



State Solutions. National Impact.

FALL 2023



## 2023 Legislative Highlights:

Thanks to you, the Network achieved transformative policy victories that bring more freedom, opportunity, and prosperity to the American people.

*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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# Dear Friends,

As I look back on this year's legislative session, it is truer than ever before that the states, not Washington, are best positioned to deliver policy solutions to meet the needs of the American people.

In this issue of *SPN News*, we are recapping the most significant victories you have made possible. While Congress squabbled instead of passing commonsense fiscal policies, you helped the states pass historic tax, regulatory, and housing reforms. You helped transform our education system as states secured education freedom reforms that prioritize students over the status quo. And you empowered our Network of litigation centers to protect our civil liberties, all the way to the Supreme Court. Thanks to your partnership, the Network is transforming American lives, one policy at a time.

This year, more states than ever before passed universal education freedom. The demand for innovation in education learning models is growing by the day. For the past three years, SPN's Ed-Prize has invested in projects that inspire innovation in the education space to meet the needs of students. The 2023 Ed-Prize, sponsored by Stand Together Trust, went to three local projects: Canary Academy, Red Bridge Education, and Let Grow. In this issue, you will hear from our winners and how they are solving problems in their communities and scaling their efforts with the help of Ed-Prize.

You will also read about Opportunity Arkansas, one of our newest affiliates and a member of SPN's startup program. Their team has achieved substantial policy wins since its founding only a year ago. We sat down with Opportunity Arkansas CEO Nic Horton, who shared how his organization is committed to changing the status quo in Arkansas and how his connections in our Network are helping him get there.

And as part of our donor spotlight series, we are honored to feature successful business entrepreneur and philanthropist Jack Miller. Jack is a passionate advocate of civic education and founder of The Jack Miller Center, a network of scholars and academics committed to passing on our American heritage to the next generation. He shared with us why he believes in the American Founders' vision of a federalist system and why the states remain the best hope for our nation's future.

These victories do not happen overnight. They are the result of years of tireless efforts of local, state, and national partners committed to improving outcomes for those in their communities. And they are only possible because of you.

Take care,

*Tracie Sharp*

Tracie Sharp  
President and CEO  
State Policy Network



# Showing Washington How It's Done: State Legislative Highlights



Frontier Institute president and CEO Kendall Cotton (far left) joins Montana Governor Greg Gianforte as he signs housing reform into law.

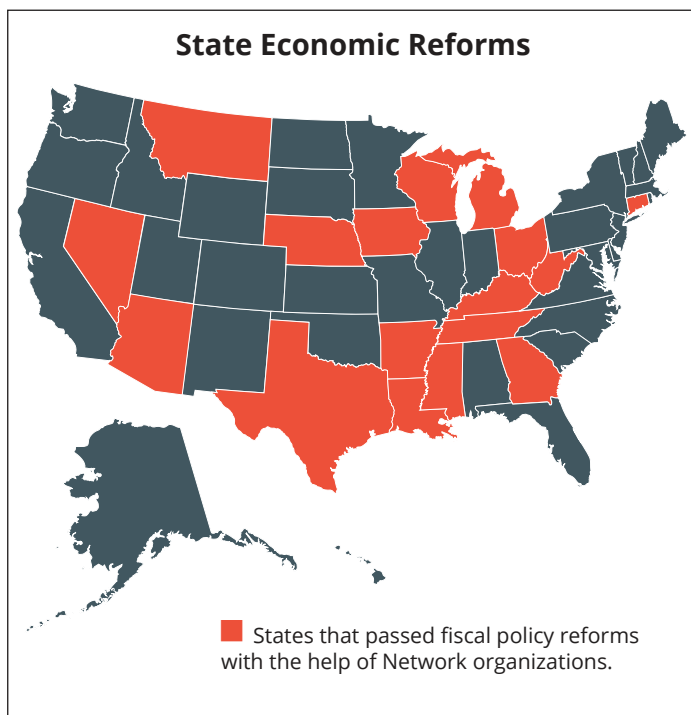
Thanks to you, SPN and the 50-state Network have empowered the states to secure critical policy wins that expand economic opportunity, increase education options, remove barriers to healthcare, and help bring power from the federal government to states and communities. While Washington politicians choose partisan politics over providing solutions to America's problems, the Network is championing reforms that bring more freedom and opportunity to citizens.

Your support enabled SPN to partner with our Network leaders in numerous ways, including targeted grants, coalition support, strategic planning, policy advising, leadership coaching, messaging and polling, government affairs talent, and issue campaign support to drive significant wins in the states. Below are select highlights from across the Network that you have made possible. For the latest policy wins and stories of impact, please visit [SPN.org](https://SPN.org).

## States Lead on Sound Fiscal Reforms

Tax reform has dominated legislative sessions since the pandemic. Since 2021, more than half of the states have passed tax relief measures. While Washington advocates for tax *increases*, states reduced income taxes, maintained previously scheduled cuts, and advanced historic property tax reforms. States have also sought to strengthen local economies by removing barriers to employment and repealing burdensome regulations to attract workers and businesses. These policies put more money back into taxpayers' pockets and boost economic activity.

- **Nebraska:** Governor Jim Pillen signed historic tax reforms into law, which include reducing the income tax rate for individuals and businesses to 3.99 percent by 2027, providing tax credits for childcare, and placing an annual 3-percent cap on how much school districts can request in property tax increases, among others. The **Platte Institute** was a key driver in this reform and its staff have been active participants in SPN's peer groups.





tuition. SPN worked with the in-state coalition to gain policymaker support for the reform. SPN empowered partners on the ground to recruit and train parents to advocate for education reform and share personal stories of how they have benefited from school choice.

- **Utah:** The Utah Fits All Scholarship was signed into law in January and allows up to \$8,000 per student to access educational options that meet their needs. The **Libertas Institute**, a member of the education coalition that helped advance the reform, is simultaneously working to create pathways for education entrepreneurs to expand existing and create new learning models like microschools.
- **Arkansas:** Signed into law in March, the Arkansas LEARNS Act will provide for costs equal to 90 percent of the state's per-student funding for public schools, over a three-year phase-in period. SPN provided start-up support to **Opportunity Arkansas**, which launched last year and played a role in making this win possible.
- **Florida:** In March, Florida lawmakers expanded the state's Family Empowerment Scholarship program to all K-12 students. SPN provided targeted support to **The James Madison Institute** to bolster their advocacy efforts to dramatically expand Education Savings Account (ESA) eligibility for ALL students.
- **Oklahoma:** In May, the governor signed the Oklahoma Parental Choice Tax Credit Act, which will provide tax credits from \$5,000 to \$7,500 for K-12 students to attend a private or charter school outside of their assigned public school. SPN affiliate **Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs** (OCPA) was a key driver in making the ground fertile for this meaningful reform. Earlier this year, SPN held a strategy session with the entire OCPA team and provided coaching to aid in this win.
- **Ohio:** As part of its biennial budget, lawmakers passed the largest expansion of education choice in the state's history by broadening eligibility to all students for Ohio's EdChoice program. SPN affiliate, **The Buckeye Institute**, regularly produced intellectual ammunition and submitted testimony in favor of universal eligibility.
- **North Carolina:** This September, the Tar Heel State became the ninth state in the nation to pass a universal education freedom program. Through the recently passed budget, legislators increased funding for the Opportunity Scholarship program providing all North Carolina families, regardless of income, up to \$7,500 to pay for an education of their choosing. The **John Locke Foundation** (JLF), along with several coalition partners, helped see this reform to the finish line. SPN provided targeted support to JLF over the years to expand education freedom in the state.

Other states have moved the needle on education reforms, from expanding ESA programs to improving literacy rates to education funding reform. The Network remains committed to challenging America's broken education system and championing students so everyone can achieve their greatest potential.

## Expanding Healthcare Access

While the federal government's solution to the healthcare crisis takes a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach, the states are proposing market-driven, innovative healthcare solutions.

- Nevada passed Right to Try for Individualized Treatments (Right to Try 2.0), a first-in-the-nation law crafted by the **Goldwater Institute**. This allows patients with rare illnesses to access cutting-edge individualized treatments, even if they are not approved by the FDA. Right to Try 2.0 is an expansion of the Right to Try Act, which was signed



THE NETWORK,  
BOTH IN-  
STATE AND  
NATIONALLY,  
WAS VITAL TO  
OUR SUCCESS.  
FIRST AND  
FOREMOST, STATE POLICY  
NETWORK BELIEVED IN US  
AND PROVIDED FUNDS THAT  
WERE MATCHED LOCALLY TO  
LAUNCH A CRUCIAL SOCIAL  
MEDIA CAMPAIGN DIRECTED  
AT LEGISLATORS AND THEIR  
FREE-MARKET-ALIGNED  
CONSTITUENTS."

Oran Smith, senior fellow at Palmetto Promise Institute



Mark Janus speaks outside the US Supreme Court during the *Janus v. AFSCME* case.

into federal law by President Trump in 2018 and allows terminally ill patients who have exhausted approved treatment options to access investigational treatments.

- West Virginia and South Carolina both repealed certificate-of-need (CON) laws. CON laws make it more difficult for hospitals and healthcare providers to expand, despite the healthcare shortages we've seen in the states. The **Cardinal Institute for West Virginia Policy** provided timely research and publications on the dangers CON laws pose to patients. Similarly in South Carolina, the **Palmetto Promise Institute** worked closely with national and local partners to form a coalition to accelerate this reform and give patients access to better healthcare options."

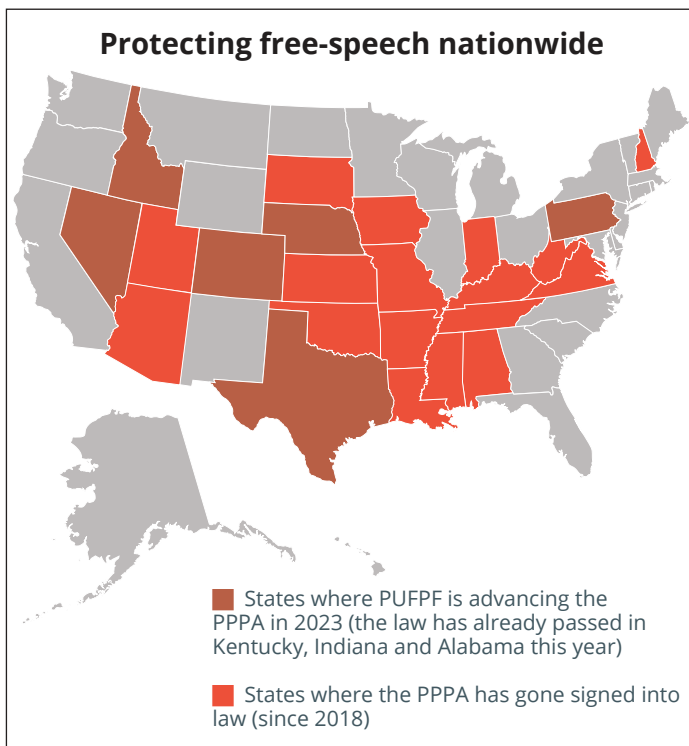
## Championing the Rights of Workers

In June, we celebrated the fifth anniversary of the historic Supreme Court decision in *Janus vs. AFSCME*. According to Mackinac Center estimates, **more than 22 percent of workers have left their union, accounting for an estimated 1.1 million workers who have left their union since the decision.** Since *Janus*, the Network has continued to defend the rights of workers from government unions and support labor reforms that protect workers from illegal deductions from their hard-earned paychecks.

The **Beacon Center of Tennessee** enshrined right-to-work in the state's constitution after a ballot initiative was passed last year and adopted in 2023. This ensures that workers' First Amendment rights are protected in addition to their ability to leave a union should they so choose. Six years ago, Beacon set this ambitious goal and participated in SPN-led strategic positioning meetings on the issue. They ran a successful campaign that yielded over 70 percent of the public voting "yes" in their favor. This protection can be replicated in other states to protect right-to-work in the event that the politics in the state

change. At SPN's 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting, Beacon took home the Biggest Home State Win Award for their efforts to protect workers' rights.

Thanks to efforts of **The James Madison Institute, Mackinac Center for Public Policy, Freedom Foundation**, and other national partners, Arkansas and Florida passed paycheck protection laws that prohibit the government from automatically deducting union dues from workers' paychecks—making it so workers must explicitly consent to membership.



## Protecting Citizen Privacy

In today's political climate, activists have used the personal information of philanthropists to target and harass them for their beliefs and values. After looking across the landscape and identifying the need for a concerted effort to protect the rights of private citizens, SPN helped incubate **People United for Privacy (PUFP)**. Thanks to the support of SPN donors, PUFP protects the fundamental right of Americans to freedom of speech, regardless of the causes they choose to support. Since its founding in 2018, PUFP has successfully passed bi-partisan-supported legislation in 17 states.

These policy victories and so many more are only made possible because of your support of SPN and the 50-state Network. Thank you for all that you do to expand freedom and opportunity for all Americans.

# When Innovation Meets Opportunity: Ed-Prize Program Elevates New Learning Models

Since our early days, State Policy Network has viewed education as one of the most critical policy issues of our time. And in 2023, it's clear that the rest of the nation agrees. Iowa, Utah, Florida, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Ohio, and most recently North Carolina, passed universal education freedom reforms, empowering families to use state funds for education options that meet their children's needs. As the demand for school choice grows, education entrepreneurs have led the way to provide the much-needed "supply" of education options for families to use.

We need policy wins to break down barriers to education opportunities. And we need entrepreneurs, practitioners, and community leaders to build the infrastructure to implement these reforms and ensure families truly benefit from them.



SPN has invested in education entrepreneurs advancing forward-thinking ideas through **Ed-Prize**, a grant program that accelerates new solutions to improve education outcomes across the country. Thanks to the generous support of our past sponsors, **The Challenge Foundation**, **The Arthur N. Rupe Foundation**, **The Walton Family Foundation**, and **Stand**



Education entrepreneurs meet in Richmond, VA, for an SPN workshop. This includes Nasiyah Isra-UI (far left), founder of Canary Academy.

**Together Trust**, we've had the opportunity to elevate ambitious projects—ones that advance flexible learning models, drive accountability through transparency, empower education entrepreneurs, and improve performance in K–12 education programs.

This year, with the support of Stand Together Trust, we selected three recipients who have pioneered learning models for the 2023 Ed-Prize. We had a record number of applications—more than a 139-percent increase from 2022. These education entrepreneurs are changing the education landscape and bringing to market bold, new ideas that meet the diverse needs of students across demographics, learning styles, and socioeconomic backgrounds.



COMING FROM A HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT I WAS DOING ON THE SIDE TO SUPPORT MY SIBLING AND TURNING IT INTO AN ORGANIZATION THAT IS CHANGING SO MANY LIVES IS INCREDIBLE. IT BRINGS TEARS TO MY EYES TO SEE HOW ONE PERSON'S ACTIONS CAN CREATE A WAVE OF CHANGE. I'M EXCITED TO SEE HOW THE MOVEMENT GROWS AND WHAT POLICIES AND DATA WILL COME OUT OF LISTENING TO THE STORIES OF SO MANY FAMILIES IMPACTED BY THIS MOVEMENT."

—Nasiyah Isra-UI, founder of Canary Academy



Andrea Keith, executive director of Let Grow, presents at SPN's LaunchPad event in Las Vegas, Nevada

## Shifting the Homeschool Narrative

After she noticed her brother struggling with his homeschooling lessons, 15-year-old Virginia native Nasiyah Isra-UI designed a learning program for him, incorporating a curriculum that adapted to his style of learning, which—in his case—wasn't watching or listening, but doing. After trying out Nasiyah's program, he started to grasp the concepts he had previously struggled with.

Her brother's experience with an individualized approach to learning inspired Nasiyah to bring her curriculum to other students who had similar difficulties learning within the homeschool framework. In 2020, she built **Canary Academy**, a one-stop shop where homeschoolers can go to get the best content, instructional materials, and customizable courses based on their learning needs. Nasiyah's homeschool program also represents students from economically disadvantaged communities who might not have the resources to create a robust homeschool experience.

"As a homeschool graduate myself, I understand just how important it is to have the freedom to choose what form of education works best for you," said Nasiyah. "But many families do not have this luxury due to socioeconomic barriers. We hope to change this through our initiative supporting homeschoolers—one day at a time."

Thanks to Ed-Prize funding, Canary Academy plans to partner with homeschool groups and media outlets through the Representation Matters in Home Education Initiative, a grassroots effort that shares stories of homeschooled youth to empower and support those in underrepresented and socioeconomically disadvantaged communities.

## Leading the Movement for Childhood Independence

As a former educator and parent, **Let Grow** executive director Andrea Keith realized that many of today's students rely on adults for direction and guidance, stifling self-direction and independence. "Over time, there has been a change in child-



**"THE ED-PRIZE PROGRAM BRINGS TOGETHER SO MANY PEOPLE WITH GREAT IDEAS TRYING TO INNOVATE AND CHALLENGE THE STATUS QUO.**

—Andrea Keith, executive director of Let Grow

hood that has basically removed these small building blocks of opportunity for success. Children gradually build resilience and self-confidence through experiences of success and even failures," said Keith. "Success doesn't necessarily have to be academic based but can be as simple as figuring out how to climb a tree or making a sandwich. If you view these moments as grains of sand, children must have lots of little experiences to build the self-confidence that they can handle things."

This "grains-of-sand" concept led Keith to Let Grow, a project that encourages foundational building blocks to foster independence in learners while encouraging adults to take a step back to allow children to become more self-sufficient. "The biggest thing I like to say is you can't have self-directed learners if you don't have self-directed kids," said Keith. "And there isn't a teacher or adult out there who doesn't want kids to have that agency."

Andrea was a finalist for the 2022 Ed-Prize and credits SPN's LaunchPad program, which connects entrepreneurs with experts across industries to elevate new ideas, for helping her refine and elevate the Let Grow curriculum.

"The Ed-Prize program brings together so many people with great ideas trying to innovate and challenge the status quo. The experience that resulted through SPN's LaunchPad was critical in helping us hone our ideas and develop relationships with folks to encourage and motivate our whole organization forward. The Ed-Prize program also shines a light on innova-

tion in the education space, and I see this as a wonderful synergistic relationship."

With the funding from Ed-Prize, Andrea plans to expand the Let Grow project through the Let Grow Experience, which will bring the curriculum to nontraditional schools, including charters, microschools, and even homeschoolers. Let Grow will initially implement the program in several schools in New York and Massachusetts and hopes to expand in the coming years. The grant will also help bring awareness to the importance of childhood independence for overall learning and education of students.

## Supporting Student Autonomy Through Assessment

When we think of assessments, we often refer to our own experiences taking state tests, other standardized tests such as the ACT or SAT, or simply the final exam of the year. Many of us can recall feeling unprepared for these exams and the subsequent anxiety of taking the test and waiting for the results. Red Bridge has taken an entirely different approach to learning—and assessments—that gives students the self-confidence to truly master concepts.



Orly Friedman, founder and head of school at Red Bridge

**Red Bridge's** mission is to develop a sense of agency in every child as the foundation for academic and life success. Red Bridge defines agency as the ability to set meaningful goals and have the will and skill to achieve them. Orly Friedman, the founder and head of school, came up with this concept by drawing upon her experience teaching at Khan Lab School, where she saw students thrive when taught skills that self-directed learning. "When kids learned at their own pace, we saw what separated the successful from those who weren't," said Friedman. "And it wasn't about academic ability. It was about work habits. We decided we needed to teach those skills, started grouping students by those work habits, and created a system called 'independence levels' which essentially identified students' capacity to be self-directed."



**"I'M REALLY GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE ED-PRIZE PROGRAM. IT'S NICE TO FIND A COMMUNITY THAT IS SUPPORTIVE OF STUDENT-DRIVEN LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS.**

— Orly Friedman, Founder and head of school at Red Bridge

Friedman has plans to apply the mission of Red Bridge to assessments and to use the Ed-Prize grant to develop a com-

petency-based evaluation system called "Learning Credits," which puts *students* in control of what they are assessed on and when. Students have a bank of credits to select from and can sign up to be assessed when they feel they have mastered concepts. If successful, the project can be scaled to serve students in homeschooling, microschooling, and traditional schooling. "I'm really grateful for the support of the Ed-Prize program. It's nice to find a community that is supportive of student-driven learning environments," said Friedman. "I want to serve all students and I hope what we do ultimately has a broader impact."

Friedman hopes that other school models will adopt the Red Bridge assessment framework and encourage student-directed learning that cultivates confidence and mastery.

Thanks to our generous sponsors and supporters like you, learning models like Canary Academy, Let Grow, and Red Bridge are emerging across the country, even in states that do not have choice programs in place. With the help of SPN, our partners in the states are working closely with real-world education entrepreneurs to ensure that education policy reforms meet the needs of their communities.

# Supporter Spotlight

## Jack Miller

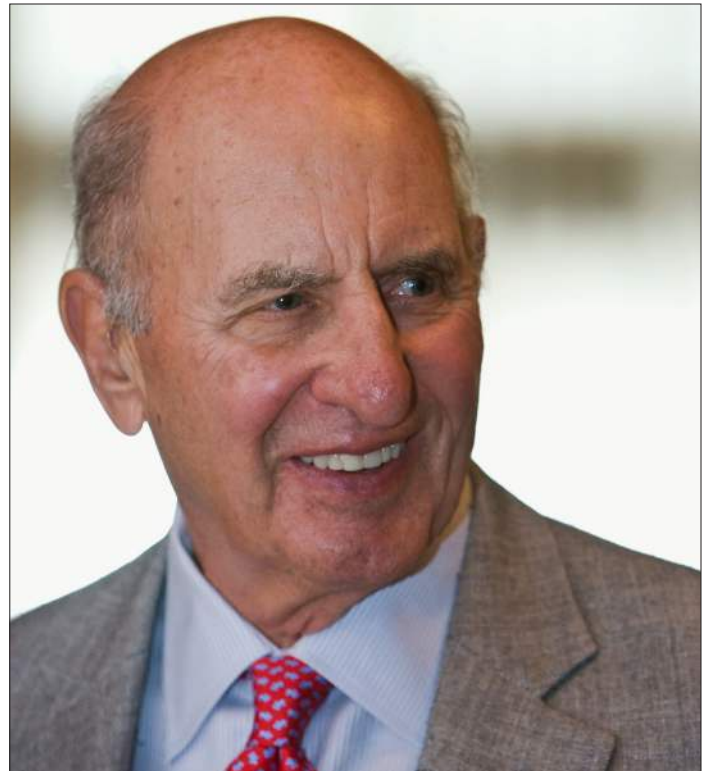
Jack Miller is an American success story. Growing up in the bustling northwest side of Chicago, Jack credits his parents for fostering autonomy in his early years, which gave him many opportunities to work as a jack-of-all-trades. “My parents were incredible people and gave me a lot of freedom all through my growing up years,” said Jack. “I started working at a very young age, not because I needed to, but because I wanted to work.” Jack recalls working a variety of jobs—delivering laundry on his bike, serving as an usher at the famed Chicago Woods Theatre, and setting pins in a bowling alley before it had automated machines.

Jack also fondly remembers his Chicago education and the impact his teachers at Von Steuben High School had on him. These educators were dedicated to challenging and encouraging their students, even teaching Jack and his classmates college algebra and English, which the students petitioned them to do. This would serve him well at the University of Illinois, where he would graduate in three and a half years.

After college, Jack went to work as a salesman in his uncle’s business, which manufactured food products. His territory stretched from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic Ocean, and from the Canadian border to Miami. The experience sharpened his sales skills as he met with wholesalers and established the foundation of his impressive business acumen. “I always say I got my masters in business administration from being on the road and selling. That’s where I learned how to market a product, when to change a business strategy, and how to solve problems.”

Soon after his marriage, Jack realized that life on the road was not conducive to married life, so he began to work for a company selling briefcases. However, the company was sold a year later, and Jack was looking for another job.

After some interviews, he decided to run his own business and found his way into the office supply industry. He sold products to businesses across Chicago, going door-to-door. After about a year, he was making enough to support himself; six months later, he invited his brother Harvey to become a partner. They split up the city, and both were out selling to cover Harvey’s salary.



Just a few months after Jack started the business, he sent out a penny postcard with five sale items on it to about 150 companies and got a decent response. This was followed by one-page mailings, then four-page, 16-page, and 32-page mailings. After about four years, the phones were ringing so much that the brothers decided they were in the mail-order business. In the late 1970s, inflation was soaring, and they could no longer guarantee prices for six months at a time, so they began to mail their customers every month instead of every three months. For two consecutive years, their sales almost doubled, and they were soon mailing customers almost every week.

They went from a spare bedroom in Jack’s home with his wife typing up the invoices, to a cleaned-out coal bin in Uncle Herb’s basement, to a retail store space, and then to their dad’s building after he closed his chicken business. With continued growth, they bought a 27,000-square-foot building in Chicago, then built a facility in the Northern suburbs, and finally a 350,000-square-foot headquarters on 27 acres of land. They added eight distribution centers around the country, providing next-day delivery anywhere in the country. They were working ten hours a day plus half a day on Saturdays, and Jack’s wife insisted that they get a house within a ten-minute drive of the office.

Jack’s determination and hard work paid dividends, as his one-man operation became the largest independent direct marketer of office products in the country, Quill Corporation (sold to Staples in 1998). Jack credits his success to hard work, seizing opportunities, and his continuous pursuit of the American



SPN IS DOING CRITICAL WORK TO KEEP THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AT BAY WHILE ALSO REMINDING THE PUBLIC WHY FEDERALISM AND THE DOCUMENTS THAT SHAPED OUR SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT STILL MATTER JUST AS MUCH TODAY AS THEY DID OVER ALMOST 250 YEARS AGO."

—Jack Miller, SPN Supporter and founder of the Jack Miller Center

Dream. **"Because we live in America and our nation was founded on the principles of the free market, it's possible for others to do what I did."**

As Jack built his business, he remained a committed philanthropist with a keen interest in civic education and organizations that advanced the American Founders' vision of a limited government. When he saw the lack of knowledge and understanding of American government and civics in K-12 schools and at the university level, he founded the **Jack Miller Center**, a nationwide network of scholars and teachers dedicated to preserving and promoting the principles that make America exceptional.

"Many of today's young people are not taught about our founding principles and the ideas that shaped our system of government," said Jack. "At the Jack Miller Center, we are determined to ensure that the next generation can carry on our American legacy. But they can only do so if they have a deep understanding of what that means and why it's important."

The Jack Miller Center has reached more than 1.65 million students through more than 1,000 scholars, across 300 campuses. The Center has key partnerships with organizations that are transforming civic education. Several of the Center's programs provide training, seminars, and resources to civics and history teachers.

In 2020, the Jack Miller Center partnered with the Ashbrook Institute and the Bill of Rights Institute to form the American Civics and History Initiative, bringing over half of Florida's social studies teachers high-quality professional development content. Because of the success of this program and the demand from teachers for more like it, the American Civics and History Initiative is expanding this model into Wisconsin, Texas, and Virginia. This fall, the Jack Miller Center will host its second civic education summit. Civic education experts and leading

scholars from across the nation will gather in Philadelphia to discuss reforms in K-12 and higher education.

The Jack Miller Center's efforts to cultivate an engaged citizenry are complimentary to SPN's efforts to protect federalism and solve problems at the state and local levels. "When our Founders came together to form this new nation, they intentionally created a system of government that had checks and balances, and in doing so created protections that would prevent us from becoming a large, centralized government," said Jack. "SPN is doing critical work to keep the federal government at bay while also reminding the public why federalism and the documents that shaped our system of government still matter just as much today as they did over almost 250 years ago."

Americans face many different challenges, but Jack believes that a well-educated population, especially one that understands the proper role of government, is the antidote to many of our ailments. "Today, we are so divided as a nation, but I believe that we can come together, despite our political and ideological differences," said Jack. **"Within the American framework, we can engage in civic discourse and unite people with the common mission of pushing back against federal overreach and preserving our rights and liberties. Not only for ourselves but for the generations to come."**

Philanthropists and entrepreneurs like Jack are the reason that SPN can work with our Network to restore the American Founders' vision of a limited government that serves the people, not politicians in Washington, DC. Thank you, Jack, for your steadfast partnership and support of SPN and our 50-state Network.

# Startup Spotlight: Opportunity Arkansas

A new think tank joins SPN's startup program to transform Arkansas into a destination where families not only come to live but where they establish roots for future generations.

Arkansas is called "The Natural State" for its lush forests, rolling hills, and beautiful landscape. But it is also a state that lands near the bottom of every national ranking, whether it be economic growth, education, or healthcare. Despite its challenges, there is significant, untapped opportunity for Arkansas to become one of the most sought-after states in the country – if only government policy wouldn't get in the way. And given recent changes to the governor's office and legislature, Arkansas is primed to be fertile testing ground for free-market policies that other states can replicate.

Nic Horton is a lifelong Arkansan. He grew up in Searcy, AR, to parents who dedicated their lives to teaching their children good values and ensuring they could one day have the American Dream. He came from modest means, and his father worked multiple jobs so that his mother could homeschool him and his siblings. They didn't have a lot, but they always gave back. They were active members of their church and even started a local food bank to serve single mothers struggling to make ends meet.

Nic's journey into the world of public policy came from witnessing how policy impacted his own community. He saw poverty, drug addiction, increased dependency on government assistance, and children inheriting the same problems that limited opportunity for their parents and grandparents.

Instead, Nic decided it was time to end the status quo. He was among the first in his family to attend college and decided to pursue a career in policy, working for several free-market groups including the Advance Arkansas Institute and Foundation for Government Accountability, where he has spent most of his career up to this point. He became an avid researcher, especially on the topics of food stamps and Medicaid – a program that has ballooned in Arkansas to include nearly a third of its residents today.

While many policy experts head to Washington, Nic chose to remain in Arkansas, determined to raise his own family in his home state.

"I want Arkansas to become a place people choose to stay because they love it, not a place they flee due to poor policy," he said. "I want to create so much opportunity and growth that when my kids graduate, they won't even consider leaving."



Nic Horton receives a pen used to sign welfare reform by Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

A turning point in Nic's life came in 2021 with the passing of his father, who had been his closest confidant, and even the best man in his wedding. It was then he re-evaluated his priorities and decided to go all in and start his own think tank. With that, the support of a dedicated board and supporters, and his colleagues at State Policy Network, he founded Opportunity Arkansas in 2022.

Nic joined SPN's startup program, which cultivates emerging leaders who want to build new policy organizations in their states dedicated to free markets and solving problems on the state and local level. Through the program, Opportunity Arkansas was brought into SPN's suite of services – everything from development training, strategy planning, operations assistance, and targeted grants to help organizations start on strong footing. SPN takes a "wrap around" approach to our partnership with Network affiliates, where we engage them on strategy, connect them with other leaders, and assist with any gaps that may stand in the way of success. We partner with them beyond the startup phase and tailor our services to where the organization is in its growth.

"Nic Horton and his team have done a fantastic job launching Opportunity Arkansas and making an impact in just a few short months," said Collin Roth, SPN's director of strategy development. "I had the pleasure of working with the Opportunity Arkansas team in Little Rock on strategy development and I'm confident this organization is just getting started as they seek to renew the Land of Opportunity with innovative, home-grown solutions."

2022 was also the year Sarah Huckabee Sanders was elected as the governor of Arkansas, further opening the Overton Window. Opportunity Arkansas seized this moment for change, armed with ideas, plans, and polling data on Day 1. Nic and his team established strong relationships and maintained a constant presence at the state Capitol, actively participating in discussions and testifying on bills.

In their first year, Opportunity Arkansas developed the “Roadmap to Opportunity” policy agenda, a comprehensive plan for implementing free-market policies to reverse years of government growth. **In 2023, their policy agenda helped inform 20 policy achievements (and counting) in key areas including education, jobs, and welfare.**

In early 2023, they played a pivotal role in the passage of the state’s universal Education Freedom Account (EFA), a program phased in over three years. The EFA is available to all families in the state and enables them to use their education dollars

Opportunity Arkansas’ work building an engaged audience of lawmakers earned them the 2023 SPN Communications Excellence Award, in addition to being one of the organizations recognized through the 2023 Network Award for universal education freedom.



Opportunity Arkansas earns an SPN Communications Excellence Award at the 2023 Annual Meeting.

## NIC’S VISION FOR OPPORTUNITY ARKANSAS AND OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH SPN WILL STRENGTHEN OUR STATE AND ALLOW OUR CITIZENS TO PROSPER.”

—Betty Jane Strong, founding board chair of Opportunity Arkansas.

towards finding the right education environment for their children. Opportunity Arkansas cultivated relationships with lawmakers the year before, hosted messaging workshops, conducted polling on specifics of the LEARNS Act, told personal stories, and published op-eds in state media outlets. Their research was presented at their first policy summit, attended by more than 40 state legislators and key members of Governor Sanders’ team.

Along with major education reform, Opportunity Arkansas also helped usher in universal occupational license reciprocity, which allows workers to practice their profession across state lines without burdensome fees or training. And just before the legislature could pass an expansion of the food stamp program, Opportunity Arkansas stopped it and ensured the program could remain viable for the truly needy.

Being the founder of a new organization comes with unique challenges. It is with the support of SPN and our CEO peer network that Nic found others who had been in his shoes to learn from their experiences. In particular, he notes that the advice he received from Kendall Cotton, the CEO of Frontier Institute in Montana, was particularly helpful given that his organization was also new and having an immediate impact.

Now, he will take these lessons with him as he charts the course for the future. Opportunity Arkansas is hard at work identifying policy solutions for 2024 and 2025 – from eliminating the state’s income tax to strengthening the school choice program to advocating for much-needed welfare reform to help lift millions of Arkansans out of poverty.

“We wouldn’t be where we are without SPN. The connections, resources, input, and strategic planning were all incredibly useful,” said Nic. “It can be a lonely thing running a startup organization. But knowing I can pick up the phone and talk to SPN or any of the other state CEOs has been tremendous. Thank you to the supporters who make this possible.”

“Nic’s vision for Opportunity Arkansas and our partnership with SPN will strengthen our state and allow our citizens to prosper,” said Betty Jane Strong, founding board chair of Opportunity Arkansas. “Everything that SPN has done for us has made our organization more successful, from participating in the SPN board chair peer group to joining the strategy session to map out our priorities. I don’t think any start-up group or organization can flourish without SPN.”

## STATE AFFILIATES

Our Network of 63 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. For more information visit [spn.org](https://spn.org).

### ALABAMA

Alabama Policy Institute  
[alabamapolicy.org](https://alabamapolicy.org)

### ALASKA

Alaska Policy Forum  
[alaskapolicyforum.org](https://alaskapolicyforum.org)

### ARIZONA

Goldwater Institute  
[goldwaterinstitute.org](https://goldwaterinstitute.org)

### ARKANSAS

Arkansas Policy Foundation  
[arkansaspolicyfoundation.org](https://arkansaspolicyfoundation.org)

Opportunity Arkansas  
[OpportunityArkansas.org](https://OpportunityArkansas.org)

### CALIFORNIA

California Policy Center  
[californiapolicycenter.org](https://californiapolicycenter.org)

Pacific Research Institute  
[pacificresearch.org](https://pacificresearch.org)

### COLORADO

Independence Institute  
[i2i.org](https://i2i.org)

### CONNECTICUT

Yankee Institute for Public Policy  
[yankeeinstitute.org](https://yankeeinstitute.org)

### DELAWARE

Caesar Rodney Institute  
[caesarrodney.org](https://caesarrodney.org)

### FLORIDA

Foundation for Government Accountability  
[thefga.org](https://thefga.org)

The James Madison Institute  
[jamesmadison.org](https://jamesmadison.org)

### GEORGIA

Georgia Center for Opportunity  
[georgiaopportunity.org](https://georgiaopportunity.org)

Georgia Public Policy Foundation  
[georgiapolicy.org](https://georgiapolicy.org)

### HAWAII

Grassroot Institute of Hawaii  
[grassrootinstitute.org](https://grassrootinstitute.org)

### IDAHO

Idaho Freedom Foundation  
[idahofreedom.org](https://idahofreedom.org)

Mountain States Policy Center  
[mountainstatespolicy.org](https://mountainstatespolicy.org)

### ILLINOIS

Illinois Policy Institute  
[illinoispolicy.org](https://illinoispolicy.org)

### INDIANA

Indiana Policy Review Foundation  
[inpolicy.org](https://inpolicy.org)

### IOWA

Iowans for Tax Relief Foundation  
[taxrelief.org](https://taxrelief.org)

### KANSAS

Kansas Policy Institute  
[kansaspolicy.org](https://kansaspolicy.org)

### KENTUCKY

Bluegrass Institute for Public Policy Solutions  
[bipps.org](https://bipps.org)

### LOUISIANA

Pelican Institute for Public Policy  
[pelicaninstitute.org](https://pelicaninstitute.org)

### MAINE

Maine Policy Institute  
[mainepolicy.org](https://mainepolicy.org)

### MARYLAND

Maryland Public Policy Institute  
[mdpolicy.org](https://mdpolicy.org)

### MASSACHUSETTS

Pioneer Institute  
[pioneerinstitute.org](https://pioneerinstitute.org)

### MICHIGAN

Mackinac Center for Public Policy  
[mackinac.org](https://mackinac.org)

### MINNESOTA

Center of the American Experiment  
[americanexperiment.org](https://americanexperiment.org)

Freedom Foundation of Minnesota  
[freedomfoundationofminnesota.com](https://freedomfoundationofminnesota.com)

### MISSISSIPPI

Empower Mississippi Foundation  
[empowerms.org](https://empowerms.org)

Mississippi Center for Public Policy  
[mspolicy.org](https://mspolicy.org)

### MISSOURI

Show-Me Institute  
[showmeinstitute.org](https://showmeinstitute.org)

### MONTANA

Frontier Institute  
[frontierinstitute.org](https://frontierinstitute.org)

### NEBRASKA

Platte Institute for Economic Research  
[platteinstitute.org](https://platteinstitute.org)

### NEVADA

Nevada Policy Research Institute  
[npri.org](https://npri.org)

### NEW HAMPSHIRE

Josiah Bartlett Center for Public Policy  
[jbartlett.org](https://jbartlett.org)

### NEW JERSEY

Garden State Initiative  
[gardenstateinitiative.org](https://gardenstateinitiative.org)

### NEW MEXICO

Rio Grande Foundation  
[riograndefoundation.org](https://riograndefoundation.org)

### NEW YORK

Empire Center  
[empirecenter.org](https://empirecenter.org)

### NORTH CAROLINA

John Locke Foundation  
[johnlocke.org](https://johnlocke.org)

### OHIO

The Buckeye Institute  
[buckeyeinstitute.org](https://buckeyeinstitute.org)

### OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs  
[ocpathink.org](https://ocpathink.org)

### OREGON

Cascade Policy Institute  
[cascadepolicy.org](https://cascadepolicy.org)

### PENNSYLVANIA

Commonwealth Foundation  
[commonwealthfoundation.org](https://commonwealthfoundation.org)

### RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island Center for Freedom & Prosperity  
[rifreedom.org](https://rifreedom.org)

### SOUTH CAROLINA

Palmetto Promise Institute  
[palmettopromise.org](https://palmettopromise.org)

South Carolina Policy Council  
[scpolicycouncil.org](https://scpolicycouncil.org)

### SOUTH DAKOTA

Great Plains Public Policy Institute  
[greatplainsppi.org](https://greatplainsppi.org)

### TENNESSEE

Beacon Center of Tennessee  
[beacontn.org](https://beacontn.org)

### TEXAS

Texas Public Policy Foundation  
[texaspolicy.com](https://texaspolicy.com)

### UTAH

Libertas Institute  
[libertasutah.org](https://libertasutah.org)

Sutherland Institute  
[sutherlandinstitute.org](https://sutherlandinstitute.org)

### VIRGINIA

Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy  
[thomasjeffersoninst.org](https://thomasjeffersoninst.org)

Virginia Institute for Public Policy  
[virginia institute.org](https://virginia institute.org)

### WASHINGTON

Freedom Foundation  
[freedomfoundation.com](https://freedomfoundation.com)

Washington Policy Center  
[washingtonpolicy.org](https://washingtonpolicy.org)

### WEST VIRGINIA

Cardinal Institute for West Virginia Policy  
[cardinalinstitute.com](https://cardinalinstitute.com)

### WISCONSIN

Badger Institute  
[badgerinstitute.org](https://badgerinstitute.org)

Institute for Reforming Government  
[reforminggovernment.org](https://reforminggovernment.org)

MacIver Institute for Public Policy  
[maciverinstitute.com](https://maciverinstitute.com)

Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty  
[will-law.org](https://will-law.org)

### WYOMING

Wyoming Liberty Group  
[wyliberty.org](https://wyliberty.org)

*The updates provided reflect activities by the time of submission for publication. For real-time updates from the Network, please visit [SPN.org](https://SPN.org).*

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### ALABAMA

**ALABAMA POLICY INSTITUTE** • [alabamapolicy.org](https://alabamapolicy.org)

**Alabama Policy Institute** has spent decades advocating for the use of state revenues and surpluses to reduce the tax burden on Alabamians. During the 2023 Alabama regular legislative session, thanks in large part to API's leadership, taxes were finally reduced and eliminated for the average Alabamian. Eliminating the state's 4-percent sales tax on groceries has been a top priority for API for more than 20 years. API was able to navigate the passage of a law that will reduce the state's sales tax on groceries from 4 percent to 2 percent by September 1, 2024, if certain revenue growth metrics are met. A 1-percent reduction will take place in 2023, providing relief from record grocery prices. Repealing half of the grocery tax will save taxpayers an estimated \$318 million annually when fully implemented—the largest tax cut in Alabama history. API also championed the elimination of the state tax on overtime wages. That bill is the first of its kind in the nation. Not only will exempting overtime pay allow hardworking Alabamians to keep more of what they earn, API asserts that it will alleviate the state's labor shortage and improve Alabama's lagging labor participation rate. API is proud to be the only organization that shepherded and championed both historic tax cuts, but the taxpayers of Alabama are the real winners.



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### ALASKA

**ALASKA POLICY FORUM ALASKA** • [policyforum.org](https://policyforum.org)

**Alaska Policy Forum**, in partnership with Workers for Opportunity (WFO), recently hosted the Worker Freedom Policy Summit to promote freedom for Alaskan workers. Events included a policymaker educational summit and two public sessions designed to inform public employees about exercising their worker freedom rights affirmed by the *Janus* decision. The Summit featured presentations from key individuals from WFO, plus Mark Janus himself, regarding the intricacies of various labor policies. The Summit allowed APF to actively engage with audiences from different communities around Alaska and educate more than 100 Alaskans about worker freedom initiatives.



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### ARIZONA

**GOLDWATER INSTITUTE** • [goldwaterinstitute.org](https://goldwaterinstitute.org)

Nevada is the latest state to enact the **Goldwater Institute's** Right to Try for Individualized Treatments Act (Right to Try 2.0). This reform extends the protections of the original Right to Try to highly specialized treatments tailor-made for each patient's genetics. Designed to benefit those with rare and ultra-rare diseases, this reform ensures they have access to cutting-edge advancements in individualized medical care. To learn more about this policy, please contact Heather Curry ([hcurry@goldwaterinstitute.org](mailto:hcurry@goldwaterinstitute.org)).





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## ARKANSAS

### ARKANSAS POLICY FOUNDATION • [arkansaspolicyfoundation.org](https://arkansaspolicyfoundation.org)

Earlier this year, Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders proposed a universal school choice measure, the LEARNS Act, and the Arkansas Legislature approved the proposal. LEARNS is an acronym for “literacy, empowerment, accountability, readiness, networking, and safety.” Recent data from the National Center for Education Statistics showed the average reading score of Arkansas fourth- and eighth-grade students “was not significantly different” from their average score in 1998. The Center also reported no states scored higher in fourth-grade public school reading when comparing average scores in 2022 with those from 2019, the previous assessment year. The **Arkansas Policy Foundation** has advanced school choice since its 1995 founding. The Arkansas school choice market enrolls nearly 110,000 students and is likely to expand under the new program. LEARNS will rely on Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) and builds on previous school choice expansions, including charter schools, virtual schools, and the Succeed Scholarship program (a voucher system). The Policy Foundation is engaging with Arkansas communities by hosting a public forum on literacy and distributing dictionaries to third-grade students in at-risk communities.



### OPPORTUNITY ARKANSAS • [opportunityarkansas.com](https://opportunityarkansas.com)

Now that Governor Sarah Sanders has signed the LEARNS Act, Arkansas’ landmark educational freedom legislation, the Left is using the courts and the petition process to circumvent the will of the Legislature and the people. At least one lawsuit has already been filed, and a petition effort is underway to get a repeal of the LEARNS Act on the ballot in November. **Opportunity Arkansas** has been at the forefront of broadcasting the truth about how the LEARNS Act expands educational choices for Arkansas families. OA released a comprehensive report in February detailing the positive impact this legislation will have on Arkansas schools. On the fiscal front, Arkansas has a surplus in excess of \$1 billion for the last fiscal year. OA supports phasing out the state income tax to bring much-needed relief to hardworking Arkansans. A recent poll conducted by OA reveals that half of likely Arkansas voters support repeal, an increase of nine full points since OA’s previous quarterly tracking poll.



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## CALIFORNIA

### CALIFORNIA POLICY CENTER • [californiapolicycenter.org](https://californiapolicycenter.org)

**California Policy Center** (CPC) helped launch the Coalition for Parental Rights ([caparentalrights.com](https://caparentalrights.com)) this summer, along with nearly two dozen California pro-parent groups. The coalition’s mission is to promote a commonsense Parental Notification Policy to school boards across the state. The policy is based on Assembly Bill 1314, introduced by state Assemblyman Bill Essayli (R-Riverside), which would require school officials to notify parents within 72 hours if they become aware that a student is requesting to use a different name or pronouns or to participate in sex-segregated sports or use bathrooms that do not align with the student’s biological sex or gender on their birth certificate or official records. Legislative Democrats killed the bill, so the coalition developed a school district policy that was quickly adopted, or formally introduced for consideration, by a rapidly growing number of school boards in the state. California Democrats have been caught off guard by this grass-roots response to efforts by Gov. Gavin Newsom’s administration, Attorney General Rob Bonta, and the state’s teachers’ unions to undermine the authority of local school boards. In addition, CPC recently launched a Parental Rights Pledge campaign to help Californians distinguish which elected officials support parental rights.

## PACIFIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE • [pacificresearch.org](https://pacificresearch.org)

In its latest research on California's green energy mandates—which are inspiring the Biden administration and blue states to pursue similar policies nationwide—**Pacific Research Institute** has found that California will fall 21.1 percent short of the electricity required to meet the state's 100-percent electric vehicle mandate. The research has received significant state and national media attention since its launch. In September 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom signed an executive order requiring all new passenger cars and light trucks sold in California to be zero-emission vehicles by 2035. "Sapping California's Energy Future" explores how this and other green mandates will create avoidable energy shortages in the state. Authors Winegarden and Jackson found that nearly 60 percent of current state electricity generation comes from natural gas and nuclear power. Including hydroelectric power that does not count as renewable, two-thirds of state power today comes from disfavored sources. The actual deficit will be worse, as the PRI report does not factor in the energy required to meet other green mandates, such as prohibitions on gas-powered air conditioners. To meet government-imposed deadlines, California will have to expand its annual addition of renewables by 86 percent. Winegarden and Jackson argue that California should repeal its green mandates and instead promote market-based climate change policies.



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## COLORADO

### INDEPENDENCE INSTITUTE • [i2i.org](https://i2i.org)

**Independence Institute** is playing a leadership role in a statewide fight over a major fiscal problem in Colorado: skyrocketing property taxes. Due to Colorado's record growth and increasing property values, property taxes will hit historical highs. The Gallagher Amendment, which repealed existing residential property-tax protections in 2020, will exacerbate the damage. The Institute is now leading the fight against another referred measure, HH, on the 2024 ballot. It looks like property-tax relief but is a disguised tactic to forever eliminate taxpayer refunds made possible by the Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR). The Institute educated the citizenry about Colorado's property taxes through a video series from its Fiscal Policy Center. This series, which earned more than 60,000 views, was strategically timed as new home valuations—showing dramatically increased property taxes—arrived for taxpayers across the state. Fiscal Policy Center Director Ben Murrey was featured in media across the state to discuss the issue. The Institute is now leading the effort to educate citizens about this harmful ballot initiative. Progressives in Colorado have long sought to eliminate taxpayer refunds under TABOR. As it has for more than 30 years, the Institute will continue to lead the fight to protect TABOR and Colorado taxpayers' refunds.





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## CONNECTICUT

**YANKEE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • [yankeeinstitute.org](http://yankeeinstitute.org)**

**Yankee Institute** is focused on bringing positive educational reform to Connecticut with the ultimate goal of funding students, not systems. The Connecticut Center for Educational Excellence ([ctcee.org](http://ctcee.org)) launched earlier this year to provide scholarships to families seeking an alternative to their designated government school—the program has already received around 800 applications from low-income families in nearly 80 cities across the state. To encourage funding for educational alternatives, Yankee Institute also helped nearly pass a scholarship tax credit program this legislative session only to have it stripped out under union pressure at the eleventh hour. Yankee Institute is dedicated to getting that proposal across the finish line as a first step to improving outcomes for young minds in Connecticut. Additionally, Yankee Institute’s growing relationship with professors and students at the University of New Haven will provide academic research on the effects of expanding educational opportunities. Yankee Institute will continue building its audience engagement platform that provides an easy and effective way for Yankee Institute supporters to directly communicate with their elected officials on important policy areas.

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## DELAWARE

**CAESAR RODNEY INSTITUTE • [caesarrodney.org](http://caesarrodney.org)**



In fall 2023, the **Caesar Rodney Institute** will launch an information campaign to awaken Delawareans to the poor public education outcomes in the state. For years, the Delaware Department of Education has hid the state’s declining education outcomes. Delaware students have the fourth worst proficiency scores in the country on the National Assessment of Education Progress (The Nation’s Report Card). A small state of only 19 small school districts, Delaware has 25 schools with single-digit proficiency scores in either math or English. This is unacceptable. CRI will host an “Education in Crisis” free event in September for concerned parents and stakeholders. The event will showcase several education experts. Additionally, CRI will run video campaigns on social media and place billboard ads on major roads in Delaware. Each endeavor will address specific concerns about Delaware’s public schools and give parents practical steps to improve their child’s education. Despite being the ninth highest per pupil in spending nationally, Delaware’s poor academic performance is linked to increases in school violence (including bullying) and a doubling of student absenteeism. The ineffective Social and Emotional Learning curriculum and a severe shortage of teachers amplify these poor results. CRI will also provide parents with a digital or paper sample letter to sign and send to their legislators, expressing their concerns over these issues.

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## FLORIDA

### FOUNDATION FOR GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY • [thefga.org](https://thefga.org)

This year, **Foundation for Government Accountability** has seen significant progress on REINS-style legislation, a reform requiring legislative approval for major regulatory actions. The organization has engaged with lawmakers in 24 states on this issue, engaging audiences by providing bill analysis, in-person focus group events, digital outreach, committee support, and on-the-ground meetings and briefings. To date, FGA has seen deregulatory REINS-style bills filed in five states, including North Carolina, Utah, Missouri, Idaho, and Virginia.



### THE JAMES MADISON INSTITUTE • [jamesmadison.org](https://jamesmadison.org)

Florida is key to the American dream. The decisions made here have profound implications for the other 49 states. So, The **James Madison Institute** launched Blueprint: Florida to collaborate with on-the-ground partners around the country to replicate successes from the Sunshine State. Over the past few months, JMI has helped push back against policies threatening economic prosperity and growth. JMI engaged in South Carolina and Alaska to expand the successful certificate-of-need (CON) repeal effort. The Institute testified before the Colorado Legislature on live event ticketing and resale issues relating to Ticketmaster LiveNation's dominance. JMI collaborated with partners in Tennessee, Montana, Idaho, Texas, South Carolina, and Utah to work through poorly crafted tech policy and educate policy-makers on free-market approaches. Recently, Michigan saw the repeal of right-to-work and JMI launched a campaign in opposition of that decision, with billboards announcing, "Florida protects your right-to-work. If you want a more pleasant peninsula, move to Florida." Due to the visibility on social media, a political commentator in Wisconsin saw the message, replying, "I hope they run these in Wisconsin if we try to repeal right-to-work." JMI has also partnered with multiple national organizations on education policy, tax reform, election integrity, and the future of tech and innovation.



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## GEORGIA

### GEORGIA CENTER FOR OPPORTUNITY • [georgiaopportunity.org](https://georgiaopportunity.org)

**Georgia Center for Opportunity** is seizing opportunities to bring employment into focus as a key deliverable of a more humane safety net system that rewards work and family formation. The current safety net design is a barrier, not a bridge, to work. In partnership with the Texas Public Policy Foundation and the Pelican Institute (the Alliance for Opportunity), the Center is working with federal policymakers on a bill designed around a "One Door Model" that would give government workers and those in the system the ability to chart a clear path out of dependence. This would also allow states to follow a model of integrating workforce and safety net services. Work with Georgia lawmakers has produced a bill to kickstart workforce and safety net integration in the state. The bill would create a task force charged with bringing the One Door Model to Georgia. The Center is also addressing an issue facing many businesses that hire those coming out of poverty. Dubbed "benefits cliffs," the moniker refers to the scenario of individuals leaving employment to keep government services like childcare, healthcare, food, or housing. The Center has put out a model to help individuals and employers navigate this challenge, as well as to inform local and state policy on the issue.





#### GEORGIA PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION • [georgiapolicy.org](https://georgiapolicy.org)

When housing prices began skyrocketing in Georgia, the **Georgia Public Policy Foundation** released a first-of-its-kind study detailing the cost of regulation on new single-family housing in 2022. That report was followed up by three additional reports examining the government's role in higher home prices. This work has been presented to thousands of Georgians and was the driving force behind multiple bills introduced in 2023 to rein in local government regulations. To continue this momentum, the Foundation is hosting a housing summit this fall where key stakeholders will address the various issues affecting the cost of housing today.

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## HAWAII

#### GRASSROOT INSTITUTE OF HAWAII • [grassrootinstitute.org](https://grassrootinstitute.org)

Hawaii's severe shortage of healthcare professionals has been a key focus of the **Grassroot Institute of Hawaii** for the past several years. To build momentum for change going into the 2023 state legislative session, the Institute sponsored panel discussions across the state, published commentaries, spoke on radio programs, produced videos, and issued policy reports, including "How Changing Hawaii's Licensing Laws Could Improve Healthcare Access," which was distributed in February to all state lawmakers and other policy officials. The Institute also worked with lawmakers directly, submitting model legislation and testifying in writing and in person. Its main goals were to enter Hawaii into interstate licensure compacts for physicians, nurses, and other medical personnel, and exempt physicians from the state's onerous general excise tax. The tax-relief proposal died early, but the licensure compact proposals survived until nearly the end, when political shenanigans killed all but one—Senate Bill 674. Approved by the Legislature and signed by the governor, the new law, Act 112, allows Hawaii to join the Interstate Medical Licensure Compact, which in turn allows licensed physicians within any of its 38 member states to practice across state lines without having to deal with time-consuming and costly individual state licensing regulations. The Institute considers Act 112 a major achievement that is likely to help relieve Hawaii's acute doctor shortage and serve as an example for the Legislature to apply to Hawaii's other licensed medical professions.

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## IDAHO

#### IDAHO FREEDOM FOUNDATION • [idahofreedom.org](https://idahofreedom.org)

**Idaho Freedom Foundation** remains hard at work, preparing for the next legislative session. President Wayne Hoffman has the team thinking big. Instead of simply slowing the growth of government, what if it was reduced overall? Rather than tinkering with Medicaid, what if it was abolished? What if people learned to rely on communities, families, and themselves again, rather than seeing government as the first and only protector? The Foundation continues to broaden its base of donors, supporters, and subscribers. It recently partnered with Marc Joffe of the Cato Institute to present a discussion about the state of Medicaid in Idaho and will again collaborate with the Claremont Institute to produce reports on critical social justice in K-12 education in Florida and California. These two states present models of how to reform Idaho's public schools, and how not to, respectively. The Foundation is working with lawmakers and stakeholders on a new education choice proposal for the 2023 session. Universal choice in K-12 public schools is the future, and that option should be available to Idaho families.



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## ILLINOIS

### ILLINOIS POLICY INSTITUTE • [illinoispolicy.org](https://illinoispolicy.org)

The **Illinois Policy Institute** has launched two different initiatives in 2023 to expand its audience and educate and influence the next generation of Illinoisans. First, to better reach young voters where they consume content, the Institute has begun creating two or three short-form videos for TikTok and Instagram each week, accumulating more than 4.5 million views in 2023. In six months, Instagram followers have more than doubled. More than 50 percent of followers on these platforms are under the age of 45—a younger audience than the Institute’s traditional web readers. These videos span a range of topics, from gas tax hikes to lawmaker pay raises, and several have gone viral with more than 500,000 views. The top performing video featured a clip from the Chicago mayoral debate and received more than 800,000 views. The second initiative involves building rapport with student newspapers and establishing relationships with the next generation of journalists. This summer, representatives from the Chicago Thinker—the University of Chicago’s student paper—visited the Institute’s office to discuss their creative process and share ideas for liberty-oriented stories. Forming relationships with student groups at universities around Illinois also helps the Institute establish a talent pipeline for future interns and new hires. Reaching the next generation of voters and influencers is essential, helping ensure free-market ideas can prosper in Illinois.



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## IOWA

### IOWANS FOR TAX RELIEF FOUNDATION • [taxrelief.org](https://taxrelief.org)

This summer **Iowans for Tax Relief Foundation** published the first issue of A Better Path Forward, a magazine that highlights the writing and research of the Foundation. A Better Path Forward was sent to members and other Iowans who have an interest in advancing liberty and pro-growth economic policy solutions. Building on the recent policy success of the Iowa Legislature passing a property-tax reform law, the Foundation continues to offer property-tax reform solutions. The Foundation’s efforts center on its ITR Local initiative. ITR Local is a website that provides a one-stop information source for Iowans interested in learning about their city, county, and school district property taxes. ITR Local also provides city and county budget information and compares property-tax growth to government spending, population growth, and inflation. ITR Foundation is also working on further income-tax reform. In 2022, Iowa led the nation with the most transformative income-tax reform. By 2026, Iowa’s nine-bracket progressive income tax will be replaced with a flat 3.9-percent tax. The Foundation is working with policymakers to advance further income-tax reform and place the tax on a path toward elimination.





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## KANSAS

**KANSAS POLICY INSTITUTE • [kansaspolicy.org](https://kansaspolicy.org)**

**Kansas Policy Institute** continues to fight for the taxpayer. Since the perceived failure of Kansas' 2012 tax cuts, consideration of any other sort of tax cut in Kansas has been a political third rail. Every effort to provide state tax relief was met with the "Don't be like Kansas" mantra from special interests. They'd claim tax cuts would produce budget deficits like Kansas experienced under Governor Sam Brownback. It wasn't the concept of cutting taxes that produced deficits, but that the Legislature went about it all wrong, as KPI demonstrated this year in an educational campaign designed to turn this misunderstanding on its head. The problems that Kansas experienced were largely self-inflicted. Still, the narrative that tax cuts were to blame for the state's budgetary problems took hold—and it was difficult to shake. Through paid advertising, website content, and videos, KPI took a myth-versus-fact approach to amplify the truth and erode the negative reputation of tax cuts and the false Brownback narrative. It worked. This messaging was shared with lawmakers and emboldened them to support and vote for these tax cuts. The bill passed with overwhelming majorities in the House and Senate before being vetoed by Governor Laura Kelly. Unfortunately, a legislative override of the veto came up three votes short. However, now that lawmakers and the public have been educated on the false narrative that had become an insurmountable roadblock, the path to \$1.4 billion in tax relief for Kansas taxpayers will be achievable.

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## KENTUCKY

**BLUEGRASS INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY SOLUTIONS • [bipps.org](https://bipps.org)**



A movement is afoot in Kentucky to get rid of the state's bureaucratic requirements that healthcare providers get special permission from the government before adding or expanding services or facilities. While the origin of such policies – known as certificate-of-need laws – which began as federal policies in the 1970s, were intended to help control healthcare costs, increase quality, and improve access to care for low-income families. However, the research doesn't confirm that certificate-of-need laws have achieved any of those expectations. Instead, such policies have shielded existing hospitals, doctors, and other medical providers from the competition that new facilities and services would provide Kentuckians. "The weight of evidence implies that Kentucky would be well-served by the improved access to healthcare that is stimulated by the removal of certificate of need," **Bluegrass Institute** scholar John Garen, Ph.D., recently told the state task force examining Kentucky's Certificate of Need laws. "Economic analysis finds competition is an important force in markets to generate lower prices, better quality, and more efficiency," Garen, BB&T Professor Emeritus of Economics at the University of Kentucky, told the task force. "Any interference with the competitive process is presumptive harmful. Certificate-of-need law impedes the entry of additional providers into markets," he added.

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## LOUISIANA

**PELICAN INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • [pelicaninstitute.org](https://pelicaninstitute.org)**

Louisiana needs a comeback. To spark this movement, the **Pelican Institute** launched [ourlouisianacomeback.com](https://ourlouisianacomeback.com), a new statewide digital campaign to inform Louisianans about policy solutions and encourage them to take action. Our Louisiana Comeback focuses on universal school choice, modernized tax policy and responsible budgeting, job creation, the elimination of regulatory barriers, and public safety. Through a series of video and social media ads, text messages, and emails, Pelican is reaching voters throughout the state until Election Day. Additionally, the Pelican Institute Center for Justice recently announced three legal actions to defend Louisianans' rights, including the first case brought under a new law that allows individuals to contest regulatory barriers to work. In that case, Pelican litigators are defending a veterinarian who is unable to practice her profession because of irrational regulations. Pelican Institute litigators also advocated for the free-speech rights of a Louisiana attorney in an oral argument before the US Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in New Orleans. In that case, Pelican Center for Justice is representing Randy Boudreaux, an attorney who is challenging the state bar association's mandatory dues. Finally, Pelican used the power of a public records request to uncover that Louisiana's secretary of the Department of Natural Resources delegated sweeping governmental power to a personal injury attorney, all to the financial benefit of political cronies.



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## MAINE

**MAINE POLICY INSTITUTE • [mainepolicy.org](https://mainepolicy.org)**

Unfortunately, Democrats flexed their political muscles in the Legislature and resisted all major efforts to reform Maine's tax code this session. However, **Maine Policy Institute** did achieve budget reforms that will save taxpayers millions in the year to come. Maine has long had a transportation funding shortfall that exceeds \$200 million per budget cycle. Maine Policy worked with lawmakers on the taxation and transportation committees to advance a bill that reallocates automobile-related sales tax revenue from the state's General Fund to the Highway Fund. The idea received the unanimous support of the taxation committee and bipartisan support in the transportation committee, and was ultimately included in the state's next transportation budget. As a result, Maine's transportation funding shortfall is plugged, which eliminates the need to bond \$100M+ annually for transportation expenses, saving taxpayers millions in future debt payments.





PIONEER INSTITUTE  
PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH

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## MASSACHUSETTS

PIONEER INSTITUTE • [pioneerinstitute.org](https://pioneerinstitute.org)

Pioneer Institute's life sciences initiative has been working to defend the innovation that leads to life-saving drugs and a vibrant life sciences sector in Greater Boston and across the nation. Dr. William S. Smith earlier this year authored "Rationing Medicine: Threats from European Cost-Effectiveness Models to America's Seniors and Other Vulnerable Populations." The book argues for an end to the use of the Quality Adjusted Life Year (QALY) methodology that some European nations have used to decide who gets life-saving treatments. In October 2023, Dr. Smith and his colleagues are releasing a new white paper "The Importance of Intellectual Property Protections for Patients," which examines the threats posed by the Inflation Protection Act and price controls to research and development in the life sciences industry. And by month's end, Pioneer plans to unveil an enhanced web tool that will allow the public to examine in detail the efficacy of the 340B pharmacy program, where charity spending for patients in need appears to be taking a back seat to the bottom line for insurers and pharmacy benefit managers.

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## MICHIGAN

MACKINAC CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • [mackinac.org](https://mackinac.org)

Michigan is facing a future of unreliable and expensive energy under the current plans from state regulators and utility companies. Fortunately, the **Mackinac Center for Public Policy** is fighting back. In 2022, the Mackinac Center laid the groundwork for reform and began its involvement as an intervenor in a public service commission's hearing on a long-term energy plan proposed by one of Michigan's largest utilities. The Center pushed back against the utility's plans to close reliable generation sources across the state and replace them with unreliable wind and solar. It eventually forced the commission to admit that system reliability was a primary concern and solidified the Center as an important voice on energy policy in the state. That was just the beginning. Given the Democratic trifecta in the Michigan Legislature, this year has been focused on slowing the flood of bad environmental and energy policy ideas. To ensure that Michigan residents are aware of the dangers of many energy changes being proposed in Lansing, the Center has published dozens of op-eds and blog posts, providing sound policy alternatives to the radical environmental agenda. The Center remains a sought-after source of information for the media and has increased its outreach by presenting to local groups statewide.



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## MINNESOTA

**CENTER OF THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT** • [americanexperiment.org](https://americanexperiment.org)

The green energy agenda would have largely gone unnoticed in Minnesota because of a progressive liberal majority in the state government and a strong urban core that wholeheartedly backs any policy that moves the state toward carbon neutrality. But **Center of the American Experiment** disrupted the liberals' presumption of easy passage by exposing the damage such net-carbon-zero policies would inflict on average Minnesotans—higher energy costs in a time of already skyrocketing inflation and the possibility of energy blackouts during the harshest days of winter. Through policy fellow Isaac Orr's proprietary energy modeling, the Center could detail how Governor Tim Walz's carbon-free energy mandate would cost each electricity customer \$3,888 more per year. The Center branded their plan the "Blackout Bill"—and the name stuck. Local news stations, state legislators, and even FOX News used the moniker to describe the bill. The Center ran a feature in its quarterly magazine, *Thinking Minnesota*, which has a circulation of more than 88,000 Minnesotans, and initiated an online call to action to which an additional 12,984 concerned Minnesotans submitted their names in protest of the bill. The Center shifted the conversation about the true nature and effects of the "green" agenda and forced a partisan issue into the open so all Minnesotans can know the truth about their legislators' intentions.



**FREEDOM FOUNDATION OF MINNESOTA** • [freedomfoundationofminnesota.com](https://freedomfoundationofminnesota.com)

More and more parents are discovering the importance of their local school boards and the power invested in those positions. Many more parents are surprised to discover that those local, municipal elections are held in off-years when voter turnout is "miniscule"—often only 10–15 percent of eligible voters in the district. The **Freedom Foundation of Minnesota**, in the 2022 report "It's Time To Fix Minnesota's Broken Elections," has a prescription to increase voter awareness and participation in local school board elections: move them to coincide with statewide federal November elections held in even years. Studies have shown that the benefits of moving school board elections include reduced election administration costs, reduced clout of special interest groups, and increased local government transparency and accountability. Off-year elections are a relic of a bygone era. Consolidating school board elections to coincide with national elections would also increase the likelihood that school boards would represent the democratic majorities in their communities.



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## MISSISSIPPI

**EMPOWER MISSISSIPPI** • [empowerms.org](https://empowerms.org)

**Empower Mississippi** has begun laying the groundwork for expanding education freedom in the state. Parents, students, and teachers are crying out for freedom—freedom to choose the setting that works best for them and professional freedom to explore and develop innovative teaching methods. National momentum is growing for more education freedom and Empower is working to ensure that Mississippi doesn't miss out. Empower has traveled across the state meeting with school leaders, teachers, and parents who are ready to be empowered with choices.





#### MISSISSIPPI CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • [mspolicy.org](https://mspolicy.org)

The **Mississippi Center for Public Policy** has been working on school funding reform as a step toward giving parents more power. In a state where many vested interests are opposed to education freedom, the Center is making a principled case and building a broad-based coalition for change. The Center is also working with officials to eliminate certificate-of-need laws to make healthcare more affordable in a state with some of the worst health outcomes in the country. Having spearheaded efforts to reduce the state income tax to a flat 4 percent in 2022, the Center is now researching options for full income tax elimination and building a coalition of policymakers who will be bold on tax reform. The Center's weekly newsletter, which focuses on these reforms, is now received and read by more than 150,000 people across the state each month. A speaker series involving high-profile advocates for change, such as Betsy DeVos, continues to influence debate across the state.

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## MISSOURI



#### SHOW-ME INSTITUTE • [showmeinstitute.org](https://showmeinstitute.org)

Land banks in Missouri are agencies that empower cities to acquire, manage, and sell private property for the ostensible goal of development. In reality, these agencies are hotbeds of corruption, favoritism, and cronyism, as documented by research from Show-Me Institute analysts and in articles from the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* and the *Kansas City Star*. In true government fashion, some politicians decided to expand land banks statewide, despite the myriad of issues with them in Missouri's two largest cities. As is often said, in government, nothing succeeds like failure. In Missouri's 2023 legislative session, a bill was filed to authorize land banks in every county or larger city. **Show-Me Institute** researchers responded with an effort dubbed "Terram ripam vinci," or, "Land banks must be defeated." The Institute's Director of Municipal Policy David Stokes testified before both the House and Senate on the land bank bill, and through multiple media outlets made the case that land banks should not be expanded. Despite the efforts of its sponsors, the bill failed in the waning days of the session. The Institute's arguments carried the day; more government ownership of private property is the last thing Missouri needs.

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## MONTANA



#### FRONTIER INSTITUTE • [frontierinstitute.org](https://frontierinstitute.org)

**Frontier Institute** has expanded capabilities, added new staff, and built its reputation over the summer. The Center for New Frontiers launched, and it will be initiating research and engaging stakeholders to secure Montana as a leader in the economy of the future with policy solutions to enable entrepreneurship and innovation in important sectors like energy, tech, finance, and more. Davis Boyer joined the Institute's team as director of development, and Trish Schreiber was welcomed as a senior education fellow. The Institute released its 2024 Real Local Budget, which documents the reckless spending by many local governments, as well as an education ecosystem whitepaper that lays the groundwork for leveraging community support and education entrepreneurship to expand education opportunities.

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## NEBRASKA

**PLATTE INSTITUTE** • [platteinstitute.org](https://platteinstitute.org)

The **Platte Institute** is proud of its progress in increasing government transparency, specifically, with Truth in Taxation. Nebraska is home to the seventh highest property taxes in the nation. That's why in 2021, the Platte Institute championed Truth in Taxation, empowering citizens to keep elected officials accountable. This legislation mandates a public hearing for major local political subdivisions seeking to increase tax revenue by 2 percent or more. Platte Institute is continuing to lead on this issue by hosting Truth in Taxation Taxpayer Training Camps across the state. These workshops will educate taxpayers, give them the tools they need to testify at their joint public hearings, and answer any questions they have ahead of the hearings. Last year, Platte hosted its first Taxpayer Training Camp, which was such a success that for 2023, the Institute is multiplying its efforts by seven, visiting more communities and engaging with more taxpayers. The work doesn't stop there, however, as Nebraska is home to 93 counties—all with a complex network of taxing entities. To reach taxpayers outside of the seven targeted communities, Platte Institute is engaging in a comprehensive email and social media marketing campaign so taxpayers will have the tools they need to fight tax increases and engage with their public officials.



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## NEVADA

**NEVADA POLICY** • [npri.org](https://npri.org)

**Nevada Policy** strengthened advocacy efforts and helped amplify the voice of voters through the introduction of the Nevada Policy Action Center in spring 2023. This tool allowed residents to use prewritten letters on different issues. The letters were then automatically directed to appropriate state assembly members and state senators based on senders' zip codes. The action center helped Nevadans make their thoughts known on an array of issues, including election reform, rent control, and occupational licensing. More than 3,500 letters were sent through the action center to Nevada lawmakers during the 2023 legislative session.



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## NEW HAMPSHIRE

**JOSIAH BARTLETT CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY** • [jbartlett.org](https://jbartlett.org)

New Hampshire's Legislature passed several **Josiah Bartlett Center** priorities this year, including accelerated phase-out of the interest and dividends tax by two years, universal occupational license recognition, and a small expansion of educational choice.



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## NEW JERSEY



### GARDEN STATE INITIATIVE • [gardenstateinitiative.org](https://gardenstateinitiative.org)

Improving New Jersey's business climate, particularly the state's highest-in-the-nation business taxes, has been the **Garden State Initiative's** top priority. The fiscal year 2024 state budget did not include a continuation of a 2.5-percent corporate business tax surcharge enacted in 2019 as a temporary measure but extended during the pandemic. The sunset of the surcharge is scheduled to take place at the end of this calendar year. GSI drove momentum with the release of "The Real Cost to New Jersey of Being an Outlier: The Impact of Steep Corporate Tax Rates" and by assembling a coalition of business and labor organizations committed to improving the business climate. The work is far from done. The sunset of the surcharge lowered New Jersey from the state with the highest business taxes to the fourth highest in the nation. GSI will continue to work with partners on this issue.

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## NEW MEXICO



### RIO GRANDE FOUNDATION • [riograndefoundation.org](https://riograndefoundation.org)

New Mexico's K-12 education system has long underperformed. It spends more than most states while producing the worst results in the nation. The **Rio Grande Foundation** has long led the way on school choice and aggressive education reforms, but when the state is 50th, all ideas must be on the table. That's why the Foundation is bringing education experts from across the nation and New Mexico, along with activists and those involved in education reform, together for a first-of-its-kind, day-long education conference on September 22. Experts will discuss numerous topics including the "Mississippi Miracle" and whether New Mexico can and should embrace it; school board rights and independence from state policymakers; charter-school developments across the nation and what reforms New Mexico policymakers might consider; private school choice, Education Savings Accounts, tax credit scholarships, and what—if any—private school choices are possible in blue states; and how expanded 529 laws can benefit families. The conference is free to the public and is being held in Albuquerque. More information is available at <https://oaknm.org>.

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## NEW YORK



### EMPIRE CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • [empirecenter.org](https://empirecenter.org)

New Yorkers have come to expect to find key details about government spending on the internet, because the **Empire Center** keeps putting them there. This summer the Center celebrated the 15th birthday of SeeThroughNY, its groundbreaking government transparency website, with a bang, revealing that eight transit workers had each collected more than \$200,000 in overtime, and more than 500 others had topped \$100,000. The Center's government transparency work goes well beyond the data on SeeThroughNY, which last year drew 1.9 million visitors. It has expanded to let users view—often for the first time—public pensions, pork-barrel grants, and other spending data. It has sparked government reforms and several criminal convictions, all while complementing the Center's top-notch policy work. The Empire Center has assembled New York's largest collection of public-sector labor contracts, pried loose important details about the state's costly energy policies, and exposed a scandalous coverup of COVID-related deaths in state nursing homes. By bridging the disconnect between the public and bad public policy, the Empire Center has created not just more access to data but also a greater expectation of transparency, a crucial part of making the Empire Center's policy alternatives a reality.

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## NORTH CAROLINA

**JOHN LOCKE FOUNDATION** • [johnlocke.org](http://johnlocke.org)

The **John Locke Foundation's** mission to expand freedom and opportunity has made significant headway on the education front this legislative session. In June, the Foundation officially launched Carolinas Academic Leadership Network (CALN), in collaboration with two sister organizations: Palmetto Promise Institute and the South Carolina Policy Council. CALN's objective is to be the most influential voice for student achievement, parental authority, and superior school board service in the Carolinas through providing school board leaders with the information and training they need to be effective board members. The kick-off event in Charlotte, NC, was a huge success, attended by school board members, as well as Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC) and Rep. Ralph Norman (R-SC). In addition, the legislature passed an expansion of North Carolina's Opportunity Scholarship Program to serve even more North Carolina students.



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## OHIO

**THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE** • [buckeyeinstitute.org](http://buckeyeinstitute.org)

The **Buckeye Institute** had even more to celebrate than usual this past Independence Day—all the victories Buckeye achieved in Ohio's new two-year budget, which the governor fittingly signed into law on July 4. The budget—chock full of Buckeye-championed policies—was one of the most pro-school choice, pro-taxpayer budgets ever passed in Ohio. All Ohio families are now eligible for Ohio's EdChoice program, with families at or below 450 percent of the poverty line eligible for a full scholarship. The budget also increased funding equity for public charter schools to provide parents with more options on where and how to educate their children. The budget extended further relief to taxpayers and moved Ohio closer to a single flat tax. Lawmakers cut the number of income-tax brackets from four down to two and eliminated the commercial activities tax for nearly all businesses, which Buckeye's research shows will improve Ohio's sluggish economy. Throughout the budget process, Buckeye worked tirelessly to urge lawmakers to adopt these and other reforms that put Ohio on a path to greater prosperity. The success of Buckeye's Economic Research Center (ERC) was featured in a high-profile National Review piece— "The Buckeye Institute's Tax Revolution"— highlighting the ERC's work in states across the country that has saved taxpayers nearly \$6 billion.



**THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE**



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## OKLAHOMA

**OKLAHOMA COUNCIL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS • [ocpathink.org](http://ocpathink.org)**

**Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs** has recently worked on sustaining Governor Kevin Stitt's veto of Senate Bill 26x, which grants authorization for one-year state-tribal tobacco compacts that replicate the language found in expiring agreements. The compacts in SB 26x include language stating that they apply to sales in "Indian country." The US Supreme Court stated in *McGirt v. Oklahoma* that the Muscogee (Creek) Nation's Oklahoma reservation was never formally disestablished for major crimes, like murder. The ruling has since been expanded to include other tribes with historic reservations covering most of eastern Oklahoma. SB 26x extends the McGirt boundaries to include tobacco taxes, setting a precedent that could apply to other taxes. OCPA has written numerous articles covering the McGirt ruling, and other court rulings that could affect the future and fairness for Oklahomans. OCPA has saturated social media with these articles, gaining public support to sustain the veto. The message of equal treatment for all Oklahomans, ensuring everyone abides by the same set of rules, without preferential treatment resulting from a court ruling that does not directly concern taxes or compacts, reached the public. In addition, OCPA ran an action alert of more than 400 emails to legislators asking them to sustain the governor's veto. Despite the efforts of the tribes to override the veto, the Oklahoma House of Representatives sustained the veto, and the Oklahoma Senate—by a one-vote margin—recently upheld the governor's veto as well.

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## OREGON

**CASCADE POLICY INSTITUTE • [cascadepolicy.org](http://cascadepolicy.org)**

In June, the Oregon Legislature unanimously passed **Cascade Policy Institute's** bill to ease state-level restrictions on taking the General Educational Development tests (GED). These tests are a group of standardized exams that measure proficiency in science, mathematics, social studies, and language arts. When passed, the GED provides certification that the test-taker meets high school graduate-level academic skills. Higher scores demonstrate college readiness, and even higher scores can qualify students for college credit. Oregon previously required that a person be 18 years or older to take the GED tests. The state permitted people as young as 16 to sit for the GED only in limited circumstances, such as if they already had dropped out of high school, were married or emancipated minors, or were in juvenile detention. House Bill 3068 removes these restrictions. Cascade's bill allows 11th and 12th graders (with parents' permission) to graduate early by passing the GED. Importantly, students won't have to drop out of high school to take the GED exams. Earning a GED while still enrolled in school provides students with a low-risk option to graduate early and move on to higher education or employment. With bipartisan sponsorship and support, Cascade Policy Institute's GED bill will make a meaningful difference to many students who are looking for a way to move more quickly toward college or a career.



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## PENNSYLVANIA

**COMMONWEALTH FOUNDATION** • [commonwealthfoundation.org](https://commonwealthfoundation.org)

The **Commonwealth Foundation's** fight to advance educational opportunity accounts resulted in historic progress in the Keystone State over the past year. Lifeline Scholarships for 250,000+ students in Pennsylvania's worst schools passed the state House (2022) and Senate (2023) and became the focal point of this year's state budget negotiations. To capitalize on this unique opportunity, CF created Commonwealth Action (CA), a separate 501(c)(4) nonprofit to engage in grassroots and direct lobbying to increase support and education around Lifeline Scholarships. CA launched One Way Out, a campaign that educated policymakers and the public about the challenges facing kids trapped in failing schools. The high-profile campaign has already earned more than 14 million impressions since June. When Governor Josh Shapiro caved to pressure from teachers' unions and threatened to line-item veto funding for Lifeline Scholarships—after publicly promising to support scholarship accounts for the most vulnerable kids in failing schools—a budget impasse began. Kim Ward, the Republican leader of the Senate and school choice champion, said she won't approve a budget without funding for Lifeline Scholarships. It's likely that this year's budget process will drag on into the fall, but CF will keep fighting to give a quarter million kids in failing schools the opportunity for a better future.



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## RHODE ISLAND

**RHODE ISLAND CENTER FOR FREEDOM & PROSPERITY** • [rifreedom.org](https://rifreedom.org)

The **Rhode Island Center for Freedom and Prosperity** has become a full-fledged media entity, raising awareness about issues that are important to Ocean State residents. With a focus on false COVID narratives and parental rights when it comes to the education and health of their children, the Center's "news and views" website, [oceanstatecurrent.com](https://oceanstatecurrent.com), has become the fastest growing all-digital (watch, read, and listen) alternative media source in the state. Flagship show "In the Dugout with Mike Stenhouse" has become the voice of concerned families and taxpayers who have lost faith in the federal government's anti-constitutional agenda. The Center now has three full-time staff and, with fundraising success, hopes to soon add an investigative journalism capacity.



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## SOUTH CAROLINA

**PALMETTO PROMISE INSTITUTE** • [palmettopromise.org](https://palmettopromise.org)

In the wake of its most significant legislative win—the full repeal of certificate-of-need (CON) requirements—**Palmetto Promise** has jumped into litigating for freedom from CON as well. In an amicus brief to the US Supreme Court, Palmetto Promise has joined with the Cardinal Institute (West Virginia) and the Georgia Public Policy Foundation to ask the high court to take a Louisiana CON case on a writ of certiorari. The cert brief was submitted by Northwestern University law professor Steven Calabresi. The Louisiana case was brought with the help of Pacific Legal Foundation by Ursula Newell-Davis, whose attempt to start a respite care organization for the parents of children with special needs was denied due to Louisiana's Facility Need Review law. In fighting CON, Palmetto fights for Ursula and all those like her who simply wish to minister to their communities without government interference.





#### **SOUTH CAROLINA POLICY COUNCIL • [scpolycouncil.org](https://scpolycouncil.org)**

Judicial reform is finally gaining steam in South Carolina, thanks in large part to **South Carolina Policy Council's** aggressive public action campaign this year. In March, SCPC Senior Policy Analyst Bryce Fiedler presented at a judicial reform summit alongside Governor Henry McMaster, Attorney General Alan Wilson, and a dozen state legislators, recommending a number of changes to improve South Carolina's judicial selection process. South Carolina is one of two states where judges are legislatively elected, though in practice, just three state legislators control much of the selection process. SCPC's proposals were included in a research report and circulated among legislators and the public. SCPC continues to build support for these bills heading into year two of the 2023–24 legislative session. With the integrity of South Carolina's third branch of government at stake, this effort and the next several months will be critical.

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## **TENNESSEE**

#### **BEACON CENTER OF TENNESSEE • [beacontn.org](https://beacontn.org)**

In July, **Beacon Center of Tennessee** released the first Beacon Poll. Politicians conduct polls all the time, giving a glimpse into voters' perspectives on elections and pressing issues. But there has been no consistent statewide survey that accurately assesses where Tennesseans stand on matters affecting their lives on an ongoing basis. Until now. Once per quarter, the Beacon Poll will track how voters feel about the direction of the nation and Tennessee, as well as within important arenas like education and healthcare. And as election season heats up, the poll will ask whom respondents plan to vote for, to give Tennesseans a sense of where the state is heading politically. This poll provides comprehensive access to all questions, methodology, and demographics on the interactive [beaconnpoll.com](https://beaconnpoll.com). In this first poll, which got more than 180 media hits and \$3.5 million in earned media value, a whopping 77 percent of Tennesseans agree that more public and private educational choices are needed, while only 9 percent disagree. When it comes to Education Savings Accounts (ESAs), the vast majority of voters (69 percent) believe that the program should be expanded statewide; only 17 percent disagree. ESAs are extremely popular even with Democratic voters (61 percent to 26 percent). Additionally, if the general election was held today, Donald Trump would have a 21-point lead (55 percent to 34 percent) over Joe Biden in Tennessee, while Ron DeSantis would lead Joe Biden by 16 points (52 percent to 36 percent).



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## TEXAS

TEXAS PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION • [texaspolicy.com](https://texaspolicy.com)



During Texas' 88th Legislative Session, the **Texas Public Policy Foundation** Network supported House Bill 2127, the Texas Regulatory Consistency Act. The legislation aims to replace the regulatory patchwork that currently comes from 254 counties and thousands of municipalities with a single set of predictable regulations that will drive economic growth while enabling local governments to respond to local needs. HB 2127 was dubbed "the Death Star Bill" by its opponents who would no longer be able to impose their progressive agenda at the local government level. TPPF pushed back against the media's narrative by recording a video with the author laying out what the bill actually does, publishing commentary pieces, and driving constituent calls and emails to legislators' offices. After the bill passed, the media and left-wing groups pivoted to claiming that the bill "bans water breaks for workers." Rep. Greg Casar likely drew the most attention to this with his eight-hour thirst strike outside the US Capitol. TPPF's research team looked into this claim by requesting information from the only two cities in the state with water break ordinances, only to find that there were no reported instances of these being enforced. Additionally, TPPF responded to the water breaks narrative with additional videos and commentary pieces, and was the only organization running Google ads to provide facts about the bill when people were looking for information. After HB 2127 goes into effect on September 1, TPPF will continue to highlight the absurdity of the left's scare tactics.

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## UTAH

LIBERTAS INSTITUTE • [libertasutah.org](https://libertasutah.org)



Last year, **Libertas Institute** launched The Future of Work initiative to identify solutions for gig economy sustainability that improve workers' lives. At the heart of this project are perspectives of gig workers like Rosemary, Marlea, Madhu, and Anuj—each with a unique perspective on the struggles this type of flexible work brings. Libertas staff started with personal interviews and then spent hundreds of hours exploring ideas and poring through research to find a policy solution that was different from all the rest: portable benefits. There are three sides to this solution. First, since many gig workers use multiple apps to earn income, the benefits must be portable. Unlike traditional employment benefits, portable benefits connect to the worker, not the employer. Second, because the kind of work a person does varies, the benefits must be custom fit to each kind of worker. Portable benefits fit this nicely. Finally, benefit contributions need to be voluntary, giving gig workers control. As a leading think tank in the business of changing hearts, minds, and laws, Libertas wasted no time moving forward with this solution. One month after publishing the portable benefits policy brief, Libertas took this solution to the Utah Legislature, where it passed resoundingly by a near-unanimous 96–2 vote (6 absent). Libertas is using this momentum to continue pushing worker-centric policy forward because building a better future of work means building a better future.



#### **SUTHERLAND INSTITUTE • [sutherlandinstitute.org](https://sutherlandinstitute.org)**

**Sutherland Institute** is leading the effort in Utah to bring the “success sequence” to schools. Sutherland has pulled together policy working groups to develop coalitions, explore the option of focus groups, create one-pagers, and advise on potential legislation with state legislators. Sutherland’s newest publication, “The Utah Family Miracle,” sheds light on why the success sequence, among other things, will benefit Utah students if promoted in school. Sutherland is also elevating communications efforts to promote the success sequence. Sutherland partnered with AEI in March to co-host the FREE Forum, which featured the success sequence as a core policy initiative launched at the event, held in Salt Lake City. Sutherland launched a podcast, “Defending Ideas,” as a messaging tool to reach engaged voters and equip them with deeper understanding of concepts like the success sequence. The podcast is enhancing social media reach, with Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts, and full-length episodes being used strategically to heighten awareness of the success sequence and other policy ideas in Utah and the nation.

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## **VIRGINIA**



#### **THOMAS JEFFERSON INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • [thomasjeffersoninst.org](https://thomasjeffersoninst.org)**

Virginia’s Air Pollution Control Board voted to remove Virginia from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, a step long advocated by the **Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy**, which opposed the push by two previous Democratic governors to enter the regional cap-and-tax compact with northeastern states. Governor Glen Youngkin is following a path to repeal suggested by Steven Haner of the Thomas Jefferson Institute soon after Youngkin’s election. The Thomas Jefferson Institute issued a white paper on the topic in 2019, beginning its efforts to keep Virginia out of the compact, which will now culminate in Virginia’s exit from the market and its taxes by the end of this summer. The Thomas Jefferson Institute’s fight against green extremism has also exposed the questionable cost estimates of several large-scale green projects in Virginia, a cost that will ultimately fall on rate payers, and has highlighted how such projects are less reliable, tax the power grid, and will not provide enough power to meet projected demand. The governor’s push for small modular reactors and Dominion Energy’s recently revised integrated resource plan both echo the Thomas Jefferson Institute’s warnings and concerns.

## VIRGINIA INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • [virginiainstitute.org](https://virginiainstitute.org)

The **Virginia Institute for Public Policy** is pursuing solutions to create an environment for businesses and entrepreneurs to choose Virginia as their home. A rising tide lifts all boats, and removing barriers to earning income or starting a business will become a rising tide for Virginia by drawing job-creating businesses to the state and providing hope to Virginia's families. Innovative businesses often must abide by regulations that are not applicable, but their product or service is so new that they end up as a square peg in a round hole. This happens because regulation laws rarely account for future possibilities, especially in technology. One policy the Institute is advancing—regulatory sandboxes—would allow innovative businesses to receive temporary waivers from regulations, such as unnecessary licensure requirements that otherwise impede new products, services, or technological advances. These waivers will empower individuals to provide solutions for society and put food on their tables. The Office of Regulatory Management (ORM), a new state agency with leaders appointed by Governor Youngkin, shares the Institute's goals for regulatory reform. The Institute's active network includes state-based and national organizations working together to develop policy, educate legislators and the public, and set up ideal conditions to precede the 2024 General Assembly session.



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## WASHINGTON

### FREEDOM FOUNDATION • [freedomfoundation.com](https://freedomfoundation.com)

The **Freedom Foundation** has made progress in freeing teachers from their union bosses and the radical agenda they impose on public schools. During the 2023 state legislative sessions in Arkansas and Florida, the Freedom Foundation was on the ground working with state lawmakers and the respective governors' teams to craft and enact legislation that removed government from teachers' union dues collection entirely. From now on, union leaders must collect payment information from teachers themselves, and in Florida, the new law extends to public employees across state and local governments. Further, the Florida legislation requires government employee unions to prove annually that they represent more than 60 percent of the bargaining unit or face an automatic vote from employees on whether to maintain the union. Two lawsuits have been filed to prevent the law from going into effect, but judges so far have tossed out the unions' suits in state and federal courts. In mid-July, nearly 200 teachers from across the country traveled to Denver for the Freedom Foundation's first Teacher Freedom Summit. There they built connections with like-minded teachers and learned about their workplace rights, opting out of union membership, alternatives to union-sponsored services, and how to combat the culture wars waged by the National Education Association (NEA) and American Federation of Teachers. Also in July, Wisconsin Rep. Scott Fitzgerald (R-05) introduced the Stop Teachers Unions from Damaging Education Needs Today (STUDENT) Act after working extensively with the Freedom Foundation to come up with an overhaul of the NEA's federal charter.





#### WASHINGTON POLICY CENTER • [washingtonpolicy.org](https://www.washingtonpolicy.org)

In 2022, **Washington Policy Center** released research projecting a 45 cents per gallon of gas, 55 cents per gallon of diesel, impact from the state's new cap-and-trade tax on carbon. Despite that projection coming from the state Department of Ecology's published estimate on the cost of a metric ton of carbon at state auctions, advocates maintained the impact would be miniscule and the governor dismissed WPC's work as "hogwash" and proclaimed the impact would be "pennies." Now, state gas prices have risen about 44 cents per gallon, and Washington has overtaken California for the highest prices in the nation. The government cited oil company profits of "80 cents per gallon" as the cause (with no explanation as to why oil companies' greed stops at the Idaho and Oregon borders). WPC contacted the source of the statistic cited and learned that it did not refer to what was collected by oil companies, nor did it reference profit. Despite claiming to know how much oil companies profit from every gallon, the governor held a press conference calling for "radical transparency" to determine their profits. Media has been shifting toward WPC's position, with one prominent journalist stating that WPC's Todd Myers had been "remarkably accurate" and another pointing to the governor's "strategic misinformation" about the cap-and-trade policy. WPC continues to inform the public, legislators, and the media about the true costs of the tax, through op-eds, digital ads, short videos, and gas pump topper advertising.

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## WEST VIRGINIA



#### CARDINAL INSTITUTE FOR WEST VIRGINIA POLICY • [cardinalinstitute.com](https://www.cardinalinstitute.com)

West Virginia has had the lowest labor force participation rate in the country since the state started measuring it more than 80 years ago. It also has some of the highest rates of poverty and reliance on government benefits of any state. The **Cardinal Institute for West Virginia Policy** wants to help West Virginians rediscover the dignity of earned success—that self-esteem which comes from meaningful work, self-sufficiency, and building the American Dream. Many Americans must make the difficult choice between meeting basic needs through state benefits or pursuing work that would give them a path toward a brighter future. Often the system is set up to punish them for seeking better financial opportunities. This creates a benefit cliff. An individual may be only earning a few dollars past the cutoff but lose hundreds in benefits—incentivizing them to reject opportunity in favor of security. Instead of having a sharp income cutoff, the system should have a gentle off-ramp, giving people the chance to continue meeting basic needs while transitioning to new work and saving money for their future. Cardinal is conducting qualitative research to better understand the impact the benefits system has on West Virginians and their thoughts on potential policy solutions. An online visioning panel and two focus groups are complete and the next step is to conduct statewide polling to gauge attitudes toward the welfare system, individuals who receive benefits, and potential policy solutions.

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## WISCONSIN

### BADGER INSTITUTE • [badgerinstitute.org](https://badgerinstitute.org)

Since the 1990s the **Badger Institute** has supported school choice and over the past two years has worked with allies to stabilize Wisconsin's robust school choice ecosystem by closing the yawning per-pupil funding gap. An explanatory chapter for new lawmakers in Badger's Mandate for Madison and more than a dozen videos highlighting successful choice schools bore fruit: a per-pupil funding boost of as much as a third for the parental choice program. The Badger Institute was part of two coalitions that helped advocate for this victory. Schools are already reviving long-dormant growth projects. Another win in the biennial budget included better pay for prosecutors and public defenders, whose low pay was shown by Badger's research to underlie the state's trial backlog. Badger's reporting helped stop the governor's spending blowout on broadband, and years of research on personal property tax came to fruition with its elimination. A long-time priority for the Badger Institute has been occupational licensing reform. Lawmakers are circulating bills targeting barriers, with good odds for passage, including permitting dental therapy. Other longtime Institute priorities with widespread backing include eliminating Wisconsin's minimum markup, reforming the unworkable criminal expungement law, and hospital pricing transparency—a reform that now has bipartisan backing.



### INSTITUTE FOR REFORMING GOVERNMENT • [reforminggovernment.org](https://reforminggovernment.org)

Wisconsin passed one of the nation's most comprehensive reading improvement laws. The **Institute for Reforming Government's** multi-year literacy effort shaped many parts of the final product. Between testimony from the Institute's advocacy partner, policy solutions, and media hits, the IRG team stood beside parents of dyslexic students, science-of-reading advocates, and the bill's authors. Inspired by Mississippi and Florida's spectacular results, conservative lawmakers approved targeted funding increases for coaching and curriculum to public and private schools, along with accountability. Meanwhile, progressives agreed to change what college professors teach future educators, ban "balanced literacy" practices that don't work for kids, get much more parent involvement in the classroom, and create actual consequences for schools failing students. This bill became law even with a divided government in Wisconsin. Despite this transformational opportunity, the teachers' union was, somehow, "profoundly disappointed" at the law's passage. IRG will monitor implementation, because this victory could be as monumental as any in the history of Wisconsin.





#### WISCONSIN INSTITUTE FOR LAW AND LIBERTY • [will-law.org](http://will-law.org)

During Wisconsin's biennial budget process, the **Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty** and partners in the Wisconsin Coalition for Education Freedom achieved a historic bipartisan breakthrough, expanding school choice in the Badger State. Despite facing opposition from the governor, the coalition secured the most substantial increase in school choice funding recorded in Wisconsin's history. The impact of WILL's advocacy is undeniable, as voucher amounts for K-8 schools rose from \$8,300 to \$9,874, and for high schools from \$9,045 to \$12,368. Additionally, independent charter schools received a significant increase in per-pupil funding, providing families with greater educational options and ensuring the future of school choice in the state. One of Milwaukee's top-performing private schools recently announced plans to expand with a new campus. This expansion will benefit up to 2,000 students, primarily from low-income areas, granting them access to quality education that can profoundly transform their lives. School leaders attributed this expansion to the recent funding changes. However, the work is far from complete. WILL recently took action by suing the Department of Public Instruction for implementing an unpromulgated "Perfection Rule" that denies eligible applicants' participation in the school choice program over minor paperwork technicalities. WILL is also collaborating with lawmakers to introduce legislation this fall that will reduce burdensome regulations and barriers associated with the choice program, making it easier for schools to expand and students to enter the program.

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## WYOMING



#### WYOMING LIBERTY GROUP • [wyliberty.org](http://wyliberty.org)

**Wyoming Liberty Group** wants to express appreciation for the leadership, hard work, and dedication of founder Susan W. Gore, as she retires from the organization. A fresh chapter is beginning for Wyoming Liberty Group, under the guidance of a team of professionals and a new board of directors. Informed citizens and policymakers are essential for advancing liberty in Wyoming, which is why the Group will continue to research, analyze, and disseminate information on matters vital to Wyoming's future. WLG's series of interviews called "Eye on the Issues" provides an in-depth look at essential topics and issues affecting the state. So far, feedback has been positive, and the plan is to continue producing these interviews for years to come.

## NATIONAL PARTNERS

*Thank you to our national partners who work with us to advance freedom across the country in key areas including education, law, free speech, energy and the environment, and tax reform.*

1851 Center for Constitutional Law	Energy & Environment Legal Foundation	National Review Institute
1889 Institute	ExcelinEd	National Right to Work Legal
Acton Institute	Federalist Society	Defense & Education Foundation Inc.
American Conservative Union	First Liberty Institute	National School Choice Awareness Foundation
American Council of Trustees and Alumni	Forge Leadership Network	National Tax Limitation Committee
American Enterprise Institute	Foundation for Economic Education	National Taxpayers Union Foundation
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	Mercatus Center at George Mason University	
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### NATIONAL PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: COMPETITIVE ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE

Fred L. Smith Jr. came to Washington, DC, to work for the Environmental Protection Agency but quickly became disillusioned with the agency's bureaucracy and its one-size-fits-all approaches to problems. In 1984, Fred and his wife, Fran, started a free-market policy think tank, the **Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI)**, in their kitchen with a vision to expand freedom and defend American liberties against a growing regulatory state. Fred quickly became a sought-after expert on regulatory reform, free-market environmentalism, and economics in national media and by public officials. Fred's principled approach to expanding free-market reforms took the think tank to new heights, establishing it as a premier liberty-minded organization. Today, under the leadership of Kent Lassman, CEI continues to carry the torch for freedom and principled economic solutions.

For 40 years, CEI has been a champion of regulatory reform and a vigilant watchdog in the nation's capital, sounding the alarm when the federal government and its agencies infringe on American liberties. CEI's annual publication, "Ten Thousand Commandments," provides a snapshot of the size, scope, and cost of the federal government's regulations. CEI and SPN have a longstanding partnership and collaborate on a wide range of policy issues including energy, the environment, economic policy, and regulatory reform.

Often, CEI will look to the Network for information on the policy issues that affect states the most. "Our relationships with the state think tanks help us leverage the right information to the right people in Washington," said Heather Browning, CEI's vice president of philanthropy. "This helps us inform leaders at the federal level about the critical issues happening on the ground and allows us to work alongside our think tank partners to amplify these issues."

For example, CEI submitted an amicus brief alongside The Buckeye Institute, Manhattan Institute, Platte Institute, National Federation of Independent Business, and Illinois Policy Institute in the Supreme Court case *Tyler v. Hennepin County*. The case involved Geraldine Tyler, a widow who was forced to move from her condo in Hennepin County, Minnesota, due to rising crime in her neighborhood. County officials seized her home after she could not pay the taxes on both the condo and her new apartment, and they ultimately sold her condo for \$40,000. Even though Ms. Tyler only owed \$15,000 in taxes, the county officials kept the entire \$40,000 from the sale and refused to return the overage of \$25,000 to her. In the decision, all nine Justices agreed that the government cannot take more than it is owed when settling tax debt.

Curbing the overreach of state and federal governments has been a shared goal of SPN and CEI for many years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, regulations prevented Americans from opening businesses, attending schools, and even accessing healthcare. CEI launched the Never Needed campaign, which highlighted burdensome or harmful regulations imposed by public officials that prevented individuals from responding to the pandemic and were "never needed" in the first place. CEI relied on its partnership with SPN's 50-state Network to share the stories of Americans affected by those regulations.

CEI recently partnered with SPN's Center for Practical Federalism, an initiative launched this year to restore the American Founders' vision of federalism, to curb federal regulations. SPN has tapped CEI's regulatory reform experts, including scholar Wayne Crews, to identify opportunities to mobilize state and local officials to push back against federal agency overreach. "Wayne Crews, Kent Lassman, and their colleagues have been so very helpful and encouraging to us as we chart a path for SPN's Center for Practical Federalism," said Tony Woodlief, senior fellow for the Center for Practical Federalism and SPN executive vice president. "We're excited about the possibilities to work together to rein in the federal administrative state."

We are so appreciative of our partnership with CEI, as we continue to protect and defend the freedoms of everyday Americans.

# Expand Freedom in the States, Now and for Future Generations



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