



State Solutions. National Impact.

FALL 2019

Education Reform in 2019

The Network is bringing about greater choice and opportunity for families across the country to help students succeed.

Students gathered in support of school choice in West Virginia at an event hosted by the Cardinal Institute for West Virginia Policy.



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 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 think tanks 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 collectively 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 donor privacy.

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Dear Friends,

The reason that many of us, including myself, wake up every day fighting for greater freedom is so we can give our children and grandchildren a better future. Your commitment and support of State Policy Network is helping us make sure our children grow up in an environment that is open to innovation; encourages risk-taking, critical thinking, and entrepreneurship; and gives them the chance to achieve bigger things than we ever could. It's these principles that State Policy Network fights for in states across the country, and we are seeing the results year after year thanks to you.

This issue of *SPN News* touches on one of the most important topics that impacts the well-being of our children: **education**. All too often, children are forced to fit a "one-size-fits-all" system because their state lacks affordable alternatives for students to take different learning paths. That's why several state think tanks pushed for—and succeeded in passing—greater choice programs this year. You can learn more about big wins for education reform from the 2019 legislative sessions and what SPN is doing to accelerate other education opportunities in the following pages.

Not only is SPN dedicated to supporting state think tanks in their efforts to improve our education system for future generations, but we also invest in recruiting the next generation into the freedom movement through our Generation Liberty Fellowship Program (GLF) and Development Apprentice Program (DAP). The GLF program, with nearly 500 alumni, is a growing cohort of savvy young professionals who are invited to Annual Meeting for exclusive hands-on training and connection with top leaders from the SPN Network. The DAP program, wrapping up its second successful year, has created a bench of quality development professionals to fuel this movement by building meaningful relationships with principled supporters like you. You can learn more about the DAP program in this issue.

Attracting and keeping high-level talent is critical to the growth and sustainability of this 50-state freedom movement. This is why SPN vigorously advances our decades of leadership development experience to cultivate young leaders passionate about free-market ideas. It is truly inspiring to get to know these students who bring refreshing energy about positive change in this country.

Thank you for all you do to support the cause of freedom for this generation, and for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Tracie Sharp

President & CEO





Education Reform in the States: A Q&A with State Policy Network's Senior Advisor Katherine Bathgate



In our most recent survey of state think tanks, an overwhelming majority of SPN's affiliate organizations said education reform is among their top priorities, and for a good reason. All parents want high-quality education for their children and the ability to choose settings that best meet their children's needs. Whether or not a state can provide that freedom could have significant consequences on outcomes for students and the future of the state's economy.

As students begin a new school year, SPN senior advisor and education expert Katherine Bathgate assesses the state of education reform since the last legislative session and discusses how the Network has worked to bring greater choice and accountability to public school systems.

Can you tell us about your background? How did you become the education expert and activist you are today, and what is most important to you about this issue?

I began my work in education reform on Capitol Hill for the US House Committee on Education and the Workforce. From there I joined the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools to

advance the charter school movement at the state, local, and federal level. About four years ago I started *SchoolForward*, a communications and advocacy firm focused on education reform. Since that time, I've been working as an advisor to SPN to support state think tanks' education reform efforts.

I am passionate about education reform because of the difference it can make in the lives of individuals and communities. I spend my days advocating for more educational choice because too many students don't have access to a great education, which can negatively impact their career trajectory, future income, and even their children's future success. Education affects people's well-being and lives in very dramatic ways and is one of the most important issues we can invest in.

Most legislative sessions have now ended, and several states have scored victories for education reform. Can you talk about the most significant school choice wins and what they mean for the broader education reform movement?

2019 was a good year for school choice thanks to the hard work of many state think tanks and the philanthropists across the country who make their work possible.

Tennessee passed an Education Savings Account (ESA) program, which will grant up to 15,000 students in Nashville and Memphis \$7,300 each to fund an education that better meets their needs. **The Beacon Center of Tennessee** has been advocating for this program for nine years and was instrumental in developing policies that are in the final law. Prior to this, Tennessee's only ESA program was limited to special needs students with only 88 enrolled statewide.

Mississippi passed \$2 million in funding for special needs ESAs, a move that will help alleviate a long waitlist of families hoping to enroll in the program. Helping to secure this significant win, **Empower Mississippi** led a powerful *Waitlisted* campaign to tell the stories of families stuck on waiting lists because there wasn't enough funding for them to participate in the program. The additional funding will allow nearly 700 more students to use the ESAs, which will help Empower Mississippi make the case to extend the program beyond its scheduled sunset next year.



ABOVE: Empower Mississippi's *Waitlisted* campaign told powerful stories of real families sitting on the waitlist in Mississippi for an education scholarship, waiting for the chance to give their children a better education.

OPPOSITE, TOP: The Cardinal Institute hosted a National School Choice Week celebration in January 2019, the largest gathering in support of school choice in West Virginia's history.

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Katherine Bathgate
State Policy Network
Senior Advisor

Pennsylvania increased two school-choice tax credit scholarship program caps by \$30 million total this session. These programs provide scholarships for thousands of Pennsylvania children to attend the best schools possible regardless of their zip code and are funded by private donations in exchange for a tax credit. As a result of the recently enacted cap increases, 15,000 additional students will be able to access scholarships. This almost didn't happen, as the Governor originally vetoed the bill. But with the help of the **Commonwealth Foundation** and its outreach efforts, they were able to include the cap increases in their final budget.

After years of work, **West Virginia** passed its first charter school law. The bill limits how many charter schools can open, but until now, West Virginia has been one of a handful of states that had absolutely no school choice. The **Cardinal Institute for West Virginia Policy** played a key role educating policy-makers, and a bill passed during a special legislative session.

Also this year, **Virginia** expanded its Education Improvement Scholarship Tax Credit to include PreK students, and **Florida** gained its fifth school choice program, which will alleviate a 13,000-student tax credit waiting list.

Finally, the US Supreme Court agreed to consider whether a **Montana** tax credit program that allows individuals to receive a \$150 credit for donating to privately run scholarship programs is constitutional. The state's Department of Revenue refused to implement the program, arguing it violates the state's Blaine Amendment, which forbids tax credits going to schools owned or operated by a "church, sect, or denomination."



With the help of the Beacon Center, the Senate Education Committee in Tennessee heard testimony from families who wanted greater education options for their children.

What are some of the biggest challenges to reforms that give parents greater choice and opportunities for their children's education?

One of the difficulties we face is general awareness about what greater education freedom really means. Knowledge of educational choice programs like education savings accounts is low, and there's a lot of misinformation out there from opponents. It typically takes multiple years to pass school choice legislation because the ideas are usually fairly new, and they challenge a very entrenched status quo. Add to this strong and virulent opposition from teacher unions and others who are part of the education establishment, and you're fighting an uphill battle from day one. Fortunately, slowly and surely, we are winning.

How have SPN affiliates engaged this issue at the federal level?

Top policymakers at the federal level recognize the expertise and knowledge of the state think tanks and often thank our groups for the work we are doing in the states. SPN and several of our think tanks are in frequent contact with the White House, Department of Education, and members of Congress to share best practices, policy developments, and state insights that can inform federal policy. In February, the Department of Education requested a briefing call with SPN members before the public announcement of their new Education Freedom

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Scholarships proposal. This policy proposal would allow individuals and businesses that donate to tax credit scholarship programs in their states to also receive a federal tax credit. We set up and hosted a call with leaders at more than 20 state think tanks and the Secretary of Education joined the call to ask for our feedback and support.

Why did SPN establish two new working groups on education reform, and what are the goals of the groups?

Last summer, SPN hosted an education reform symposium to explore new ideas in education. Following the symposium, many state think tank attendees wanted to do more on issues related to school finance and teacher pay. This year, SPN launched a working group on each of these issues. Working groups are one important way SPN works with state think tanks to achieve multi-state momentum on policy change.

School Finance Reform:

If you want to change education policy, you have to follow the money. A state's school finance formula is a reflection of its education priorities. Done well, a student-centered formula can help drive student achievement, reward great teachers, and steward taxpayer resources efficiently. This year, the School Finance Working Group is focused on building the capacity and knowledge of its members. SPN sponsored six state think tank education policy staffers to complete a five-month Certificate in Education Finance at Georgetown University. The course ended in May, and the Network now has a team of experts who are well-versed in education finance and working to generate new policy ideas. The training is already paying off as groups like Texas Public Policy Foundation and Commonwealth Foundation are already weighing in on critical school finance debates in their states.

Teacher Pay:

In 2018, we saw an increase in the number of teacher strikes due in part to issues of pay and benefits. We need to promote reforms that are pro-student and pro-teacher so that teacher compensation better rewards and retains quality teachers and attracts the best talent to the profession. The working group is advancing several teacher pay policy ideas, among them providing higher base salaries in exchange for a defined contribution pension plan and offering higher pay to highly effective teachers who work in hard-to-teach schools.

What has SPN done to accelerate education reform in the states?

In 2015 and 2016, SPN took on a significant project to support state think tanks working to advance Education Savings Accounts. SPN conducted message research; wrote and published an Education Savings Account Issue Campaign Guide; and created a library of videos, graphics, and other collateral for state think tanks to use to educate audiences about ESAs. More than half of state think tanks have been through ESA messaging training and at least a dozen groups have used the created guide and content in their state. Several years later, we're seeing this work pay off. Groups like the Beacon Center and Empower Mississippi used SPN's resources to help secure their ESA wins this year.

Additionally, one thing I hear time and again from our state think tanks is how much they appreciate SPN's role in connecting state think tanks with one another. Working on and advancing new ideas in education can be really challenging, and having a group of peers in other states to lean on and learn from is a valuable asset. SPN brings groups of people together to solve problems and connects individuals who are facing similar situations to advise one another. There's a lot of value in that.



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SUPPORT SPN

For more than 27 years, State Policy Network and our thousands of supporters across the country have been committed to building a durable freedom movement in every state. Your investment has empowered this Network to achieve victories that improve our economy, job opportunities, healthcare, education, and so much more.

With your gift today, SPN can continue its unique and important work to connect leaders, ideas, and resources so that our movement achieves lasting, national impact.

Donate today at spn.org/donate



Spotlight: West Virginia Passes School Choice for the First Time

West Virginia passed its first school choice law during the 2019 legislative session. Prior to this year, it was one of only six states that had not yet authorized the creation of public charter schools.

The new law allows for three public charter schools within the next three years, with the ability to expand by three every three years. In addition, the law breaks down barriers to open enrollment. This enables parents to choose a school outside of their district to meet their child's needs without needing permission from their current school.

The road to school choice in West Virginia was long and fraught with obstacles along the way, including two major teacher strikes in two years. There is a strong appreciation for and history of unions in West Virginia, and they are the most well-funded and vocal opponents of school choice.



WE STILL HAVE A LOT OF
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Garrett Ballengee
Executive Director, Cardinal Institute

Since the **Cardinal Institute for West Virginia Policy's** creation in 2014, the organization has been dedicated to improving West Virginia's education system. West Virginia schools are consistently ranked among the worst in the country, and more than a third of West Virginia residents believe the school system is failing, according to the Institute's "State of the Mountain State" report. At the same time, 62 percent of West Virginians polled agreed that giving parents more choice about where they can send their kids to school would help improve the education system.



Executive Director of the Cardinal Institute Garrett Ballengee

For years, the Cardinal Institute ran a campaign to educate the public and lawmakers about the effect greater choice and opportunities in education can have on a student's performance. Their message—echoed in digital campaigns, media outlets, and billboards along the state's busiest highways—was that with greater choice, parents have more control over their children's education; children have a better chance to succeed than they do in a "one-size-fits-all" system; and, in time, these could lead to greater economic outcomes in one of the poorest states in the nation.

"We were able to make sure that as long as anyone is talking about education, choice would be discussed," said Garrett Ballengee, executive director of the Cardinal Institute. The Institute was among the first groups to talk about ESAs in West Virginia and to educate lawmakers on the multitude of policies that would improve education options.

2019 was a positive first step to bringing greater education freedom to West Virginians. But the fight is far from over. Private charter schools are still not permitted in the state, and there remains an information gap about ESAs and open enrollment. Additionally, teacher unions have threatened to challenge the new law in court.

"We still have a lot of work to do, but at the end of the day we are giving kids hope," said Ballengee. "This is just the beginning. We are just now starting our school choice experiment in West Virginia. We are not stopping until every child in this state has education choice, regardless of their parents' means."

Building the Next Wave of Philanthropic Leaders

State Policy Network's Development Apprentice Program Welcomes 2019 Class

State think tanks have extraordinary opportunities to change lives and steer our country toward a freer and more prosperous future. But as any nonprofit leader will tell you, achieving that kind of mission is not possible without supporters who share the organization's passion and vision.



The 2019 Development Apprentices met in Washington, DC, to kick off their program before they dispersed to spend the summer with a state think tank's development shop.

Nonprofit leaders will also tell you that these philanthropic partnerships do not develop overnight. Building relationships with valued supporters like you requires the consistent presence and diligence of a key role within the organization: development professionals who can connect the organization's vision and mission to the difference that philanthropists want to make in their states and across the country.

Development professionals are so central to the long-term success of the 50-state freedom movement that State Policy Network launched the Development Apprentice Program (DAP) in 2018 to connect new talent to the field of development within the state-based, free-market Network. This program is made possible thanks to your generous support.

This spring, SPN kicked off the second year of its Development Apprentice Program and welcomed 13 new young professionals into the Network. These participants were placed at SPN state think tank affiliates across the country, where they received a combination of intensive training and on-the-job

experience in nonprofit philanthropy. Working alongside seasoned development leaders, apprentices learned the day-to-day aspects of development operations, as well as high-level components of the field, such as development strategy and donor engagement.

This program is unique among professional apprenticeships, especially within the liberty movement, because it offers an intentional and structured path toward a career that many do not directly study in school. Several development professionals come to their careers serendipitously, and think tanks can struggle to fill development roles when it is difficult to tie the career opportunities to a specific major or education program. DAP creates a direct, practical link between aspiring young talent and philanthropic career paths in the free-market movement.

The program also supports the development directors who serve as day-to-day supervisors for apprentices, providing directors with management training that furthers their own professional growth.



Kristina Mitten Sanders, SPN's senior director of leadership and philanthropic strategy, welcomes the 2019 class of Development Apprentices. Sanders has worked with state think tanks to grow their development capabilities since 2011.

DAP's 2019 class kicked off in May 2019 with a Welcome Seminar at SPN's headquarters in Arlington, VA. During this week-long seminar, apprentices learned the fundamentals of fundraising, received professional development training, and connected with a peer network of fellow apprentices and professional mentors.

During the past six years, SPN's development training program has focused on growing and cultivating the Network's development leaders through several training opportunities. The 2019 DAP Welcome Seminar brought in 65 development leaders who offered their time and expertise to train the new class of apprentices. These leaders included alumni from the 2018 DAP class, think tank hosts, Network philanthropists, mentors, facilitators, and other partners. Even more development leaders in the Network engage with DAP throughout the 10-week program.

The program is an extraordinary testament to the Network's growth in the field of development. Today, the Network not only boasts an impressive number of development leaders, but it also attracts and retains new talent like never before. In its first year alone, DAP empowered apprentices from the 2018 DAP class to land development roles in organizations such as The Heritage Foundation, Cato Institute, the Show-Me Institute in Missouri, and State Policy Network.

"It is exciting to see the growth and success of this program, and it is only possible thanks to the hard work and support of SPN's donors, staff, and the development directors and leadership across the Network who truly have embraced fundraising as a crucial part of organizations' success," said Kristina Mitten Sanders, SPN's senior director of leadership and philanthropic strategy, who has

spearheaded SPN's development training programs since 2011.

"Our hope is that this program will continue to build the culture of philanthropy in SPN's member think tanks and raise awareness of nonprofit development as an exciting, fulfilling, career option for new graduates."

Below is a list of state think tanks that hosted 2019 development apprentices:

- [GOLDWATER INSTITUTE \(ARIZONA\)](#)
- [THE JAMES MADISON INSTITUTE \(FLORIDA\)](#)
- [GEORGIA CENTER FOR OPPORTUNITY](#)
- [CALIFORNIA POLICY CENTER](#)
- [WASHINGTON POLICY CENTER](#)
- [MACKINAC CENTER \(MICHIGAN\)](#)
- [ILLINOIS POLICY INSTITUTE](#)
- [THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE \(OHIO\)](#)
- [MAINE HERITAGE POLICY CENTER](#)
- [BEACON CENTER OF TENNESSEE](#)

What apprentices are saying about the program



Samantha Jorich, Illinois Policy Institute: "I'm excited that this program even exists—it's the only one of its kind that I could find. So many people I talk to in this field have fallen into it. This program is a direct path to success, and I'm looking forward to learning how to cultivate relationships with donors and build support for the liberty movement. I can't be the mil-

lion-dollar donor right now, but I can support the movement by joining a think tank and helping it thrive. I want to give back to the things that have transformed me, and this is how I want to do it."



Alexis Pavlinich, Cardinal Institute (West Virginia): "I enjoy building relationships and listening to people so that I can connect them to ways they can fulfill their personal goals. I'm excited to help donors take part in a vision that speaks to them."



Jacob Householder, Mackinac Center (Michigan): "I've been passionate about freedom since high school, but I never thought there would be a career opportunity within the freedom movement. I was pretty committed to go into banking and finance and participate in the freedom movement on the side. It changed my life to learn that there's a way to be part of it as

a career. I really believe in state-based solutions. These laboratories of democracy will produce the best results if we allow states to experiment and try their hand at solving problems. Think tanks can change the policy climate and conversation so that solutions that are impossible now can be possible soon."



Madison Bauer, The James Madison Institute (Florida): "I have a passion for free-market ideas, but I don't necessarily want to work in policy. I'm more extroverted and love talking with people. In development, I can assist with a need and use my skills to advance a cause I care about. I'm excited for the chance to get real knowledge about the field of development and explore

a potential career path. I love that this opportunity is called

an "apprenticeship." It implies that I'm going to get in-depth knowledge, and I'm excited to learn new skills and discover a new path for my future in an intentional way."



Emily Ethridge, State Policy Network: "State think tanks are interested in ideas but combine the ideas with practicality. I see that as being really impactful, and I've always wanted to do meaningful work that makes the world a better place. I have spent time on college campuses that are generally very liberal. I don't think those ideas are good for our country, and if that's

what young people are being taught, there's a big need for the liberty movement to provide a different perspective. I know the liberty movement is dedicated to creating a more prosperous society, and I'm excited to contribute to that."



Alex Miller, Maine Heritage Policy Center: "I really appreciate interpersonal communication skills. Dialogues are so important, especially for organizations trying to build their brands and cultivate relationships. I'm excited to serve as the liaison between my organization and the people who feel passionately about the same mission. The organization's work becomes

more real for donors when there's someone there to serve them. It's a significant thing to love and respect donors and their generosity."



Development Apprentices learn best practices from development experts across the Network as part of their training program.



ALABAMA

ALABAMA POLICY INSTITUTE • alabamapolicy.org

Prior to the start of Alabama's 2019 legislative session, an orchestrated campaign to slander the Alabama Accountability Act (AAA)—Alabama's tax-credit scholarship program—began. In response, **Alabama Policy Institute** launched a campaign to change the narrative concerning the act and its programs. With op-eds, radio interviews, and television appearances, API promoted and showcased the real-life effect that the act's programs have had on students and families in some of the state's least privileged areas. API also formed the Alabama Accountability Act Coalition, a group of 16 state and national organizations dedicated to the preservation and advancement of the Accountability Act's programs. As a result of API's work and the AAA Coalition's activism, no attempt to repeal the Alabama Accountability Act was made in the 2019 legislative session. Calls for repeal are likely to remain, and API will continue to promote and push for the expansion of the AAA in the coming years.



ALASKA

ALASKA POLICY FORUM • alaskapolicyforum.org

In the year following the *Janus v. AFSCME* decision, the **Alaska Policy Forum** focused on sharing personal stories to raise awareness of how the decision had restored First Amendment rights for workers. APF did a circuit on the major talk radio shows in Alaska to discuss the effects of the decision and inform workers of their choices related to union membership. Working with experts from State Policy Network, APF was able to place two op-eds that highlighted personal stories of two Alaskans who were freed by the *Janus* decision. High school teacher Todd Smoldon's op-ed ran in the largest daily paper in the state, and first-grade teacher Kathy McCollum's op-ed was published at *FoxNews* online. Thereafter, APF began a collaborative project with the Mackinac Center for Public Policy to educate public employees about their First Amendment right to work for government without paying dues to a union.



ARIZONA

GOLDWATER INSTITUTE • goldwaterinstitute.org

Goldwater Institute received recognition from Arizona Governor Doug Ducey for its leadership in fighting for freedom in the state and across the nation. "The Goldwater Institute is focused on individual liberty and limited government. Those are two principles that have made Arizona a better and more productive state, and people are flocking here," Ducey said. "There's no state more on the cutting edge of what good government should look like and holding elected leaders accountable for their actions." Governor Ducey recently signed first-in-the-nation legislation that recognizes occupational licenses from other states. In every other state, workers who are licensed in one state and then move to another are forced to go through more study and training in order to do the same job in their new home. This Goldwater Institute-backed reform is a common-sense yet groundbreaking change to a law that has, for too long, held workers back.

ARKANSAS

ARKANSAS POLICY FOUNDATION • arkansaspolicyfoundation.org

Years after tax cut opponents claimed rate reductions would lead to revenue shortages, the Arkansas state government closed fiscal year (FY) 2019 with a \$231.2 million surplus—4.1 percent above the official forecast. The report confirmed **Arkansas Policy Foundation's** fiscal research that shows state surpluses occur in economic expansions, with shortfalls occurring in recessions with a time lag. The US economy is in an expansion that started in June 2009, according to the National Bureau of Economic Research, a Massachusetts-based nonprofit organization. Arkansas policymakers reduced state income tax rates for middle-class households in 2015 and for low-income filers in 2017. Critics opposed both tax cuts, arguing that shortages would occur. The Foundation supported both reductions, contending surpluses would continue and would improve Arkansas' economic position relative to nearby states. Arkansas trails only two of six border states in job creation, according to recent employment data.



CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA POLICY CENTER • californiapolicycenter.org

In June, the **California Policy Center** co-hosted "The *Janus* Victory: One Year Later" conference in partnership with Liberty Justice Center, Mackinac Center, National Review Institute, and Reform California; it drew 100 attendees from organizations across the country. Law firms, prominent politicians, nonprofits, think tanks, policy centers, and activists met to discuss in-depth analysis of the response to the *Janus v. AFSCME* decision. They considered next steps in addressing union corruption and restoring the rights of workers across the nation. CPC is also working with local elected officials on issues related to expanding workplace freedom, tackling corporate welfare, and ensuring more school choice. A CPC-hosted conference in July gave local elected officials an opportunity to discuss ordinances that would address the California gift clause and enabled them to learn more ways to engage with Sacramento politicians who are seeking to harm the state public charter school system.



FREEDOM FOUNDATION OF CALIFORNIA • freedomfoundation.com

Freedom Foundation of California and the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation filed a motion to intervene in federal litigation—brought by a coalition of states—that would block implementation of the Medicaid union dues skimming rule change that IFF worked on for two years. The motion was filed on behalf of 10 home caregivers in California, Oregon, and Washington who want the union dues skimming to stop. After word of Freedom Foundation's lawsuit against the California Teachers Association spread, more teachers contacted Freedom Foundation of California to share their stories and ask for help. As a result, more teachers have joined the suit against the California Teachers Association, the National Education Association, several local school districts and boards, and California Attorney General Xavier Becerra. To celebrate the one-year *Janus v. AFSCME* anniversary, Freedom Foundation of California employees released a new video. They also distributed information to public employees outside government buildings in Sacramento and Fresno. A plane flyover in Sacramento advertised OptOutToday.com, the Foundation's educational website.





PACIFIC RESEARCH INSTITUTE • pacificresearch.org

A new **Pacific Research Institute** study found that environmental, social, and government (ESG) funds have historically underperformed funds investing in the broader market over the long term. While possibly appropriate for individual investors, Senior Fellow in Business and Economics Wayne Winegarden says ESG investing threatens public pension funds, as investment decisions are made based on politics, not on maximizing fund growth. Winegarden analyzed the 18 ESG funds with a 10-year track record and found that a \$10,000 ESG portfolio would be 43.9 percent smaller than a portfolio of the same amount invested in a broader S&P 500 index fund. ESG funds also carry higher risks because they are less diversified and have higher costs—factors that can lower returns. “While ESG funds offer environmentally and socially conscious investors an investment option that suits their interests, based on the historical record, they should not see these investment vehicles as likely to outperform the broader market,” said Winegarden.

COLORADO



INDEPENDENCE INSTITUTE • i2i.org

The **Independence Institute** is working diligently on the *Vote No on CC* fight. Amy Oliver Cooke is one of the proponents of this issue campaign. The Institute has created a large coalition across the state, speaking to many counties about this attack on our voting rights. Proposition CC is a direct assault on Colorado’s Taxpayers Bill of Rights (TABOR) and on its ability to keep government spending in check. The Local Government Project has placed over 50 people on boards and commissions at the local level. One person who attended a workshop and chose to join a commission has taken the next step to run for city council. This is a big step in activating the average citizen; the Independence Institute challenges attendees to be part of the solution to government overreach instead of just complaining from the sidelines.

CONNECTICUT



YANKEE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • yankeeinstitute.org

Research and data from the **Yankee Institute for Public Policy’s** report, “No Way to Do Business: When Government Picks Winners, Connecticut Loses,” was used as the primary source for *The Wall Street Journal’s* editorial entitled “A Connecticut Tax Story: A rate increase yielded less revenue than the state paid in subsidies.” Connecticut lawmakers continue to raise taxes on Connecticut businesses, then dole out tax credits to politically connected companies. With the number of businesses leaving or considering leaving, these policies are clearly failing. As Yankee notes in its report, “If we’re going to turn Connecticut around, we need to adopt the best and cheapest incentive programs ever invented: low taxes administered fairly and equally for all, ‘paid for’ by eliminating unaffordable and counterproductive programs like these ‘incentive’ plans.” Yankee will continue to fight on all platforms for low, fair tax policy in Connecticut.

DELAWARE

CAESAR RODNEY INSTITUTE • caesarrodney.org

Caesar Rodney Institute has launched a new website, which is more user-friendly and updated regularly with the latest news and information about Delaware. CRI provides a range of information, from updates about the latest bills being introduced, to tools that enable citizens to find out who their legislators are. Additionally, the new website gives Delaware state employees free access to the state's pension data in an easy-to-read format.



FLORIDA

FOUNDATION FOR GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY • fga.org

The **Foundation for Government Accountability** released new research combating the myth that Arkansas' groundbreaking Medicaid work requirement wasn't effective. The data told the real story: The state's Medicaid work requirement was changing lives. Arkansas became the first state to implement a work requirement for able-bodied adults on Medicaid, and the results showed that thousands of able-bodied Arkansans moved from welfare to work because of it. FGA also partnered with South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem to tell her story of executive excellence and released a video with Governor Noem, depicting what the state is doing to ensure people have pathways to work through apprenticeships. FGA celebrated the Trump administration's announcement of a rule that would finally close a loophole within the food stamp program that allows millionaires to collect food stamps. The rule would ensure millionaires do not receive food stamps and would be a step towards refocusing the program on the needy.



THE JAMES MADISON INSTITUTE • jamesmadison.org

Policymakers and a new governor made bold strides in the 2019 Florida legislative session, cementing Florida as a beacon for conservative principles. The work of **The James Madison Institute** team in Tallahassee will be felt for generations. There was an unparalleled level of energy and commitment to the principles that are central to JMI's mission, and policymakers enacted initiatives from five of the six policy priorities JMI had set for this past session. The Florida Legislature charted a course for patient-centered healthcare reform; expanded school choice in ways that caused other states to marvel; protected and encouraged small businesses; took the first step down the path of criminal justice system reform; and passed several other principled reforms that will touch the lives of Floridians. The Legislature also maintained the state's status as one of the leanest governments in the country. A copy of JMI's 2019 Legislative Wrap-Up Memo is available at jamesmadison.org/2019-legislative-wrap-up-memo.





GEORGIA

GEORGIA CENTER FOR OPPORTUNITY • georgiaopportunity.org

Georgia Center for Opportunity continued to spread the message about how free-market principles empower those in poverty. GCO worked with local and community leaders to identify and address the barriers many of the underserved face. One of the ways GCO has done this is through its Healthy Family Initiative (HFI). HFI offers community training and educational classes with organizations such as the YMCA, Every Woman Works, and others. Through the spring, GCO provided a series of classes online. Conducted by trained counselors, these discussions taught participants how to build strong, lasting relationships. Each class was conducted during the lunch hour to reach new audiences. These classes are now becoming available to partners as part of an online portal on GCO's site. In July, GCO's CEO Randy Hicks spoke before the Atlas Network's Latin America Liberty Forum on successful solutions from Georgia. He discussed how GCO is reaching communities and helping those in poverty. Healthcare is one area identified that disproportionately affects those in poverty. GCO released and distributed to Georgia lawmakers two groundbreaking healthcare reform reports that describe how they can begin crafting a healthcare system that works for everyone, particularly the most vulnerable. GCO is also preparing for the launch of a "Hiring Well Doing Good" web portal that connects the unemployed or underemployed to services and training. Once users have worked with area services and training, they will be connected to local businesses seeking to hire them.



GEORGIA PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION • georgiapolicy.org

During the first half of 2019, **Georgia Public Policy Foundation** held six policy events, conducted visits across the state, hired a new development associate, advertised a digital media specialist opening, and offered input to state leadership on innovative healthcare policy. Early bird registration is open for the 2019 Georgia Legislative Policy Forum, which takes place on November 15 in Atlanta. Since 2010, this event has been an important precursor to upcoming legislative sessions, bringing together state and national experts from the private sector and public policy arena to highlight innovation and transformation that Georgia's leaders can embrace. This year's theme is "Wisdom, Justice, Mobility," a play on Georgia's motto "Wisdom, Justice, Moderation." Sessions will focus on healthcare, education, transportation, economic opportunity, and regulatory reform.



HAWAII

GRASSROOT INSTITUTE OF HAWAII • grassrootinstitute.org

Hawaii's 2019 legislative session ended with the **Grassroot Institute of Hawaii** claiming several victories. Proposed increases in the state's minimum wage and regressive general excise tax were defeated, and an increase of the "handyman exemption" was approved. The latter allows homeowners to hire unlicensed contractors for work valued at less than \$1,500. Previously the limit was \$1,000. Grassroot also actively supported a measure approved by the Legislature to reform the state's civil asset forfeiture laws—among the worst in the nation—but the governor vetoed it, responding to protests by local law enforcement officials. The governor also vetoed punitive legislation regarding short-term vacation rentals, but the slack was picked up by ordinances approved by several of the counties. In all cases, Grassroot defended the right of property owners and urged a balanced regulatory approach. Meanwhile, Grassroot's Facebook readership reached a milestone—5,000 page likes—and its "Why We Left Hawaii" series, which shares stories from former residents, continued to raise awareness about Hawaii's high cost of living and lack of affordable housing and job opportunities.

IDAHO

IDAHO FREEDOM FOUNDATION • idahofreedom.org

When infighting led the Idaho Legislature to neglect renewing all of Idaho's administrative rules before adjourning for the year, the **Idaho Freedom Foundation** sprang to action and engaged hundreds of Gem State residents. These reform-hungry Idahoans turned in enough petitions to force the Idaho State Board of Education to hold Common Core repeal hearings in at least nine counties across the state. This gave Idahoans the chance to re-litigate the controversial Common Core standards, which have not lived up to education reformers' hype. In addition, IFF's policy analyst Lindsay Atkinson, leader of IFF's "Save Our Cities" initiative, authored and released the 2019 Boise Pork Report. This document—a first for IFF—exposes tens of millions of dollars in wasteful spending by Boise city officials. The document, more than 160 pages in its online version, earned IFF dozens of media hits and a handful of angry tweets from state officials.



ILLINOIS

ILLINOIS POLICY INSTITUTE • illinoispolicy.org

Illinois lawmakers passed Governor J.B. Pritzker's progressive tax amendment in the final days of the spring legislative session. The amendment will go to the November 2020 ballot, and voters will decide whether to eliminate Illinois' flat-tax protection and allow lawmakers to replace it with a progressive income tax system. **Illinois Policy Institute** is making sure voters understand the dangers of a progressive tax and the need for lawmakers to advance common-sense spending reforms instead. Thanks to the rapid growth of its outreach, Illinois Policy is more prepared than ever to lead this fight. Its active email list has grown to more than 500,000 Illinoisans, and its website topped more than one million unique visitors in June alone, rivaling legacy media outlets such as the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Sun-Times* in online engagement. To date, its progressive tax analysis has also been featured in more than 200 media placements across the state and nation.



IOWA

TAX EDUCATION FOUNDATION OF IOWA • tefiowa.org

Tax Education Foundation of Iowa hosted a two-day policy summit at the end of June. Colleagues from The Center for Economic Accountability (tax incentives), Center of the American Experiment (energy policy), Platte Institute (occupational licensing), and Show Me Institute (local government transparency) joined TEF Iowa and Americans for Prosperity to discuss critical initiatives that are taking place throughout the Midwest.





KANSAS

KANSAS POLICY INSTITUTE • kansaspolicy.org

In the 2019 legislative session, **Kansas Policy Institute** was part of a coalition that fought off another attempt to expand Medicaid. Through testimony, original research, and panel discussions, KPI was able to demonstrate the devastating effect expansion has had in other states. KPI published its 2019 Green Book, an invaluable resource to lawmakers and taxpayers, which explores the relationship between economic growth and the size of government. Also recently published is the “2019 K-12 Public Education FactBook.” One year ago, KPI unveiled the initial, and groundbreaking, A-F grading system for Kansas public schools. This year, KPI released the 2018 grade card. KPI undertook this effort to create a reporting system, using data from the Kansas Department of Education, so that parents could more easily understand how schools are performing.

KENTUCKY

BLUEGRASS INSTITUTE • bipps.org

Bluegrass Institute President and CEO Jim Waters took Bluegrass’ new public-pension paradigm across the Bluegrass State, speaking to a full house at the Southern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce in Corbin, which was attended by several local elected leaders, including Mayor Suzie Razmus. Bluegrass created its first advisory council, and participants from the fields of business, public policy, law, higher education, and government met in a day-long session to provide insight into Bluegrass’ mission, strategies, and resources. Board chairman Aaron Ammerman led the meeting. Part of the advisory council’s mission is to discover and cultivate future members of the board of directors who can help grow and advance Bluegrass’ mission and success.

PEGASUS INSTITUTE • pegasuskentucky.org

Kentucky’s most successful millennials are leaving, and it’s a trend that **Pegasus Institute** is watching closely. A SmartAsset study released in June 2019 found Kentucky is struggling to keep millennials in the state, as many move west to coastal states and to southern states, including Tennessee, Florida, and North Carolina and South Carolina. Jordan Harris, executive director of Pegasus Institute, writes, “How much should metrics like this concern policymakers? The loss of purchasing power alone is bad for a state’s economy. A study last year found that millennials as a whole make up 21 percent of consumer discretionary purchases in the United States. Millennials also have the highest educational attainment of any generation, with 39 percent having a bachelor’s degree or higher. Kentucky has historically struggled to attract or retain that population, a metric that we have long pointed to with concern. Long term, this trend could equal major economic problems.”

LOUISIANA

PELICAN INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • pelicaninstitute.org

Since September 2018, the **Pelican Institute for Public Policy** regularly released deep-dive policy papers about its “Jobs and Opportunity Agenda for Louisiana” leading up to the 2019 legislative session and election cycle. Each policy paper offers solutions for abandoning the broken status quo in order to bring jobs and opportunity to Louisiana. The first policy paper examined the problems resulting from the expansion of Louisiana’s Medicaid program, which will be a major issue on the campaign trail this fall. Pelican is getting a head start on educating leaders about the dangers of expansion and alternative solutions. In an op-ed for



The Wall Street Journal, Pelican Institute Senior Fellow Chris Jacobs pointed out, “Medicaid expansion has Louisianans dropping their private plans.” The Pelican team has been barnstorming the state on a media tour, explaining how expansion further burdens hard-working taxpayers and ultimately hurts those citizens most in need of Medicaid services. Pelican will continue to educate leaders on the reforms needed to the program in order to bring jobs and opportunity to Louisiana.

MAINE

MAINE HERITAGE POLICY CENTER • mainepolicy.org

On the one-year anniversary of the US Supreme Court’s *Janus v. AFSCME* decision, the **Maine Heritage Policy Center** launched “My Pay My Say Maine,” a new education and awareness campaign that will inform public sector workers in Maine of their rights under *Janus*. The campaign is in partnership with the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, which originally launched “My Pay My Say” nationwide. MHPC is encouraging Maine to look at Kentucky for ideas that can improve freedom and prosperity in the state. At MHPC’s 2019 Freedom & Opportunity luncheon, Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin discussed key labor reforms in his state that could serve as models for Maine and the country. These ideas included right-to-work, repealing the prevailing wage, and expanding apprenticeships.

THE
**MAINE HERITAGE
POLICY CENTER**

MARYLAND

MARYLAND PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE • mdpolicy.org

Maryland Governor Larry Hogan signed into law a bipartisan plan inspired by the **Maryland Public Policy Institute’s** groundbreaking efforts to restore accountability and transparency to Maryland’s public pension system. The Institute’s report on the state pension system highlighted the waste spent on fund managers and how that money could be redirected to better purposes, such as public education. As a result of the legislative victory, MPPI reports that government will be more transparent: “The Maryland State Retirement and Pension System funds the retirement of 400,000 current and former state employees. They deserve to know whether the system is making responsible investment decisions and why it’s spending an estimated \$500 million in exchange for poor investment returns.”



MASSACHUSETTS

PIONEER INSTITUTE • pioneerinstitute.org

For the first time in memory, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Retirement Fund has less than 50 percent of the assets needed to cover its liabilities. The **Pioneer Institute** has advocated for reforms to the state’s pension system and created MassPensions.com, a website that makes it easy for the public to monitor the health of 102 Massachusetts pension systems. Over the summer, Pioneer took a closer look at how Massachusetts’ public retirement system compares to those in other states. Pioneer found that state-run pensions were underperforming relative to other states and were relatively average compared to New England states. For solutions, Pioneer suggests looking to Maine, which is on track to fully fund its pension system by 2028. Transparency intern Cole Kroninger points out that this fiscal success is the result of “[Maine’s] careful planning, starting in 1995, when it amended its constitution to effectively prohibit increases in unfunded liabilities.” He recommends Massachusetts’ elected leaders consider a similar approach for the long-term fiscal health of the state.





MICHIGAN

MACKINAC CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • mackinac.org

One year after the *Janus* decision, many people still face barriers to exercising their First Amendment rights. In response to a New Jersey law that limits opt-out time to 10 days, the Mackinac Center Legal Foundation filed separate lawsuits on behalf of three New Jersey public employees. The US Supreme Court agreed to hear *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue*, a case that could affect states that have barriers to school choice. Ben DeGrow, education policy director for the **Mackinac Center**, and Jamie Gass, director of the Center for School Reform at Pioneer Institute, co-authored an op-ed in *The Hill* about the case. Mackinac has also published a study on small-dollar lending to help legislators understand the importance of access to credit and the unintended consequences of policies that limit these financial products.



MINNESOTA

CENTER OF THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT • americanexperiment.org

After a 70 percent increase to the state's gas tax became the centerpiece of Minnesota Governor Tim Walz's budget proposal, **Center of the American Experiment** developed an advertising campaign encouraging Minnesotans to protest against the increase. The website NoNewGasTaxes.com made the case against the gas tax increase, showing only 35 percent of Minnesotans favored it. More than 2,500 Minnesotans sent emails opposing the increase to Minnesota's governor. The anti-gas tax campaign was featured in the Center's Capitol Watch email, which reaches 10,000 subscribers weekly. The Center targeted advertising to the state Capitol and Senate and House office buildings, bombarding legislators, staffers, and lobbyists with anti-gas tax ads. Social media ads and a large banner on the website of the largest newspaper in the state rounded out the digital marketing effort. The campaign was successful: The governor caved on his proposal entirely, and the 70 percent gas tax increase was soundly defeated by a bipartisan majority.



FREEDOM FOUNDATION OF MINNESOTA • freedomfoundation.publishpath.com

Freedom Foundation of Minnesota's biggest victory in the most recent legislative session was stopping some of the worst election-law changes from becoming law. Progressive legislators introduced proposals that included an unconstitutional requirement for nonprofit donor disclosure, awarding Minnesota's 10 electoral votes to the winner of the presidential national popular vote, allowing registered voters to "vouch" for an unlimited number of new voters in their precincts, and allowing every city in the state to host municipal elections based upon a ranked-choice vote. Freedom Foundation joined with a group of conservative legislators and stopped these bills. Supporters of these proposals have already said that they will attempt to pass these bills again during the 2020 legislative session. The Freedom Foundation of Minnesota will be ready to make sure Minnesota elections remain safe and secure.

MISSISSIPPI

EMPOWER MISSISSIPPI • empowerms.org

Mississippi families who had been waitlisted for years while hoping for a Special Needs Education Scholarship Account (ESA) received word this summer that the wait is over. During the months leading up to the 2019 legislative session, **Empower Mississippi**, as part of its Waitlisted campaign, told the stories of these families who have been desperate for financial help to find best educational setting for their children. The Mississippi Department of Education announced that it has increased the number of ESAs for the upcoming school year, and that they will be awarded in order of application, with priority being given to those eligible applicants who have waited longest. “We are thrilled that many more families will finally be able to gain access to ESAs. This would not have been possible without the commitment of the lieutenant governor and other legislative advocates this year to addressing the wait list,” said Grant Callen, president of Empower Mississippi.



MISSISSIPPI CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • mspolicy.org

Mississippi Justice Institute director Aaron Rice was named a recipient of the 2019 Buckley Award, given annually by America’s Future Foundation. The Buckley Award recognizes “outstanding young professional conservatives for their above and beyond service to the conservative movement.” Jon Pritchett, president and CEO of the **Mississippi Center for Public Policy**, said, “There is perhaps no honor greater for a young conservative than to receive an award in the name of William F. Buckley.” Rice received the award for helping defeat attempts to renew administrative forfeiture, which gives state agents the ability take personal property and forfeit it with only a warrant and a notice to the individual. Because the renewal was stopped, Mississippi citizens are spared a lengthy, costly process to contest forfeiture and get their property back. “I am honored to be able to bring this award to the Mississippi Center for Public Policy, and its legal arm, the Mississippi Justice Institute,” said Rice. “Our work on administrative forfeiture was very much a team effort. While I have the honor of receiving The Buckley Award, I consider it a team award to our entire organization, and the first we have been honored with.”



MISSOURI

SHOW-ME INSTITUTE • showmeinstitute.org

The **Show-Me Institute** is holding the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) accountable for how it evaluates Missouri schools and districts. The Missouri Report Card, which should be a resource for parents making decisions about children’s education, is a tangle of jargon and undefined terms. To shine a light on this problem, Show-Me Institute analyst Abby Burrola and director of research and education policy Susan Pendergrass are creating a report card of their own to grade DESE. DESE will receive a grade based on each requirement within the Every Student Succeeds Act. Show-Me’s grades will help reveal where DESE falls short in meeting its obligation to Missouri parents. The release of the report will coincide with the beginning of the 2019–20 school year. Show-Me hopes the report will help persuade DESE to revamp its approach and create a new report card that will truly serve parents and increase accountability.





NEBRASKA

PLATTE INSTITUTE • platteinstitute.org

Though the Nebraska Legislature has adjourned without taking major action on property tax reform, the **Platte Institute** is continuing the conversation with a series of property tax reform town halls. Platte Institute CEO Jim Vokal also hosted state Senators Mike Groene, Lou Ann Linehan, and John Lowe for a public discussion on their efforts for property tax reform. A Platte poll of 400 likely voters in the legislative district found 70 percent favored a new state law to place greater limits on local property tax rates or valuations. The policy won approval among 69 percent of Republicans, 68 percent of Democrats, and 75 percent of independents. Only 12 percent of area voters polled said they opposed additional property tax limitations, while 19 percent were unsure. In the interim, the Platte Institute plans additional town hall programs in other Nebraska communities.



NEVADA

NEVADA POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE • npri.org

Nevada concluded its 80th legislative session in early summer, and **Nevada Policy Research Institute** noted that it “was, by all accounts, a session dominated by tax-funded agencies, government lobbyists, and government-sector unions.” Even so, NPRI landed a few victories that managed to put taxpayers’ interests before those of government and special interests. Michael Schaus, NPRI communications director, highlighted one of the biggest wins in the area of government transparency: “Most notably, in conjunction with the Right to Know Nevada coalition that [NPRI] helped create, we were able to help move Senate Bill 287 across the finish line—a landmark public records reform bill that will make it easier for Nevadans to access government records. The bill improves our public records law by requiring governments to work promptly to help requesters find what they are looking for, and, for the first time ever, imposes a civil penalty on government agencies who are found to be in violation of the Public Records Act.”



NEW HAMPSHIRE

JOSIAH BARTLETT CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • jbartlett.org

The **Josiah Bartlett Center for Public Policy** helped defeat two separate single-use plastics bans (straws and plastic bags) despite a Democratic majority in the state Legislature. The Center’s research, published in the local press, helped reframe the debate and show the bans to be more problematic, and less effective, than proponents claimed. The Center also exposed deceptive polling designed to fool lawmakers and the public into believing that a state-run commuter rail proposal had massive levels of public support. The Center showed how commuter rail boosters left out vital information to get the favorable poll result they wanted.

NEW JERSEY

GARDEN STATE INITIATIVE • gardenstateinitiative.org

Garden State Initiative held its second annual Economic Policy Forum, where New Jersey's leading policymakers and influencers joined an audience of more than 100 for an interactive discussion of the state's competitiveness. Conversation covered alternative ideas to improve New Jersey's business climate, affordability, and constraints for size and cost of government. Andrew Haughwout, senior vice president and policy leader in the research and statistics group at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York led a discussion on the state of New Jersey's economy relative to the region. Senator Declan O'Scanlon, himself a business owner, discussed New Jersey's business climate. Paul Harencak, vice president of LPS Industries, a leading manufacturing firm based in northern New Jersey, and board member of the Commerce and Industry Association of New Jersey (CIANJ), also spoke. Senate President Steve Sweeney and Senator Steve Oroho discussed the upcoming state budget negotiations and proposals to reform state spending.



NEW MEXICO

RIO GRANDE FOUNDATION • riograndefoundation.org

Informing New Mexico workers of their First Amendment rights under the *Janus v. AFSCME* decision and educating them about their options is central to the **Rio Grande Foundation's** mission to support worker freedom. In New Mexico, worker freedom remains protected only for public sector employees. Private sector workers can still be fired from their jobs for choosing not to join unions or pay union dues. Together with the New Mexico chapter of Americans for Prosperity and the Michigan-based Mackinac Center, the Rio Grande Foundation has launched a website and campaign, My Pay My Say–New Mexico, to inform workers that they are no longer forced to join unions and pay dues in order to keep their jobs.



NEW YORK

EMPIRE CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • empirecenter.org

The aftermath of **Empire Center for Public Policy's** release of Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) payroll data continues as MTA scrambles to find solutions for problems like vandalism and timekeeping. Empire Center's Ken Girardin suggests the problem lies in the union contracts. There have been 586 mentions of Empire Center in MTA stories since Empire released MTA data, including articles in *The New York Times*. The New York legislative session ended after the Legislature enacted a number of laws that will have serious negative effects on the New York economy. In its recent publications, Empire Center examined the consequences associated with the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act, the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act, and new health insurance mandates. Luckily, there was no expansion of prevailing wage included in the final legislation package, even though the unions are struggling to pay for their underfunded pensions.





NORTH CAROLINA

CIVITAS INSTITUTE • nccivitas.org

The North Carolina General Assembly is in the midst of a budget showdown, with the state's Democratic governor vetoing the budget on June 28. Since that time, there has been little progress as Governor Roy Cooper has insisted Medicaid expansion be part of ongoing budget negotiations. **Civitas Institute** continued to lead the fight on Medicaid expansion while providing guidance to lawmakers and the public on how fiscally conservative policies remain the surest way to position North Carolina for economic flourishing. Recently, Civitas president and CEO, Donald Bryson, offered a conservative solution to the budget impasse. Such a solution ensures that all spending obligations are met and gives policymakers an opportunity to assess which portions of the budget are unnecessary expenses. This smart and sound spending prioritization helps legislators get their arms around how taxpayer dollars are being spent, while highlighting areas where cuts can and should be made. Civitas has also recently been in the news, as director of policy Bob Luebke offered insight into why raising the minimum wage would be harmful to lower-income workers. Stay current with Civitas initiatives, including its weekly podcast, *Civitalk*, at nccivitas.org.



JOHN LOCKE FOUNDATION • johnlocke.org

John Locke Foundation has a new home: After many years in downtown Raleigh, the Foundation moved its headquarters to midtown. Senior fellow Don van der Vaart is asking questions about flawed agri-business regulatory policies. Writing in the *News & Observer* earlier this year, he questioned why farmers who have complied with environmental regulations are in jeopardy. In the *Fayetteville Observer* and on the *Southern Farm Network*, van der Vaart exposed costly new requirements that regulators imposed on animal feed operators—rules negotiated by special interests behind closed doors. As the state's General Assembly neared adjournment, the Foundation's outreach team, led by Senior Vice President Becki Gray, pushed back against calls from Governor Roy Cooper to expand Medicaid and instead offered recommendations to expand access and lower costs through competition and scope-of-practice reform.

OHIO



THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE

THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE • buckeyeinstitute.org

The Buckeye Institute recognized the injustice of entrenched interests prospering from a restrictive occupational licensing regime and went to work to combat this unfair system. Buckeye research revealed that Ohio's licensing burdens were more onerous than the national average and that they disproportionately affected low-income workers and workers without a college degree. Armed with this research, Buckeye outlined policy reforms that: require Ohio to seek the least restrictive regulation needed, require all licensing boards to be renewed once every six years, ensure all new licensing legislation meets the least-restrictive regulation law, and allows persons convicted of a criminal offense to request reviews to determine whether convictions disqualify them from obtaining a license. These Buckeye-created recommendations formed the basis of Senate Bill 255 which, once adopted, moved Ohio from one of the nation's worst states on occupational licensing to one of its best.

OKLAHOMA

OKLAHOMA COUNCIL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS • ocpathink.org

The Electoral College denied Hillary Clinton the presidency, so now partisans want to throw out or hijack the Electoral College. The **Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs** is leading the defense of the Electoral College. OCPA's Trent England created the "Save Our States" project 10 years ago while serving at the Freedom Foundation in Washington state. He continues to direct "Save Our States," a project tasked with defeating the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPV) while helping Americans understand the importance of our constitutional system of states. Trent testified in seven legislative hearings this spring, appeared on "Fox & Friends," contributed an op-ed to *USA Today* and a speech to Hillsdale College's *Imprimis*. OCPA's efforts this year were instrumental in stopping NPV in Maine, New Hampshire, and Nevada (where the Governor vetoed the bill). To learn more, attend the Save Our States workshop at SPN's Annual Meeting in Colorado Springs.



OREGON

CASCADE POLICY INSTITUTE • cascadepolicy.org

Cascade Policy Institute's vice president of research Eric Fruits published an op-ed in *The Portland Tribune* challenging the assertion that Oregon taxpayers have disinvested in public K-12 education. He also presented this topic as part of Cascade's monthly policy discussions series. Annual state and local education spending in Oregon has increased by \$2,350 per student since 2009. Statewide expenditures per K-12 student reached \$13,037 in 2016. The Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) and other employee benefits are the biggest drivers of Oregon's education finance problems. The latest estimates indicate that, next year, districts will have to pay 30 percent of payroll to fund retirement obligations. A big piece of current so-called "instructional" expenditures is spent to pay for teachers who no longer instruct. Cascade advocates for PERS reform and for more educational options for Oregon families at a lower cost through school choice.



FREEDOM FOUNDATION OF OREGON • freedomfoundation.com

Freedom Foundation of Oregon filed a federal class-action suit against the Oregon Education Association (OEA) on behalf of three educators who have been denied their right to leave the union (unless they do so during the month of September only). The Freedom Foundation of Oregon also filed a motion to intervene in federal litigation brought by a coalition of states—including California, Oregon, Washington, Connecticut, and Massachusetts—that would block implementation of the Medicaid union dues skimming rule change on which Freedom Foundation worked for two years. The motion is a joint project with National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation on behalf of 10 home caregivers in California, Oregon, and Washington. Freedom Foundation employees celebrated the *Janus v. AFSCME* one-year anniversary by releasing a new video to commemorate the victory and by passing out donuts and coffee to public employees in government buildings in Portland and Salem.





PENNSYLVANIA

COMMONWEALTH FOUNDATION • commonwealthfoundation.org

Pennsylvania school choice legislation caught the attention of *The Wall Street Journal*—and it championed reform in three editorials. The *WSJ* focused on House Bill 800, which would expand tax credit scholarships with a one-time cap increase and demand-based automatic increases thereafter. The *WSJ* editorial board called the bill “Pennsylvania’s Choice Escalator,” citing **Commonwealth Foundation’s** research. Despite previously supporting tax credit scholarships and despite being a private school graduate himself, Governor Tom Wolf turned a blind eye to up to 50,000 families seeking a better education and vetoed HB 800. The *WSJ* used Commonwealth Foundation data and an EdChoice study to call Wolf’s arguments against the bill “political eyewash.” Speaker of the House Mike Turzai led lawmakers in an end-run around Wolf’s veto by including a \$30 million tax credit scholarship expansion in the state budget—the largest increase in the program’s 18-year history.



RHODE ISLAND

RHODE ISLAND CENTER FOR FREEDOM & PROSPERITY • rifreedom.org

In recognition of the one-year anniversary of the landmark US Supreme Court *Janus v. AFSCME* ruling, the **Rhode Island Center for Freedom & Prosperity** announced the launch of the second phase of its My Pay My Say RI.com campaign. The campaign informs government workers of their restored First Amendment rights. “After hearing last summer from dozens of workers, frustrated that their unions were not adequately informing them of their rights following the *Janus* decision, our Center quickly launched...our ‘My Pay My Say’ campaign, in conjunction with our national partner, the Mackinac Center for Public Policy,” said Mike Stenhouse, the Center’s CEO. Phase one of the campaign has already achieved significant results. According to a *Providence Journal* article, the percentage of state workers choosing not to join unions has doubled from about 3 percent to 6 percent in less than one year.



SOUTH CAROLINA

PALMETTO PROMISE INSTITUTE • palmettopromise.org

Long-time **Palmetto Promise Institute** friend, partner, and co-founder of Palmetto Pro-active Healthcare, Jerome Aya-Ay was in the East Room when President Trump signed an executive order promoting healthcare cost transparency. The order empowers Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar to require hospitals across the country to publicly post their charge information “in an easy to understand, consumer-friendly, and machine-readable format . . . that will meaningfully inform patients’ decision making and allow patients to compare prices across hospitals.” The order also loosens restrictions on direct primary care and healthcare sharing ministries. Forthcoming HHS action will open the door for more patients to take advantage of these innovative healthcare models. This White House action represents momentum toward more transparency related to patients’ out-of-pocket costs and price negotiations between hospitals and insurers.

TENNESSEE

BEACON CENTER OF TENNESSEE • beacontn.org

The **Beacon Center of Tennessee's** legal team filed *Will McLemore v. State of Tennessee*, challenging the constitutionality of a controversial law regulating online auctions on the grounds that it restricts free speech and burdens interstate commerce. In 2018, the Tennessee Legislature convened a task force to study the issue. Data showed very few consumer complaints about online auctions. But instead of leaving the issue alone, the task force ignored its own data and pushed a law regulating online auctions. After Beacon filed an initial complaint to keep the law from going into effect on July 1, the state was issued a temporary restraining order, prohibiting it from enforcing the law until a judge issues a final ruling on its constitutionality. With this case, Beacon aims to restore the right to work through speech and to remove senseless and protectionist barriers to interstate commerce on the internet.



TEXAS

TEXAS PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION • texaspolicy.com

Texas Public Policy Foundation's general counsel Robert Henneke presented oral arguments in *State of Texas v. United States of America*, which challenges the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). TPPF represents the individual plaintiffs in the case—both are small business owners with young families; both have been hurt by the ACA. Following the hearing, Henneke concluded, "I expect after today's arguments that the Fifth Circuit will uphold the trial court's ruling" which, in December, upheld the plaintiffs' challenge. "There is certainly time for the states to take action to provide a state-by-state replacement so that those persons who currently rely upon the ACA can have a replacement ready," said Henneke. "If we can get the federal government out of the way of healthcare, then all the states are each in a position to adopt laws that will provide a safety net for persons with uninsurable pre-existing conditions and address the healthcare needs of the poor." The case will likely be appealed to the US Supreme Court.



UTAH

LIBERTAS INSTITUTE • libertasutah.org

Libertas Institute is celebrating the implementation of an innovative 2018 bill it proposed, which limits the late fees and interest government entities can charge on fines they impose on individuals. Government entities can still hold people accountable for failing to pay fines on time, but they will not be able to do so with never-ending fees and interest that compound the financial burden. The new law allows government entities to only assess up to 25 percent of the initial fine amount, a reasonable restraint that ensures penalties do not balloon to outrageous amounts. For example, failing to pay a \$50 speeding ticket can result in upward of \$200 after adding penalties. This is a common practice across the country, and it especially hinders low-income people who cannot keep up with the required payments (and if they fail to do so, they could be arrested). In Utah, this will no longer happen, and the government will not be able to profit from an individual's inability, or failure, to pay on time.





SUTHERLAND INSTITUTE • sutherlandinstitute.org

Sutherland Institute hosted events in collaboration with every member of Utah's delegation for its second annual "Congressional Series." Topics included: free enterprise and socialism, religious liberty, innovation in education and the teaching profession, and health-care. Sutherland Institute's "Congressional Series," presented by Zions Bank, is designed to facilitate civil dialogue and convene stakeholders, elected officials, and community leaders to discuss important issues. The events were open to the public with advance ticket registration and were livestreamed on Facebook.

VERMONT



ETHAN ALLEN INSTITUTE • ethanallen.org

Rob Roper, president of the **Ethan Allen Institute**, points out that Vermont's revenue surplus in fiscal year (FY) 2019 amounts to \$60 million as a result of an additional \$43.5 million in personal income tax and \$38 million in corporate income tax collections. While this might seem like a positive financial boost, it's also a sign that the state government overcharged Vermont businesses and taxpayers for services provided in 2019. Rather than accept overcharging, Roper recommends that Vermont adopt a Taxpayer Bill of Rights (TABOR), which would require that the state return to taxpayers revenue collected that extends beyond the fiscal year's budgeted obligations.

VIRGINIA



THOMAS JEFFERSON INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • thomasjeffersoninst.org

Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy looks forward to once again sponsoring its State Energy Policy Summit at SPN's 27th Annual Meeting in Colorado Springs on October 28-29, 2019. State policy experts will gather for an in-depth discussion on energy and environment issues facing our states and our nation. This annual summit takes place just prior to SPN's Annual Meeting and has become a "must-attend" event for those policy leaders interested in making America energy independent, keeping energy prices low, reforming current government energy regulations, and challenging current energy-related discussions at the state and federal level.



VIRGINIA INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • virginiainstitute.org

Virginia Institute for Public Policy is part of the Virginia Energy Reform Coalition (VERC), a group of organizations that spans the ideological spectrum and agrees energy monopolies do not work. Institute president and CEO Lynn Taylor said, "In the business world, there is always competition. The question is, for what are businesses competing? In a healthy competitive market, businesses compete for consumers. In a monopoly market, such as Virginia's current energy scheme, businesses compete for legislative and regulatory favors." VERC's reform initiative consists of priorities aimed at opening Virginia's energy market to consumer choice and direct-provider competition. These priorities include "quarantining" the monopolies, establishing independent grid operators and uniform interconnection standards, phasing out of wholesale capacity markets, and more. The Institute anticipates seeing the VERC initiative, modeled after the Electric Reliability Council of Texas wholesale market, shift the way energy is handled in the Commonwealth.

WASHINGTON

FREEDOM FOUNDATION OF WASHINGTON • freedomfoundation.com

Freedom Foundation of Washington intervened in a lawsuit brought by California, Oregon, Washington, Massachusetts, and Connecticut to block repeal of the Obama-era rule allowing union dues skimming from Medicaid payments. The Foundation took this legal action in conjunction with the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation on behalf of 10 home caregivers in Washington, Oregon, and California. Freedom Foundation and the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation scored another victory against the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). The government union was forced to issue a pair of nurses a refund with interest for illegally confiscated dues money. SEIU 1199NW also agreed not to continue the practice against others. Freedom Foundation employees also celebrated the one-year anniversary of *Janus v. AFSCME* by passing out information at government buildings in Bellevue and Olympia. At the Department of Labor and Industries building in Olympia, law enforcement shut down this free speech exercise, surrounding Foundation staff who were distributing pamphlets, preventing video evidence from being taken, and escorting Foundation staff from the building. Freedom Foundation will take legal action against the department.

WASHINGTON POLICY CENTER • washingtonpolicy.org

While lawmakers in Washington state work to deny public workers their *Janus* rights through anti-worker legislation, **Washington Policy Center** has launched a long-range, statewide, multimedia campaign to educate the public on the *Janus* decision and help public sector workers exercise their First Amendment rights. The effort includes a strategic partnership with the Freedom Foundation to help drive public sector workers to Freedom Foundation's comprehensive website, optouttoday.com. WPC also partnered with the Freedom Foundation on a series of billboards around the state that inform workers of their right to stop paying union dues. One billboard was right outside the teacher's union state headquarters. WPC also released a short, animated video that explains in simple terms what the *Janus* decision means, directing public workers to optouttoday.com.



WEST VIRGINIA

CARDINAL INSTITUTE FOR WEST VIRGINIA POLICY • cardinalinstitute.com

With great joy, the **Cardinal Institute for West Virginia Policy** is proud to announce that, after four years of hard work and an uphill battle against entrenched teachers' unions, West Virginia finally has education choice. The last two years have seen a surge in teacher strikes (two in 2019 alone) that sparked a nationwide teachers' movement. This resulted in a heated battle that left many with little hope for change, but during the West Virginia Legislature's special summer legislative session, it passed HB 206 by a margin of 51-47, bringing public school choice to the Mountain State for the first time. This law mandates open enrollment and opens the door for the establishment of three charter schools over three years. It's a small first step, but a huge victory for West Virginia, a union stronghold.





WISCONSIN

BADGER INSTITUTE • badgerinstitute.org

The **Badger Institute** continues to grow its team and expand its expertise with the addition of free-market policy advocate David Fladeboe as a public affairs associate, digital media marketer Jacob Martin as marketing and media coordinator, former department of corrections assistant deputy secretary Patrick Hughes as corrections consultant, and national transportation expert Robert W. Poole Jr. as visiting fellow. The Institute released “Ex-offenders Under Watch,” a combined qualitative study and quantitative analysis of community corrections in Wisconsin. The Institute also published a policy brief by American Enterprise Institute’s (AEI) Mark Perry on migration trends from Illinois to Wisconsin, as well as a policy brief on paratransit reform by Reason Foundation’s Bruce Feigenbaum. In April the Institute also published “The High Cost of Increasing the Minimum Wage to \$15 in Wisconsin,” a policy brief authored by economists Ike Brannon and Andrew Hanson.



MACIVER INSTITUTE • maciverinstitute.com

The **MacIver Institute** earned a 2018 Excellence in Journalism Award from the Milwaukee Press Club for its radio documentary, “The Walker Years: A Legacy of Conservative Reforms.” The radio documentary also took home the bronze award for Best Long Hard-Feature Story in the audio category. The documentary is a chronological review of Scott Walker’s tenure as governor. It aired six times in December on News/Talk 1130 WISN in Milwaukee and on the iHeart online platform, and it was also presented as a podcast series. Walker spearheaded reforms spanning from Act 10, right-to-work, tax cuts, regulatory reform, and numerous other conservative, pro-taxpayer policies that many would have considered impossible in blue-leaning Wisconsin just a decade ago. Few news organizations presented as comprehensive a review of the Walker years as MacIver, and none explained why the former governor’s reforms were so vital to free markets and free people.



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

The Wisconsin Supreme Court issued a 4–2 decision in *Koschke v. Taylor*, a **Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty** case brought on original action. The case argued the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) does not have the constitutional power to make laws. WILL asked the State Supreme Court to hear the case directly to get clarity about what “supervision of public instruction” means. The Court granted WILL’s request and issued a majority opinion agreeing with WILL’s argument that rulemaking by the Superintendent of Public Instruction is a legislative delegation and “may be limited or taken away, as the legislature chooses.” The superintendent and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) have historically been dominated by an education establishment hostile to school choice and K–12 education reform. This decision provides the executive and legislative branches with critical oversight authority over DPI rulemaking to ensure that laws are made in the interests of all Wisconsin children. The decision marks WILL’s fourth victory at the Wisconsin Supreme Court since 2017.

MEMBER TESTIMONY:

Ed Robinson & Carole Wade

"I wanted to do what I could to support an organization that does more than most to promote these values effectively in all our states."

- ED ROBINSON



“ As a conservative who believes that almost everyone does better in a society that values and promotes self-reliance, liberty, free markets, and free minds, and who worries that our culture is pushing us in opposite directions, I wanted to do what I could to support an organization that does more than most to promote these values effectively in all our states.

My hope is that SPN succeeds in empowering the Network to convince more and more state legislators to be sure that what they do actually aids in the achievement of these outcomes, and to oppose statist actions which both limit freedom and rarely achieve their stated goals.

With luck (!), SPN's successes at the state level will help voters understand why they need to demand that their Congressmen and Senators follow the same principles, greatly reducing the size and scope of the federal government. The self-imposed weakness of Congress, and its creation of the administrative state with huge, intrusive, and unconstitutional powers, need to be reversed, as does the imperial presidency.

To increase the chances of these good results occurring, I hope that SPN will be able to contribute to the freeing of K-12 education from state monopolies. Competition makes everything better and cheaper, and the same will be true of education, if states would only limit themselves to setting reasonable requirements and allowing the market to compete to achieve those goals (and more) in the most effective and efficient ways. ”

**Safeguard the future.
Leave your legacy.**

Establish your legacy through SPN by joining the Thomas Roe Legacy Society. Learn how by visiting SPN.org/Legacy or contacting Cindy Kilduff at 703-243-1655 or kilduff@spn.org.



1851 CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL LAW • ohioconstitution.org

The **1851 Center for Constitutional Law** initiated two new property rights cases against the city of Columbus. The first challenges the city's practice of prohibiting homeowners from altering any "distinguishing architectural feature" or "historic material" (both terms undefined) unless a board consisting of the homeowner's neighbors grants a permit. The second challenges the city's policy demanding that property owners give part of their land to the city as a condition of obtaining a land use permit. These cases reflect the Center's broader agenda: ensuring that Ohio's constitutional protections of private property are as strong as possible. The Center is also litigating ticket taxes that fund private art, exactions that must be paid before a homeowner can use a home security alarm, and prohibitions that forbid gardening in one's own yard without a city permit.



AMERICAN CONSUMER INSTITUTE • theamericanconsumer.org

The **American Consumer Institute's** Center for Citizen Research released the white paper, "How International Reference Pricing for Prescription Drugs Would Hurt American Consumers." Responding to suggestions from lawmakers and other federal officials that international reference pricing would reduce drug costs for Americans, the white paper illustrates the harmful effects this approach would have on consumers and companies alike. It reports that artificially suppressing drug prices would substantially reduce incentives for drug manufacturers to undertake the costly and high-risk process of creating novel medicines. It also notes that the availability of cutting-edge medicines is far more limited in countries that use price controls in their pharmaceutical markets. Rather than relying on counterproductive international benchmarks, the white paper calls for increased transparency in the pharmacy benefit manager industry. It highlights how, in lieu of further federal regulation, increasing the level of information in the drug market can lower consumer prices while fostering innovation.



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES AND ALUMNI • goacta.org

The **American Council of Trustees and Alumni** advised the South Dakota Legislature and the South Dakota Board of Regents in their efforts to build a culture of intellectual diversity on university campuses across the state. When Armand Alacbay, ACTA's vice president of trustee and government affairs, spoke to the Legislature, he said, in part, "This is about more than compliance with a legislative mandate. It is part of fulfilling your fiduciary duty to the public at large, which relies on our nation's colleges and universities to ensure that the next generation of civic and business leaders carry on that academic tradition of intellectual humility—the idea that maybe, if posed with the right facts and arguments, they could be convinced that there is a better, truer way of understanding something that they currently believe." ACTA believes that intellectual diversity and the free exchange of ideas are indispensable for society and are the basis for all liberal learning.

AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE • aei.org

On July 1, Robert Doar succeeded Arthur Brooks to become the 12th president of the **American Enterprise Institute**. Mr. Doar joined AEI in 2014 to create a new body of work on poverty studies, after serving for more than 20 years in leadership positions in the social service programs of New York and New York City, under Governor George Pataki and Mayor Michael Bloomberg, respectively. AEI's poverty studies program and the scholars in it have since become leading voices in the national discussion on the importance of work, family, and personal responsibility in human flourishing. Of his new position, Mr. Doar said, "I am humbled to be asked to serve as the president of AEI, especially at a time when AEI's work is as important as ever. We at AEI share certain core values, including a belief in free people, free markets, earned success, American strength and global leadership, and a commitment to the rule of law and the United States Constitution. It has been my privilege to learn from Arthur Brooks, a scholar who has so ably made the moral case for AEI's mission and a president who is leaving AEI in as strong a position as the Institute has ever been."



AMERICA'S FUTURE FOUNDATION • americasfuture.org

The 28th chapter of **America's Future Foundation** was launched on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. AFF-Mississippi Gulf Coast is led by Howie Morgan, a Mississippi-based political consultant who specializes in campaign management of federal elections. It joins chapters in 27 other cities and communities across the country. New chapters in Phoenix and Charlotte also launched this summer. AFF's chapters bring together young professionals to meet like-minded peers, learn about free-market ideas, and build their professional skills in order to become dynamic advocates for liberty. Chapter events have drawn more than 2,000 attendees in 2019. With millennials poised to become the largest living generation, engaging these young professionals with free-market ideas is more important than ever. Individuals or organizations interested in reaching this audience are welcome to contact info@americasfuture.org for more information on event or chapter partnerships.



ATLAS NETWORK • atlasnetwork.org

Atlas Network's Leader Lab is coming up on November 2, 2019. The Leader Lab is a three-day workshop designed to equip new think tank managers with an understanding of best practices in essential advocacy group functions. In addition, Atlas provides two online courses that focus on think tank management basics. Atlas' 2019 Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner will take place November 6–7 and will feature the following: the prestigious \$100,000 Templeton Freedom Award, Think Tank Shark Tank Competition, and John Blundell Elevator Pitch Competition. The Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner will also showcase the Lights, Camera, and Liberty Film Festival.



CITIZENS AGAINST GOVERNMENT WASTE • cagw.org



Citizens Against Government Waste released its *2019 Congressional Pig Book*, a compilation of pork-barrel earmarks, which exposes 282 earmarks in fiscal year (FY) 2019 that cost taxpayers \$15.3 billion—the largest amount since 2010. For the seventh time since Congress enacted an earmark “moratorium” in 2011, CAGW has unearthed earmarks in appropriations bills. The increase in pork-barrel spending occurs behind closed doors and is hidden from taxpayers. There are no names of legislators attached to each earmark and limited information is provided regarding where and how the money will be spent. The *2019 Congressional Pig Book* reveals that Congress earmarked \$65 million to help recover pacific coastal salmon, \$12 million to control aquatic plants, \$9 million to quarantine fruit flies, and \$863,000 to eradicate brown tree snakes in Guam. Read the full publication at PigBook.org.

CITIZENS’ COUNCIL FOR HEALTH FREEDOM • cchfreedom.org



Citizens’ Council for Health Freedom met with members of Congress, congressional staff, and the Trump administration in Washington, DC, to discuss stopping the National Patient ID legislation. CCHF pushed the administration to give senior citizens the right to opt out of Medicare without losing Social Security benefits. It also suggested ways to improve privacy, access, and transparency. The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals recognized the fundamental and Fourth Amendment rights of parents to protect their children’s DNA. The case, brought by Michigan parents, was remanded to the federal district court for further proceedings. CCHF is keeping in touch with the plaintiffs and working at the federal level to secure parent consent requirements nationwide for federally funded research that uses baby DNA. CCHF is the only organization working to protect newborn citizens from unauthorized retention, use, and sharing of their genetic code.

COMPETITIVE ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE • cei.org



Responding to a petition from the **Competitive Enterprise Institute**, the US Department of Energy (DOE) in July announced a new rule related to slow dishwasher cycle times. In March 2018, CEI petitioned DOE to address this problem, which was the result of government regulations supposedly aimed at increasing energy efficiency. The petition, composed by CEI attorney Devin Watkins, argued the regulations wasted huge amounts of consumer time and caused unnecessary consumer frustration—as evidenced by the avalanche of comments submitted to DOE. The average dishwasher cycle today is more than two hours, while decades ago it was one hour. To learn more, visit CEI’s website.

EDCHOICE • edchoice.org



Arizona has one of the most robust, diverse school choice environments in the nation, featuring charter schools, a tax-credit scholarship (TCS) program, and education savings accounts (ESAs). **EdChoice** recently published “Families’ Experiences on the New Frontier of Educational Choice,” a new report authored by Drew Catt, director of state research and special projects for EdChoice, and Albert Cheng, assistant professor in the Department of Education Reform at the University of Arkansas. Catt and Cheng survey approximately 3,500 parents across all sectors to learn more about their school climate, satisfaction, level of parental involvement, schooling preferences, and trusted sources for educational decisions. Read the full report at edchoice.org/research/families-experiences-on-the-new-frontier-of-educational-choice.

EXCELINED • ExcelinEd.org

America's unmet need for top talent in information technology (IT) and computer science (CS) is a longstanding problem. However, a new report from the IT + CS Business Advisory Council, "Addressing America's Growing Demand for IT and CS: The Case for Change in K-12 Education," identifies what businesses, education leaders, and policymakers can do to address this skills gap. The findings and recommendations in the report represent aggregated interview responses from education organizations, businesses, and some of the world's leading tech companies. In short, students need expanded opportunities to learn IT and CS knowledge and skills that sequentially build mastery and prepare them for college, careers, and life. However, IT and CS skill acquisition opportunities are limited in K-12 education. To address the supply side of the skills gap in IT and CS, career pathways in K-12 need to be expanded and better aligned to postsecondary and professional IT and CS opportunities. See specific recommendations at ExcelinEd.org/ITCS.



FIRST LIBERTY INSTITUTE • firstliberty.org

First Liberty Institute asked US Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao to investigate San Antonio's actions after its city council banned Chick-fil-A from having an airport location because of the chain's religious viewpoint. First Liberty also launched its own investigation into San Antonio's actions. American business owners should not have to suffer because they want to operate their businesses in accordance with their religious beliefs.

In a 7-2 decision, the US Supreme Court preserved the nearly 100-year-old Bladensburg World War I Veterans Memorial, along with memorials across the country that bear religious symbols. In this case—*The American Legion v. American Humanist Association*—the justices reaffirmed that the First Amendment allows people to use religious symbols and images in public. First Liberty and the international law firm Jones Day represented The American Legion. This is a landmark victory for religious freedom. The days of illegitimately weaponizing the Establishment Clause and attacking publicly displayed religious symbols are over.



FIRST
LIBERTY

FRASER INSTITUTE • fraserinstitute.org

The **Fraser Institute** convened the fifth annual Economic Freedom of North America (EFNA) conference in Dallas. "Communicating Economic Freedom to the Public, Press, and Policymakers" brought scholars and executives from 17 partner organizations representing 15 states. EFNA Network members from The Buckeye Institute in Ohio, Mackinac Center in Michigan, and Center for the Study of Economic Liberty in Arizona led the keynote session, focusing on best practices in promoting economic freedom in the policy-making sphere. The EFNA Network now numbers 52 members in 41 states, Canada, and Mexico. To stay current on everything at the Fraser Institute, sign up for its US newsletter at fraserinstitute.org/subscribe.





FREEDOMS FOUNDATION AT VALLEY FORGE • freedomfoundation.org

More than 400 educators attended summer graduate courses at **Freedom Foundation at Valley Forge**. Four Medal of Honor Legacy programs covered the War on Terror, the Cold War, Vietnam, and World War II. Traveling seminars took teachers to the historic homes of Virginia presidents and traced the path of revolution in 18th-century Pennsylvania. Eight teachers from across the country, whose innovative classroom initiatives promote free enterprise, were honored at the 42nd Annual Leavey Awards for Excellence in Private Enterprise Education. More than 600 teachers have been honored, and over \$4 million awarded, through this partnership between the Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation and Freedom Foundation. The journal *Teaching Enterprise*, featuring the work of these award-winning educators, debuted this summer. To nominate a teacher for the 2020 awards, email Carolyn Santangelo at csantangelo@ffvf.org.



FREE STATE FOUNDATION • freestatefoundation.org

Senator Marsha Blackburn and Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Commissioner Noah Phillips participated in the **Free State Foundation's** National Press Club seminar, "Privacy Regulation: Why, What, and When?" A panel discussion addressed potential new privacy regulation, whether it's sponsored by Congress, the FTC, other federal agencies, or states. Panelists included Kelly Cole, senior vice president of government affairs at CTIA; Lynn Follansbee, vice president of policy and advocacy at USTelecom; Loretta Polk, vice president and deputy general counsel at NCTA (The Internet & Television Association); and Michelle Richardson, director of the privacy and data project at the Center for Democracy and Technology.



FREEDOM CENTER OF MISSOURI • mofreedom.org

The **Freedom Center of Missouri** came to the legal defense of two Girl Scouts whose city had tried to shut down the cookie stand they had set up in their driveway. The Freedom Center found a disturbing number of instances in which local government had shut down kid-run concession stands. The Center put those findings into a Google map that has since received widespread attention, and it has started promoting a "Lemonade for Liberty!" campaign. State legislators have started to take seriously the idea that child-operated concession stands should be free from government interference. Since 2017, four states (Utah, Colorado, Texas, and Tennessee) have passed laws expressly protecting childhood entrepreneurship, and other states (including New York) are considering similar bills. Country Time Lemonade has even made protecting kid-run lemonade stands a way to promote their brand. The Freedom Center looks forward to the day when its map can show that every state protects kid-run concession stands.

THE HEARTLAND INSTITUTE • heartland.org

The Heartland Institute is hiring for three key positions in fundraising for all levels of experience: director of development, major gifts officer, and development assistant. The director of development works with Heartland's new executive director of development to create and oversee the organization's fundraising plan. The major gifts officer manages Heartland's gift-making process—including initial prospect research, meeting with individual donors and foundation staff, and closing gifts. The development assistant is tasked with fulfilling critical development responsibilities, including researching current and prospective donors, managing donor and prospect mailings, and other administrative and communications responsibilities. See detailed job descriptions at Heartland's career page and send resumes and three writing samples to Heartland Institute vice president Latreece Reed at lreed@heartland.org.

THE HEARTLAND INSTITUTE 

INTERCOLLEGIATE STUDIES INSTITUTE • isi.org

In July, Senator Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee introduced the Campus Free Speech Resolution of 2019 to protect “the free and open exchange of ideas.” Senator Blackburn and her colleagues deserve credit for recognizing that free speech is under attack on college campuses, but this measure cannot make a difference without the force of law behind it. In an op-ed featured in the *Washington Examiner*, the **Intercollegiate Studies Institute** called for this resolution to include protections for campus free speech in the next re-authorization of the Higher Education Act. For years, ISI students have been subjected to daily harassment and abuse on campuses for their beliefs. In the past academic year, ISI's student journalists were barred from reporting on a faculty meeting in one instance; in another, they were kicked off campus for wanting to host a debate on the value of a liberal arts education. Senator Blackburn's resolution is one small step in the right direction, but our students and our country deserve more.



INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE • independent.org

California's 2017 and 2018 wildfires did not surprise astute observers of state wildfire policy and management. Critics had warned for years that worsening conditions across the state were increasing the risk of a “perfect storm” of cataclysmic wildfires. The failure to heed those warnings has prompted the **Independent Institute** to award a group of public agencies—led by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire)—its eighth California Golden Fleece® Award, a dishonor given quarterly to California state agencies, local agencies, or government projects that swindle taxpayers or break the public trust. Although Cal Fire has blamed Pacific Gas & Electric Company for causing the state's deadliest wildfire, the Golden Fleece Award report finds Cal Fire and other state and federal agencies to be at fault for allowing fuel conditions to persist that enabled wildfires to reach epic proportions. The Independent Institute will continue to monitor and call out organizations and individuals, including their policies and actions that place California and its citizens in danger.





INSTITUTE FOR FREE SPEECH • ifs.org

The 2019 legislative sessions were encouraging for donor privacy supporters. Many states defeated threats, and several advanced or passed legislation bolstering nonprofit donor privacy. The **Institute for Free Speech** has analyzed these developments. Mississippi joined Arizona as the second state to pass strong donor privacy protections. Mississippi law generally prevents regulatory agencies from requiring nonprofits to expose their supporters. West Virginia also passed a First Amendment-friendly reform of its campaign finance code. The law is now simpler and more protective of nonprofit advocacy.

In Iowa and Michigan, donor privacy bills made significant progress. The Iowa bill emerged from committee on a bipartisan, 20–1 vote, but never received a House floor vote. The Michigan Legislature passed a similar bill, but it was vetoed. Still, more than 20 states considered legislation that would harm donor privacy and free speech. Despite these attacks, the trend of states passing proactive donor privacy protections is positive.

INSTITUTE FOR JUSTICE • ij.org



The US Supreme Court ruled against state-based economic protectionism as it struck down a Tennessee law that required those seeking a retail liquor license to first reside in the state for two years—and to reside in it 10 years before renewing it. This marks the **Institute for Justice's** second US Supreme Court win this term. "[The] opinion by Associate Justice Samuel Alito and the six justices of the Court who joined with him was an indictment against in-state economic protectionism," said Anya Bidwell, an attorney for the Institute for Justice, which litigated the case. In another IJ's case, which was appealed to the US Supreme Court, the justices agreed to hear Institute for Justice's appeal of the Montana Supreme Court decision in a school choice program. The Montana Supreme Court struck down the state's scholarship tax credit program because some parents selected religious schools for their children. The Institute for Justice seeks to use this case as a means of eliminating the bigoted Blaine Amendments once and for all.

INSTITUTE FOR POLICY INNOVATION • ipi.org



The **Institute for Policy Innovation** led 25 conservative groups and leaders in expressing concerns with Senator John Cornyn's Affordable Prescriptions for Patients Act of 2019, which threatens biopharma innovation by weakening patent laws. "It is hard to overstate the harm this legislation could pose, not only to biopharmaceutical innovation, but eventually to all innovative industries and our economy at large," said IPI president Tom Giovannetti. After IPI submitted the letter, Cornyn staff reached out to IPI and were receptive to the coalition's concerns about the legislation. "If Congress weakens patent laws, patients may never benefit from new treatments or cures," wrote IPI's Merrill Matthews in a *Dallas Morning News* op-ed. Matthews has urged legislators to foster more competition in the drug marketplace between brand-name companies and generics and to also look into the complex drug supply ecosystem, which demands greater price transparency.

JAMES G. MARTIN CENTER FOR ACADEMIC RENEWAL • jamesgmartin.center

The latest publication from the **James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal**, “University of North Carolina System 2019 Fact Sheet,” provides information on enrollment, tuition, graduation rates, student debt, and more for schools in the UNC system. The fact sheet also examines significant trends in tuition rates, funding, and faculty, administration, and staff employment.



JESSE HELMS CENTER • jessehelmscenter.org

The **Jesse Helms Center’s** program for high school students, the “Free Enterprise Leadership Challenge”, completed two sessions at Houston Baptist University and Wingate University. On each campus students spent five days learning the value of the free enterprise system through hands-on experiential learning. They ran a business with real money and worked on speech contests, debates, essay contests, and a virtual-trade mission. The Jesse Helms Center hosted three additional sessions of this program in July and involved more than 300 high school students from across the country. The Center recently launched a new app for “Free Enterprise Now.” This customized app features the “Free Enterprise Now” digital learning curriculum for students, as well as leadership resources, and it can be downloaded for free on Google Play and Apple’s App Store.



MERCATUS CENTER AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY • mercatus.org

Education and healthcare costs continue to rise, but at the same time the cost of home appliances and telecommunication technologies and services are becoming much less expensive. Eric Helland and Alexander Tabarrok of the **Mercatus Center at George Mason University** asked in a recent paper: “Why Are the Prices so D*mn High?” Senior Research Fellow James Broughel released two “State Snapshots” capturing the size of the regulatory code in Montana and Washington. He also presented testimony regarding the regulatory environment in Kansas. Senior research fellow Patrick McLaughlin and visiting research fellow Laura Jones released a regulatory snapshot for the Great Lakes Region. Senior research fellow Robert Graboyes and deputy director of health care policy at the American Action Forum Tara O’Neill Hayes joined Chad Reese on the Mercatus Policy Download podcast to discuss “The Future of Healthcare.”



NATIONAL REVIEW INSTITUTE

NATIONAL REVIEW INSTITUTE • nrinstitute.org

On the date of the one-year anniversary of the Supreme Court's monumental *Janus v. AFSCME* decision, **National Review Institute** partnered with the Liberty Justice Center, California Policy Center, Mackinac Center, Reform California, and National Right to Work to commemorate the anniversary. The commemoration event covered how the Supreme Court's ruling has changed the workplace for government employees and what they must do to exercise their *Janus* rights. It also covered which states are standing in the way of workers' rights, which parts of the country have become havens for worker freedom, the latest legal battles against government unions, and what lies ahead in the fight for workers' rights. NRI also recognized Mark Janus at its Ideas Summit, honoring him with the biennial Whittaker Chambers Award.



NATIONAL RIGHT TO WORK FOUNDATION • nrtw.org

With free legal aid from the **National Right to Work Foundation**, 10 Medicaid providers have intervened in a federal lawsuit challenging a rule adopted by the US Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) that would close a loophole created by the Obama Administration. The CMS rule would stop union officials from illegally skimming union dues directly out of taxpayer-funded Medicaid payments to providers. Over the past 15 years, union officials have skimmed more than \$1 billion in Medicaid funds intended for caregivers. The motion also seeks to stop California, Oregon, and Washington from enforcing statutes that require diverting dues from Medicaid payments to respective unions, unless and until the providers revoke their dues authorization during narrow "window periods." NRTW president Mark Mix said, "Providers are right to oppose this lawsuit's blatant attempt to enable union bosses to skim union dues in violation of federal law."



PACIFIC LEGAL FOUNDATION • pacificlegal.org

The US Supreme Court decided in favor of **Pacific Legal Foundation's** client Rose Knick in the landmark case *Knick v. Township of Scott*. This decision re-opened federal courts to property owners, overturning *Williamson County*, a 34-year-old precedent that relegated property rights claims to second-class status. This victory restores the constitutional rights of property owners across America. This is Pacific Legal Foundation's 12th victory at the US Supreme Court. In the spring, Montana passed a bill revising the tax lien and tax deed process for residential property in the state. For years Montana's tax law allowed government officials to seize homes from people who fell behind on their property taxes; sell seized private property to investors; and pocket the profits. The new law reforms this process. It requires homes to be sold to the highest bidder and extra profits returned to the former owner (once taxes, interest, penalties, and costs are deducted).

PROPERTY AND ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH CENTER • perc.org

Fewer Americans believe that wildlife should be managed through activities such as hunting and fishing. These realities present challenges for the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, which uses a broad set of principles that have guided wildlife management in the United States and Canada for more than a century. **Property and Environment Research Center's** new issue of PERC Reports magazine focuses on addressing many of those challenges through markets and property rights. PERC executive director Brian Yablonski testified before the US Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources on ways to improve the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). As recreational demands grow and public lands face new challenges, federal land managers should have the flexibility to spend LWCF funds on the greatest needs. The growing outdoor recreation sector could help provide public lands funding. PERC will continue researching ways that markets and property rights can be applied to improve public lands management.



R STREET INSTITUTE • rstreet.org

Since its founding in 2012, **R Street Institute** has expanded into 10 different policy departments, including harm reduction, which promotes innovative solutions and incentives to reduce the level of harm caused by substances like tobacco and opioids. Harm reduction policy director Carrie Wade and research assistant Chelsea Boyd produced a policy paper on the worsening opioid crisis, highlighting creative, state-based means to reduce the harm associated with the opioid epidemic. Wade and Boyd suggest permitting privately operated needle exchanges to slow the proliferation of bloodborne diseases; making naloxone—the drug that reverses opioid overdoses—easier to obtain; and permitting the creation of private, supervised injection facilities where medical professionals can oversee users. These policies are not designed to condone drug use, but to save lives and inhibit the proliferation of illness. Each of these proposals has been tested elsewhere and has resulted in fewer deaths and lower rates of communicable diseases.



THE COLLEGE FIX • thecollegefix.com

Reporters with the Student Free Press Association's flagship news website, **The College Fix**, conducted research into the waste, fraud, and abuse of campus bias response teams. The investigation—facilitated through public records act requests—exposed how more than a dozen public university bias teams have targeted innocuous, everyday campus activities. Students deem these campus occurrences as oppressive microaggressions and report them to campus authorities who then investigate. Some of the most extreme examples uncovered include a University of Michigan student who reported his dorm roommate for watching a Ben Shapiro video, a student at the University of Utah who reported her economics professor for assigning too many white male authors, and a student at the University of Minnesota who reported a cafeteria worker for saying hello to him in Japanese. The results of the probe show the Orwellian nature of these unneeded bias response teams, as well as the waste of taxpayer dollars involved in creating and sustaining them.

THE COLLEGE FIX



THE POLICY CIRCLE • thepolicycircle.org

The Policy Circle's roundtable discussions empower women to become more vocal in public policy dialogue and civic engagement in their business, community, family, state, and country. The St. Louis Policy Circles put their conversations to work by hosting a community forum so citizens could ask questions about a proposed city-county merger. The event was hosted by Paraquod and featured Molly Dwyer from Better Together; Tom Schneider, former mayor of Florissant who represented the Municipal League of Metro St. Louis; and Tracey Hyatt Bosman, business consultant and Policy Circle leader. Forum conversations addressed many aspects of the proposal, including current tax policy and its impact on economic development, the municipal court system, and the statewide ballot measure in 2020. Attendees asked questions about the identity implications of merging the city with the county and the impact on the school systems. This is another great example of Policy Circles taking the next step.



TRUTH IN ACCOUNTING • truthinaccounting.org

Truth in Accounting released its "Defense Department Audit Report Card," a ranking of 21 Department of Defense (DoD) component entities based on their performance in recent financial statement audits. Truth in Accounting presented this ranking to identify relative strengths and weaknesses in DoD components' financial reporting, and to identify agency leaders who serve as good examples for the department as a whole. Four of the five lowest-scoring entities are the main military branches—the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines. View the full report at truthinaccounting.org/library/doclib/DoD-Audit-Report-Card-2019.pdf.



YOUNG AMERICA'S FOUNDATION • yaf.org

Former Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker has been elected by **Young America's Foundation's** board of directors as president of YAF, effective February 1, 2021. Governor Walker's fearlessness in doing the right thing mirrors the commitment to freedom's principles seen in bold YAF activists nationwide. His dedication to rooting out fraud and corruption also reflects YAF's work to expose the Left's schemes to corrupt higher learning and indoctrinate today's young people. Governor Walker will oversee the management of YAF's 500+ campus chapters, President Reagan's Rancho del Cielo and YAF's Reagan Ranch Center, YAF's Center for Entrepreneurship & Free Enterprise, the National Journalism Center, and an aggressive legal strategy to protect students' First Amendment rights. Governor Walker will succeed Ron Robinson, who has served as YAF's president for more than 40 years.

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For more information, contact Crystal Bouziden Baker
at crystal@spn.org, or visit spn.org/annualmeeting.



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