states through strategic funding. At Annual Meeting, STT hosted several policy sessions that discussed actionable solutions to reduce crime, ways to increase energy abundance, and shared how educators, parents, and entrepreneurs are innovating and challenging the status quo in education. They also sponsored a trip to several Atlanta microschoools in partnership with the *VELA Education Fund*, which highlighted the work of education entrepreneurs in Georgia who are creating dynamic, student-centered education models. Additionally, STT hosted a hospitality suite to connect with state partners, advocacy groups, and individuals working in the states. Throughout Annual Meeting, STT made deep connections with coalition groups, shared their priorities and initiatives with key stakeholders in the states, and built new relationships with individuals who are spearheading exciting initiatives that align with their policy priorities.



PARTNERING WITH SPN AT ANNUAL MEETING IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE OUR POINT OF VIEW AND ELEVATE THE WORK OF OUR PARTNERS. SPN PLAYS THE ROLE OF A CENTRAL CONNECTOR FOR US TO LEARN ABOUT WHAT OUR STATE PARTNERS ARE DOING ON THE GROUND AND TO SHARE OUR WORK AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL.”

—Lisa Snell, Senior Fellow in Education, Stand Together Trust

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.

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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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