



State Solutions. National Impact.

SPRING 2022



## State Policy Highlights

SPN and the Network are championing freedom and federalism through our work in the states.

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

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visit [spn.org/staff](http://spn.org/staff).

# Dear Friends,

As we approach the midway point of 2022, a lot is at stake for the future of the country. Historic decisions from the Supreme Court and the midterms are quickly approaching, and key issues like education, the economy, COVID, and election reform are all front and center.

This year, the Biden administration's "federal first" agenda has ushered in more programs, more spending, and more top-down reforms, further centralizing services to a citizenry that varies widely in its makeup and needs. We were never meant to be governed in a one-size-fits all way, which is why the Founders outlined a set of enumerated powers for the states to create balance, pushing responsibility for decisions to be made closer to home, and thus preserve the self-governance needed in our Constitutional republic.

Now, American families face rising prices, a broken supply chain, and local economies struggling to return to their pre-pandemic prosperity. Parents are waking up to what's going on in their children's schools and demanding more transparency and choices. People are not looking to Washington, with its constant gridlock and infighting, to solve their problems. They're seeing solutions closer to home – and that's thanks to you.

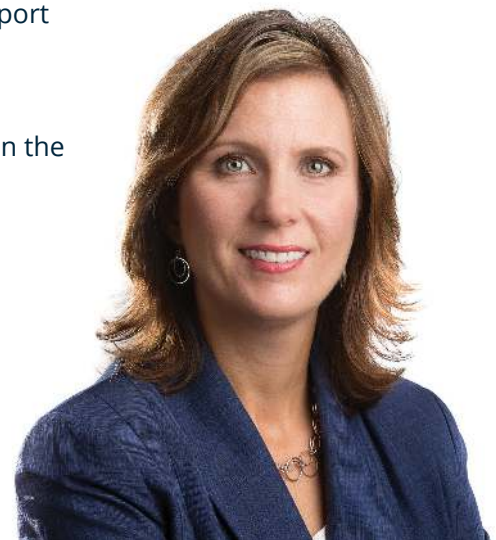
Know that because of you, this Network has been fighting in the states to push back on federal overreach and pass reforms to help Americans thrive. Even in an election year, our work is of great importance because our Network leaders are close to the problems their communities face. Thanks to this proximity, they can better deploy the research, coalitions, and solutions that policymakers need to create reforms that actually improve lives. No matter who is in office, they are there to advance positive reforms and defend freedom when threats arise.

In this issue of *SPN News*, we offer a preview into some of the recent victories in the states you made possible, including a groundbreaking victory against government overreach at the Supreme Court. To celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we also feature a profile of one of our longtime supporters who shares his views on why the states matter and why SPN has helped him achieve his philanthropic goals. We are so grateful to Ed for participating and for his loyal support over the years.

And thanks to you for all that you do to support freedom in the states.

Take care,

*Tracie Sharp*



# Advancing Freedom in the States

## Network leaders drive critical reforms in key issues leading into 2022 Midterms

### Your child deserves an education that fits *them*.

The Hope Scholarship is a portion of state-allocated education funds that families can use on a range of approved educational items, services, and activities.

In its first year of operation, the Hope Scholarship is estimated to give parents \$4,600 per child to individualize their education. However, that amount may be subject to change each school year based on the state's education funding formula.

**More than 90% of the student population in West Virginia will be eligible immediately.**

Scholarship money can be used for textbooks, private school, private tutoring, online learning, educational therapies, and other qualified expenses approved by the Board!

**You can learn more at**  
**[hopescholarshipwv.com](https://hopescholarshipwv.com)**



### LOOKING FOR AN EDUCATION THAT FITS YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS?

**MORE THAN 90% OF FAMILIES IN WEST VIRGINIA ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THE HOPE SCHOLARSHIP**

**Contact Andrew Bambrick for more info**  
[andrew@cardinalinstitute.com](mailto:andrew@cardinalinstitute.com) / 304-546-7636

Note: By the time of publication some outcomes may evolve as legislative sessions progress. For real-time updates please visit [spn.org/blog](https://spn.org/blog).

2022 has already presented a new set of challenges and opportunities under the Biden administration's "federal first" agenda. The federal government is taking unprecedented action that destroys jobs and fuel inflation, diminishes American independence, and prohibits the expansion and growth of businesses with increased tax burdens.

**D**espite these challenges, you are pushing back on government overreach with your support of SPN and our Network. Through your partnership, we are equipping our Network to develop and achieve policy reforms that improve communities and American lives.

## POLICY WINS THAT IMPROVE LIVES

Though state legislative sessions are still underway at the time of publication, the Network has already seen significant wins in the states. These wins increase transparency and accountability in education, create jobs, cut taxes, and increase flexibility in healthcare. As voters prepare for midterm elections, these achievements remind them how our policy solutions give Americans the opportunities and freedom to flourish.

### Education Reform

At least 44 education reform bills have been introduced in states where SPN is working together with state leaders to pass legislation that encourages innovation and increases parental choice in their child's education. These reforms ensure that tax dollars follow students while increasing accountability for education finances and outcomes.

In early April, the governor of West Virginia signed a law protecting learning pods in the state. For the past few years, SPN has supported the Cardinal Institute's efforts to achieve this win through model legislation, messaging guidance and polling, education materials for lawmakers, connections to key lawmakers, and grants. West Virginia's Hope Scholarship Program, the state's first school choice program, opened in March of 2022 and more than 2,000 students have already been awarded a scholarship for the 2022-2023 school year. The program is currently facing a lawsuit from outside special interest groups, and SPN's partners on the ground are actively fighting this litigation to ensure parents are still aware of this opportunity.

Utah is giving more students education options, as the state's special-needs Education Savings Account will now include siblings of children with special needs. SPN and The Libertas Institute led the coalition advancing this policy win and provided polling and messaging research.

In a victory for curriculum transparency in schools, The Arizona Senate passed a policy reform that would establish parents' right to know what is being taught in their child's public school. The policy would require schools to post all instructional materials online for parents to review. The Goldwater Institute backed the reform and so far, 17 states have introduced similar legislation to increase overall academic transparency.

## Economic Recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic economically devastated many Americans due to lockdown measures that shuttered businesses and halted revenue. More than ever, Americans need relief from rising prices and record inflation rates. SPN is actively working with state leaders on 26 economic recovery reform bills to reduce taxes and regulations, shape how states responsibly use federal stimulus funding, and implement fiscally responsible state budgets.

**Iowa and Mississippi** have both passed historic tax reforms this year, providing much needed relief for workers and their families. The reforms will save Iowa taxpayers an estimated \$1,300 per year and Mississippians \$800 per year. This policy win was a long-term goal for Iowans for Tax Relief, who is active in SPN's Economic Recovery Working Group, and helped usher this policy with SPN support. Mississippi Public Policy Institute and Empower Mississippi laid the groundwork in Mississippi for this tax reform bill, with SPN providing strategic support to bolster these efforts in 2020 and 2021.

The Network continues to strengthen its policy efforts towards reducing overly burdensome regulations. The Buckeye Institute developed and advanced a policy solution that now requires Ohio government officials to eliminate some of the more than 270,000 government regulations that hindered



**"THE NEED TO PRESERVE  
FEDERALISM IS ONE OF  
THE BIG REASONS WHY  
SPN EXISTS, AND WHY  
IT'S VITAL.  
I THINK THAT'S BEYOND  
QUESTION."**

**Guy Benson,  
Fox News Radio**

Ohioans from starting and expanding businesses. The policy will help cultivate and expand Ohio's economy, while encouraging entrepreneurship and attracting qualified job seekers.

Utah is working to expand its universal regulatory sandbox to other states (a solution that went through SPN's rigorous LaunchPad program). A regulatory sandbox is a policy which temporarily allows businesses to experiment with new products, business models, and services without having restrictive regulations that would stifle innovation. Utah is currently the only state with a universal sandbox that allows entrepreneurs to start new businesses with limited red tape, while nine other states have passed and implemented industry-specific sandboxes.

## Market-Based Healthcare Reform

The recent pandemic has highlighted the necessary expansion of healthcare options to better accommodate the needs of Americans. SPN continues to work with state leaders to advance market-based healthcare reform and has helped progress at least 19 healthcare reform bills that have been introduced this year. Reforms include eliminating certificate of need laws, implementing Right to Try, direct primary care, and telehealth expansion.

The Florida House and Senate unanimously passed telehealth expansion with Governor Ron DeSantis' signing the bill into law on April 6, 2022. The Arizona Senate has passed Right to Try 2.0., which would allow individuals facing life-threatening health conditions to access experimental treatment in the



state. The bill is anticipated to pass the House and receive the governor's signature later this year.

## Labor Reform that Protects Workers

This year, 43 pro-worker policy reforms have been introduced in states across the nation. These reforms promote workplace freedom by requiring unions to receive workers' consent before taking their union dues, eliminating opt-out windows, and ending "release time" where taxpayers pay for union work.

Under the guidance of the Mackinac Center and support from SPN, Indiana passed a policy to ensure public school employees know they are free to leave their union. Arizona passed a policy that prohibits release time—a union practice where public funds are used to pay for union activities. The Goldwater Institute, who shaped the reform, is advancing similar legislation in Minnesota, along with SPN strategic and targeted support, to fuel these efforts.

## HOLDING GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABLE THROUGH LITIGATION

Litigation is a key Network strategy to challenge government overreach and protect our hard-fought victories. Multiple Network organizations filed lawsuits challenging the Biden Administration's vaccine mandate for companies with 100 or more employees (see the next article in *SPN News* for more). These cases and others led to the U.S. Supreme Court decision blocking the mandate.

The Buckeye Institute continues to defend the civil liberties of Americans against government overreach. The state think tank and its client, Eric Flannery, a Navy veteran and co-owner of The Big Board pub and restaurant, recently won their case to re-open The Big Board after DC health officials shut down the restaurant after Flannery announced all customers were welcome regardless of their vaccination status. The District finally agreed to lift its suspension of Flannery's liquor license last month and the pub was reopened April 1<sup>st</sup>.

The Milwaukee Public School Board voted to amend their union leave policy as a result of a lawsuit Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty filed last summer. This measure will safeguard education tax dollars and prohibit public funds from being siphoned by private unions to advance political agendas or their private interests.

## ELEVATING THE IMPORTANCE OF FEDERALISM

We continue to highlight the importance of federalism through SPN Executive Vice President Tony Woodlief's new book, *I Citizen: A Blueprint for Reclaiming American Self-Governance*. Tony's book has been featured in multiple news outlets including C-SPAN's Washington Journal, *National Review*, *The Washington Post*, and the *New York Post*.

In March, Tony joined Fox News Radio's Guy Benson to discuss how a return to true federalism could create more freedom and prosperity for everyday Americans. The book offers a path toward community-driven solutions rather than the one-size-fits all approach from the federal government. Notably, Guy Benson said "The need to preserve federalism is one of the big reasons why SPN exists, and why it's vital. I think that's beyond question."



Your partnership and support of State Policy Network and its members make these critical efforts possible. We look forward to keeping you updated as we strengthen our Network, push back on harmful and invasive government overreach, and achieve policy wins that put more Americans on a path towards success.





Brandon Trosclair with the Liberty Justice Center at the US Supreme Court. Photo Courtesy of the Liberty Justice Center.

# Network Leaders

## Stop Government Overreach in Biden Administration's Vaccine Mandate

Since the start of COVID-19, we have seen countless examples of the federal government extending its power beyond what is allowed and what is just. But thanks to you, and the power of our 50-state Network, we are fighting back against the most egregious forms of government overreach—and winning.

In January, the Supreme Court ruled against the Biden Administration's controversial vaccine mandate that impacts over 84 million private-sector workers across the country. Under the mandate, OSHA would have had the authority to require businesses with over 100 employees to ensure all of their workers were vaccinated or subjected to frequent testing. The Court ultimately ruled that while OSHA had the power to regulate occupational hazards, they did not have the authority to apply it to public health more broadly.

**Simply put: the federal government cannot force private businesses with over 100 employees to make their employees get vaccinated or frequently tested to keep their jobs.**

The justices made the decision quickly after lawsuits were filed in the lower courts defending business owners and workers who feared the significant harm the mandate would create on the already-struggling economic recovery and labor shortage

crisis. The mandate was struck down in the 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit, but the 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit reversed the stay, creating a split and ultimately leading to the consolidation of all of the cases under one that went to the Supreme Court.

**Several important cases among the petitioners came from members of this Network:** The Liberty Justice Center in partnership with the Pelican Institute (5<sup>th</sup> Circuit), the Buckeye Institute in Ohio (6<sup>th</sup> Circuit); the Mississippi Justice Institute (5<sup>th</sup> Circuit); The Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty (7<sup>th</sup> Circuit) and Texas Public Policy Foundation (5<sup>th</sup> Circuit) to name a few.

The Liberty Justice Center/Pelican Institute represented a local grocery store owner, Brandon Trosclair, who fought the mandate to protect his over 500 employees from having to disclose their health information to keep their jobs. They also represented virtual employees who were still subject to the mandate although they posed no health risk to their fellow coworkers.

It wasn't a debate about vaccines, but rather, about whether or not the federal government had the authority to compel businesses to force employees to make personal health decisions.



## WHILE THIS CASE IS FAR FROM OVER, THE U.S. SUPREME COURT RULING GIVES BUSINESS OWNERS AND WORKERS SOME MEASURE OF CERTAINTY THAT THEY WILL NOT BE FORCED TO IMPLEMENT A COSTLY VACCINE MANDATE THAT VIOLATES NUMEROUS CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES AND LAWS.

Robert Alt,  
CEO of the Buckeye Institute

Their case won in the 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit and was the first in that circuit to ask the court to put the mandate on hold (or issue a stay). The ultimate Supreme Court ruling reinstated the stay won by Brandon Trosclair.

The Buckeye Institute filed a critical case in the 6<sup>th</sup> Circuit, representing Phillips Manufacturing & Tower Company and Sixarp. Phillips Manufacturing found that a significant number of their employees would leave their jobs if the mandate was enforced, costing the company over \$1 million in losses annually. Buckeye was among the first to complete the filing with the Supreme Court and requesting a halt on the mandate.

Robert Alt, CEO of the Buckeye Institute and lead attorney in this case, said in a statement: "While this case is far from

over, the U.S. Supreme Court ruling gives business owners and workers some measure of certainty that they will not be forced to implement a costly vaccine mandate that violates numerous constitutional principles and laws."

In addition to strategic litigation, one of the biggest value adds this Network provided in elevating this case to the Supreme Court is the focus on the people most impacted by policy reforms. They represented real individuals who would directly feel the negative consequences of the mandate and they worked to elevate their stories in top media outlets including the *Wall Street Journal*, Fox News, RealClearPolitics, The Today Show, *USA Today*, and C-SPAN.

Diana Rickert, Vice President of the Liberty Justice Center, talked about the Network's role in making sure our solutions meet the needs of the people on the ground rather than political theatrics:

***"This is where SPN groups carried the day. We were the only groups in the giant swarm who represented regular people who were going into work and having to live with this. The SPN movement led with the personal story, and we helped lead the narrative of how this affects real people...that it wasn't just a Blue/Red fight in DC."***

Thank you for your critical role in making this important victory against government overreach possible. For over a decade, we have worked with our partners in the states to build top-notch litigation centers that can serve as watchdogs when government abuses its power. Our Network of litigation centers - 21 in over 18 states - have taken on the biggest challenges of the day and are setting game-changing precedent for freedom. These groups also work closely together to strengthen their cases and find opportunities for national impact.

"This partnership with the Liberty Justice Center representing Brandon Trosclair and his OSHA challenge is really a result of the power of the SPN Network," said Daniel Erspamer, CEO of the Pelican Institute. "Our relationship was deepened with the LJC through things like SPN's Annual Meeting and opportunities to meet them at SPN-sponsored events, information shared about the OSHA mandate from SPN staff and others in the Network...We see the results of bad things stopped and the conversation changed. That's the kind of thing we can do together."

This work has never been more important than it is today, in an era where the federal government will continue to test its bounds.



## Donor Spotlight: Ed and Velinda Jonson

In celebration of SPN's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, we would like to highlight some of our most loyal supporters who make it possible for state solutions to have national impact. Thanks to you and those who have stood with us for so long, Americans are able to live their lives with less government intrusion and more freedom.

**E**d Jonson is a retired Air Force service member and retired defense contractor employee from Hudson, New Hampshire. As a young boy growing up on a farm in Central Michigan, his father instilled in him the qualities of hard work and perseverance, as well as a love of baseball and politics. A loyal subscriber to *National Review* for many years, Ed discovered and began interacting with state-based think tanks like the Goldwater Institute and the Mackinac Center for Public Policy who were at the center of the liberty movement. He has been a steadfast supporter of SPN since 2006, when he observed the influence and impact that SPN's affiliates and their coalition partners had in shaping legislation that allowed communities and their members to prosper.

"When I first discovered State Policy Network, it was an incubator for ideas. SPN convened policymakers and grassroots leaders who were at the forefront of innovative policy solutions and shared the most effective free market ideas and education policies with their broader network," he said.

In October of last year, Ed lost his precious life partner, Velinda, his wife of over 56 years. Velinda was a member of the church choir and provided quality healthcare for her patients as a neonatal and public health nurse in her early career days. But more importantly, she had a passion for people, her community, and our country. Like Ed, she also cared deeply about the education of her children, and never missed a parent teacher conference. To honor her memory, Ed has committed his days to supporting his community in a variety of



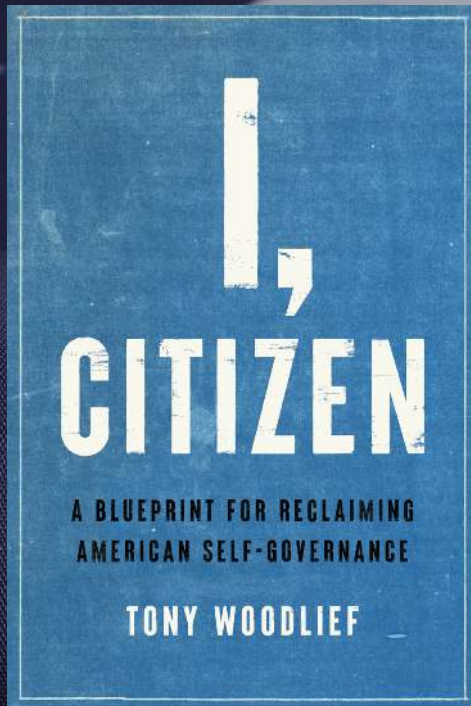
Ed and Velinda Jonson

ways, including serving as an active church council member, and a local club soccer referee and mentor, while continuing to sponsor organizations dedicated to educating and mentoring the next generation of liberty movement leaders.

Ed's biggest concerns about the future of the country are the continuous overreach of the federal government, our broken education system, and the rise of socialism across the nation. Many young Americans today look favorably on socialism and have forgotten or have simply not been taught its history of destroying once prosperous nations. Ed believes that education can be the remedy to the current embrace of socialism, and would like to see more young Americans become active in their communities and lead the liberty movement. Through his support of SPN, he is optimistic that the next generation will have a renewed appreciation for federalism and the freedoms afforded by our nation.

"I believe it was William F. Buckley, Jr. who once said he would prefer to be governed by the first 500 names in the Boston phone book than out-of-touch politicians. It is those members active in the local community who can affect real and lasting change. SPN has been a champion of federalism and empowering Americans to return to self-governance beginning at the local and state levels," he said.

Thank you, Ed, for your steadfast partnership for the past 16 years!



**Americans must reclaim their right to govern themselves.**

**I, Citizen** details how we as a country can come together to solve problems through state and local solutions, **rather than more top-down reforms from Washington, DC.**

**Get your blueprint for reclaiming American self-governance today!**



**Author** Tony Woodlief

To order, visit: **[SPN.org/icitizen-discount](https://SPN.org/icitizen-discount)**

Use code **SPN** at checkout to get a 30% discount on your copy from Encounter Books.



## STATE THINK TANK AFFILIATE UPDATES

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

### ALABAMA

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

At the beginning of the 2022 regular session, the education freedom movement sweeping the nation appeared to have finally reached Alabama. The Parent's Choice Act, which would create a full-scale, every-student-eligible school choice program in the State of Alabama was introduced with much fanfare. As expected, the education bureaucracy and teachers union opposed the bill heavily. Unfortunately, their opposition killed the bill. The **Alabama Policy Institute** has spent the past months highlighting the importance of school choice through its recently launched full-service media outlet, 1819 News. That campaign, though not enough to ensure the passage of the Parent's Choice Act, has created a desire in the State House to do something on school choice. Two school choice bills, though tempered compared to this session's original legislation, are now being seriously considered in Montgomery. We expect them to pass in bipartisan fashion as more Alabamians across the state see the need for choice.



### ALASKA

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

In the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, the Alaska Policy Forum argued Alaska students must learn to "Read by Nine" now—not in nine years. Learning to read before the age of nine (typically fourth grade) is imperative for our children. If we fail to prioritize learning to read, so that our children can read to learn, long-term implications on the economy and the fabric of Alaska are unavoidable. Students who cannot read by the end of the third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school; high school dropouts make up 75 percent of citizens receiving food stamps and 90 percent of the Americans on welfare. Some in Alaska simply call for more education funding. But Alaska already spends more per capita on education than the majority of states. Now is the time for Alaska to implement a strong reading initiative like "Read by Nine." Every child—regardless of their income level, race, or first language—deserves a fighting chance to reach their potential and to fully embrace their dreams.



### ARIZONA

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

The **Goldwater Institute** continues to work nationwide to advance policies that empower parents and students. The Institute's Academic Transparency Act is under consideration in numerous states as policymakers seek to protect the right of parents to know what is taught in the classroom. In healthcare, the Goldwater Institute continues to innovate. Its new model, the Right to Try for Individualized Treatments (Right to Try 2.0), extends the protections of the original Right to Try to patients seeking tailored, individualized treatments where a clinical trial is not an option. RTT 2.0 is currently moving in the Arizona Legislature and is a natural next step for policy groups looking to protect the rights of their state's most vulnerable patients.







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## ARKANSAS

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

The **Arkansas Policy Foundation's** top priority in 2022 is to educate policymakers, citizens, and media on how record state budget surpluses will allow further reductions in state income taxes. The Arkansas Governor and policymakers reduced the state income tax from 7.0 percent to 5.5 percent (effective Jan. 1) and enacted a plan to further reduce the rate to 4.9 percent by 2025 if revenue triggers are achieved during the period. The measure also included a tax credit for low-income Arkansans and eliminated many of them from state tax rolls. Tax rates are an economic development factor and will give Arkansas the third-lowest rates in the 12-state Southeast region—behind only Florida and Tennessee. Both states do not have an income tax.



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## CALIFORNIA

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

**California Policy Center's** Parent Union coached and supported the leaders of more than 20 local parent groups (representing some 260,000 California parents) to reopen schools, recall lousy school board members, take on government unions (even in open discussions about union contracts), talk to the media, organize other parents, and even—through learning pods, charter schools, and homeschooling—opt out of the entire union-run education system.

In addition, CPC's California Local Elected Officials (CLEO) program coaches local elected officials—anybody serving in public office below the state and federal level—on first principles, public finance, taxes, bonds, and fighting unions. This year CPC is creating "Governing in California," an online Pepperdine University-certificated course for CLEO members. And finally, in the first two months of 2022, CPC provided the only current analysis of state and local government debt (it's an astonishing \$1.6 trillion, far more than the \$46 billion surplus the California Governor claims).



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

Just a few months into the new year, the **Pacific Research Institute** has helped defend free-market healthcare choices for all Californians. In January, advocates of Assembly Bill 1400, legislation to create a single-payer health care scheme in California, revived their efforts. The plan would have effectively abolished private health insurance and enrolled all 39 million California residents in a new government-run plan, called CalCare. Companion legislation to fund the proposal, ACA 11, called for a tax increase of at least \$163 billion. PRI's Sally Pipes played a leading role in educating policymakers, the media, and concerned citizens about Assembly Bill 1400. She explained how single-payer healthcare programs in other countries have been plagued by doctor and hospital shortages; long waiting times; rationed treatment; and substandard care. Thanks to PRI's efforts, the bill died in the State Assembly on January 31, 2022. Another PRI legislative priority is reforming the California Environmental Quality Act, or CEQA. The law makes it difficult to build housing or infrastructure projects and has contributed to the state's record-high housing costs.



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## COLORADO

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

**Independence Institute** is beefing up its presence and level of activity at the capitol and working with stakeholders, lawmakers, and partners to monitor, analyze, and engage on legislation covering topics like curriculum transparency, school choice, transparency in healthcare, collective bargaining for public employees, and more. Independence will also be following various energy-related bills, such as Colorado's new "trip reduction mandates" and energy code changes, as well as related administrative rule making proceedings related to energy and the environment.



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## CONNECTICUT

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

**Yankee Institute** published "A Risky Plan," a criticism of the proposal for the Connecticut state government to sell health insurance to the general public. Yankee's investigation revealed state officials had used accounting tricks to conceal massive losses in a major state healthcare program and were essentially running a Ponzi scheme with little legislative oversight. Instead of putting taxpayers in the insurance business, Yankee recommended several market-based reforms that will reduce the cost of healthcare and health insurance coverage. With Connecticut running a billion-dollar budget surplus, Yankee is encouraging lawmakers to resist pressure to use it on gimmicks and instead roll back the 2011 and 2015 state tax hikes and adopt structural reforms to control local property taxes.



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## DELAWARE

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

In the 2022 legislative session, the **Caesar Rodney Institute** (CRI) will focus on several initiatives, including amending the Education Transparency Spending law to include "transparency in curriculum and teacher training materials"; canceling Delaware's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) program; amending Delaware's prevailing wage law in construction that the state had arbitrarily assigned labor wage rates 15-30 percent higher than the federal rates; eliminating income tax on retired military; redefining the Health Resources Board (HRB) scope to consist of an advisory board only and limit the review process to only nursing facilities within the Certificate of Public Review process, or CON law; eliminating the Gross Receipt Tax in stages over two years. The top issue for CRI in this legislative session is the restructuring of Delaware's certificate-of-need law. Reforming CON Laws will reduce Delaware's total healthcare costs and improve rural Delaware residents' access to quality healthcare.





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## FLORIDA

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

In 2022, the **Foundation for Government Accountability** (FGA) is focused on empowering Americans to work. FGA believes the power of work is a miracle, but since the beginning of the government-created pandemic, many Americans have become trapped by government dependency and inflated handouts. Instead of looking for jobs, Americans have become distracted by Big Tech censorship and how to remain 'politically correct'. All while a record number of jobs remain open. There are many solutions states can implement to combat this labor shortage, which is why FGA is focusing on reforms that promote work instead of woke ideas. In its "Work not Woke" campaign, FGA will show states how they can get Americans off the sidelines by implementing work or volunteer requirements, encouraging alternative education pathways, and applying unemployment indexing. States can retake control of their welfare and healthcare programs in a way that reduces dependency and reduces the burden to taxpayers by recommitting themselves to pro-work reforms.



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

Several policy proposals contained in **The James Madison Institute's** priority list have seen positive movement through committee hearings in the Florida Legislature. Most notably, lawmakers advanced a further expansion of Florida's nationally recognized school choice program, reforms to Florida's technology regulations to address cryptocurrency growth, and additional expansion of telemedicine. In 2021, the Florida Legislature passed the largest expansion of school choice in history. The Institute hopes lawmakers meet a new goal of further expansion this year. In addition, while JMI is not actively involved in the redistricting process, the organization is certainly paying attention to it. The Florida Senate voted through new maps for the 40-member districts, plus their proposal for the 28 Congressional Districts (Florida gains one seat because of reapportionment). The Florida House appears to have reached a consensus on its 120 districts, but the jury is still out on what it proposes for Congressional Districts. It's notable that while the House and Senate maps go into effect once certified, the Congressional map must be approved by the governor, who submitted his own proposal for Congressional lines.

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## GEORGIA

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

This legislative session has opened a unique opportunity for the **Georgia Center for Opportunity** to make huge strides in one of our core areas, education. In 2022, multiple pieces of legislation are up for consideration that would expand school choice options in Georgia and allow parents to have a voice in their child's education. To support these efforts, GCO has hosted bipartisan conferences to educate legislators and the public on the value of such legislation. GCO also launched multiple campaigns in key areas of the state to engage parents and encourage them to take action.



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

As housing prices continue to skyrocket, the **Georgia Public Policy Foundation's** latest study identifies the cost of regulatory compliance as a large factor. A Georgia Policy survey of developers and builders shows that regulations imposed by government at the federal, state and local levels account for nearly 27 percent of the final price of new single-family homes in Georgia, higher than the national average. In addition to promoting sound housing policy, the Foundation is advancing education reforms for families in the Peach State. Georgia lawmakers are considering two bills that provide hope for those seeking education options for their children, including legislation that creates Promise Scholarships, or Education Savings Accounts. The Foundation is in the middle of a successful social media campaign aimed at delivering information about the benefits of these scholarships to Georgia parents. Also, this legislative session, Georgia may join the dozen states that have recently cut their income tax rates. Finally, the Foundation completed a website redesign that makes the user experience much easier and more seamless. Check out the Foundation's new look at [georgiapolicy.org](https://georgiapolicy.org).



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## HAWAII

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

The **Grassroot Institute of Hawaii's** legislative priority this year is to restore the Aloha State's constitutional balance of powers. The Hawaii Governor continues to abuse his emergency powers that he invoked two years ago in response to the coronavirus crisis. In the name of fighting a virus, the governor virtually destroyed Hawaii's economy, causing numerous permanent business closures, massive unemployment, major state budget distortions, and many irreparable social ills. He has done this without legislative oversight or any meaningful input from Hawaii residents in general. In January 2021, the Institute published a policy brief which outlined provisions needed to adequately reform the state's emergency-management statute. Most of those recommendations were included in a bill that nearly passed in the 2021 session—but died at the last minute in conference committee. This year there are several reform bills vying for legislative approval, and the Institute is working with legislators and the public to ensure that at least one of them is enacted into law.



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## ILLINOIS

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

To restore the American Dream in Illinois and make it a place where all families can flourish, the **Illinois Policy Institute** is working towards four key priorities in 2022. First is comprehensive pension reform. Spending on public pensions in Illinois has increased 501 percent in the last 20 years, crowding out state spending for the poor and disadvantaged and making the state's property taxes some of the highest in the nation. Reform will reverse that trend and pave the way for long-term financial stability. Second is an effort to expand school choice. The Institute is working to make Illinois' Invest in Kids tax credit scholarship program permanent, empowering parents to decide where their kids go to school, instead of locking them into a system that increases the disparity between wealthy and poor families. Third is rebalancing power in Illinois by laying the groundwork to defeat Senate Amendment 1, a proposed constitutional amendment that would give unelected government union leaders the ability to control public policy across the state. And finally, Illinois Policy is working to end gerrymandering and voter suppression.





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## IOWA

### IOWANS FOR TAX RELIEF FOUNDATION • [itrfoundation.org](http://itrfoundation.org)

In January, **Iowans for Tax Relief Foundation** released a report which outlined a series of tax and regulatory reforms, in addition to workforce solutions, that will keep Iowa's economy growing and create more opportunities. ITR Foundation successfully advanced major income tax cuts that would benefit families and businesses. Property tax reform is also a priority, and the Foundation has been working to educate Iowans on the advantages of the direct notification aspect of Truth-in-Taxation as a pro-taxpayer measure. ITRF has also been working to remind local governments that ARPA funds can be used for property tax relief and shouldn't be used to place the taxpayer on the hook for big spending increases in the future. Building on Iowa's successful school choice legislation of 2021, the Foundation continues to inform Iowans of the benefits of additional reforms, including Education Savings Accounts.

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## KANSAS

### KANSAS POLICY INSTITUTE • [kansaspolicy.org](http://kansaspolicy.org)

**Kansas Policy Institute** continues its focus this legislative session on providing more educational opportunities for students. In Kansas, education spending makes up more than half of state spending. Student achievement remains stubbornly flat for all children and low-income kids remain at least two grade levels behind their peers. What's more, recent concerns from across the country about what is being taught in classrooms only serves to highlight the need for Accountability, Choice, and Transparency. In addition to school choice, KPI is pushing for several education transparency issues, including a Parents Bill of Rights, using the school needs assessments to build budgets, and publishing student achievement in a KPI-designed report card. KPI's fiscal policy efforts evolve around its Responsible Kansas Budget. KPI wants state officials to use the COVID-era revenue surpluses to place Kansas on a growth trajectory. Instead of boom and bust state spending, Kansas should be shoring up state finances through pension reform, rainy day fund contributions, and tax reform that goes beyond election-year handouts. KPI is also working this year on a package of regulatory reforms, including occupational licensing and workplace freedom.



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## KENTUCKY

### PEGASUS INSTITUTE • [pegasuskentucky.org](http://pegasuskentucky.org)

The 2021 Legislative session in Kentucky marks a return to normalcy in the halls of Frankfort. The doors are open, committee rooms are packed, and masks are optional. This means the **Pegasus Institute's** priorities have normalized as well. That means two major things for the organization: tax reform and public safety. In 2018, Kentucky took major steps on both fronts. That year the state cut the top marginal tax rate to a flat five percent and eliminated the progressive income tax. The general assembly also took gang violence seriously, passing a bill that enhanced penalties for gang violence and criminalized recruiting juveniles into gangs. These were both Pegasus Institute priorities and stemmed from Pegasus Institute research. This year we're back for the next bite at the apple. The Kentucky State House has introduced a bill that would eliminate the state income tax over time and another that would amend the state constitution to allow for moving local taxes from production to consumption. They have also introduced a bill to deal with violent juvenile offenders in a more deliberate way. All of these measures have overwhelmingly passed the House and await action in the Senate.





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## LOUISIANA

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

During Louisiana's 2022 legislative session, the **Pelican Institute for Public Policy** is tackling Louisiana's burdensome occupational licensing laws. Roughly one in four professions require a license in Louisiana—making it one of the most licensed states in the country. From florists to interior designers, Louisiana has many strange government roadblocks to work. Pelican will change the legal playing field by passing the Right to Earn a Living Act to ensure Louisianans can challenge these restrictive licenses and begin to write Louisiana's comeback story. Pelican has identified many people who have been held back by licensing requirements and has produced stories to paint a picture of how occupational licensing regulations take away people's ability to provide for their families. In conjunction with storytelling, Pelican will use its target district grassroots strategy to help ensure Louisianans' right to earn a living is restored this legislative session.



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## MAINE

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

The primary focus for **Maine Policy Institute** is alleviating the burden of inflation by returning surplus revenue to taxpayers in the form of future tax reductions. Maine is currently sitting on a projected surplus in excess of \$800 million. Instead of creating new government programs, Maine Policy is working with the Appropriations Committee to approve a bill that would direct the state's unappropriated surplus at the end of the fiscal year to a cascade that pays down various consumption taxes, such as the fuel tax, sales tax, and service provider tax. At the end of the last legislative session, instead of reforming the tax code with surplus revenue, lawmakers agreed to send one-time \$285 payments to taxpayers. While this is better than having it squandered by lawmakers, our preference and priority this session is to use surplus revenues to alleviate the future tax burden on hardworking Mainers.



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## MARYLAND

**MARYLAND PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE** • [mdpolicy.org](https://mdpolicy.org)

Maryland's economic future is inexorably tied to its largest and most important city: Baltimore. Yet, according to the Census Bureau, the city had fewer residents in 2020 than it did in 1920. While there are numerous policy failures at the heart of this mass exodus of residents to neighboring counties and states, none stands out more than Baltimore City's exorbitant property tax. At twice the rate of neighboring counties, Baltimore City's property tax acts as an effective wealth tax on the city's poorest homeowners. In fact, 75% of the city's least valuable homes sold between 2007 and 2018 yielded prices lower than the value used to assess the taxes. While the so-called progressives leading the city are attempting to revive 1970's era boondoggles to fix this problem of their own creation, the **Maryland Public Policy Institute** will be launching a major ballot initiative to decrease the city's property tax rate by the will of the voters—not politicians. Making this change will increase incomes, reduce crime, and encourage business development in a majority-Black city that has been plagued by generations left-wing efforts to "fight inequity" while only increasing it.





**PIONEER INSTITUTE**  
PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH

## MASSACHUSETTS

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

While we are advancing smaller bills on healthcare, program funding for school choice and vocational-technical schools, **Pioneer Institute's** top priority is non-legislative: fighting against a ballot initiative that the Massachusetts Legislature is putting before voters in November 2022 to create a graduated income tax. This measure would raise taxes on high earners by 80 percent. It will hurt retirees and small businesses, cost the state's economy investments and jobs, and make the Commonwealth less competitive. Pioneer has done more than any other organization in Massachusetts to counter proponents' false "tax fairness" narrative and prevent a return to "Taxachusetts." In 2022, Pioneer is intensifying efforts to educate residents about the tax's devastating impact on the economy, through research, social and traditional media campaigns, videos, and other activities.

## MICHIGAN

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

The **Mackinac Center for Public Policy** is working to improve Michigan's business climate through tax reform and fighting against corporate welfare schemes, as well as fighting to give families greater choice in education. Michigan's revenue is at an all-time high from continued economic growth and unprecedented federal spending. To ensure fiscal stability and economic competitiveness in the future, the Mackinac Center is encouraging lawmakers to resist creating new spending obligations and instead return some of the excess funds to Michigan residents and businesses through lowering the personal and corporate income tax rates. Giving billions of taxpayer dollars to a select few corporations is not helpful to Michigan's economy, and the Mackinac Center remains committed to fighting back against newly introduced corporate welfare programs. In addition, families are desperately seeking options for their children's education. Five families, with the help of the Mackinac Center Legal Foundation, are fighting back against Michigan's anti-aid amendment. The Center is also promoting education reforms such as opportunity scholarships and enhancing curriculum transparency to give families more control over what and where their child learns.

## MINNESOTA

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

**Center of the American Experiment** launched the Give It Back campaign to persuade the Minnesota Governor and the Minnesota Legislature to return the \$7.7 billion state budget surplus to taxpayers. The Give It Back campaign includes a landing page with information on the surplus and a call to action so Minnesotans can easily craft and send an email or video to the governor and their state representatives. The campaign will build throughout the session and include billboards, radio ads, digital advertising and email campaigns. American Experiment is also publishing a report on the surplus with details on different options to permanently reduce tax rates. American Experiment is planning a Give It Back rally for April 2022 on the steps of the Minnesota State Capitol in St. Paul.



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

In light of the controversy surrounding the 2020 elections, Minnesotans, like a majority of Americans, overwhelmingly voiced support for commonsense election reforms. They understand that it must be “easy to vote but hard to cheat” and that full election transparency helps guarantee greater confidence that all legal votes are counted in future elections. That has been a primary goal of the work done by the **Freedom Foundation of Minnesota** as it prepared a thoughtful report containing reform measures that will safeguard future elections in the state. The bold reforms contained in the report outline several key proposals that, if adopted, will provide greater ballot security and confidence in our electoral process. One extremely important measure outlined in the report calls for the Legislature to recognize that they are the only constitutionally charged organization that can make changes to state election law—not the courts and not the governor. As such, the Foundation called upon the Legislature to enact, as quickly as possible, these recommendations in a bipartisan fashion.



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## MISSISSIPPI

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

**Empower Mississippi** remains committed to providing quality education for every child, meaningful work for every adult, and justice for all. In education, Empower wants advance open enrollment that allows students to choose their preferred public school, expand digital learning options, and limit regulations that make education more about testing than learning. In an effort to fight back against population outmigration, Empower has helped make Mississippi the most job-friendly state in the nation. Empower is also continuing to work on removing unnecessary regulations. In January, the organization released its newest report, “Better Jobs Mississippi: Smart Regulation on Occupations” which provides guidance on steps that can be taken to lower Mississippi’s regulatory burden.



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

The **Mississippi Center for Public Policy** is working on several policy priorities during Mississippi’s 2022 legislative session, including: advancing school choice bills; capping school board administration costs so more money reaches the classroom; promoting legislation that would allow the creation of more charter schools; promoting academic transparency and free speech; removing burdensome certificate-of-need restrictions so more Mississippians can access quality healthcare; advancing regulatory sandbox bills that would help make Mississippi a center for innovation; reducing red tape through a regulatory reduction program; and abolishing the state income tax.





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## MISSOURI

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

Passing a parents' bill of rights is priority one for the **Show-Me Institute** this year. Transparency and accountability in education have been hot-button issues across the country, and Missouri is no exception. Back in November, the Institute released its version of a Missouri Parents' Bill of Rights. Transparency and choice are key—parents should know what is going on in public schools, and if they don't like it, they should have other options to educate their children. Too often, schools and districts in Missouri have circled the wagons to prevent transparency precisely because they know parents wouldn't approve of what they see; the educational establishment has resisted accountability at the same time as it has shut down avenues of choice. It's time for that to end. Legislators have followed the Institute's lead on this issue, and several bills have already been proposed.



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## MONTANA

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

In 2022, the **Frontier Institute** published a report called the "Montana Red Tape Snapshot," detailing the status of excessive red tape in Montana and providing a status update on the progress of the Governor's Red Tape Relief Initiative. Frontier Institute President and CEO Kendall Cotton received a call from Governor Gianforte personally thanking Frontier Institute for the report, calling the report very helpful for the governor's efforts. In addition to reducing regulatory barriers for Montana residents, Frontier published the Montana Zoning Atlas, an interactive resource that demonstrates how strict local zoning regulations exclude low and middle-income residents and worsen Montana's housing shortage. The report outlined how both state and local officials can combat Montana's affordable housing crisis by giving landowners the freedom to build new homes to meet demand. The report is receiving attention from state and local policymakers and the media.

Frontier is driving the conversation about affordable housing in Montana and is hopeful the report will spur Montana leaders to finally take meaningful action on this issue.



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## NEBRASKA

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

Just as 2022 kicked off, the **Platte Institute** played a critical role in bringing Nebraska's county inheritance tax to the top of the legislative agenda. With recent Platte Institute polling of Nebraska voters, lawmakers learned that 78 percent of their constituents favored completely repealing Nebraska's county inheritance tax—including 86 percent of Republicans, 64 percent of Democrats, and 78 percent of independents. In a seven-question survey, voter support for repeal grew, and opposition shrank, as more Nebraskans learned how the tax really worked. The inheritance tax has been in place since 1901, and with Iowa's planned repeal by 2025, Nebraska is on track to be one of only five states with this tax, and the only state west of the Mississippi River. Though an amendment to eliminate Nebraska's inheritance tax by 2028 was unable to gain traction this year, senators are expected to approve a bill effectively cutting many inheritance tax rates by 15 percent, raising the amount of property exempt from tax for immediate relatives to \$100,000, and fully exempting young people under age 22 from paying inheritance tax.



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## NEVADA

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

**Nevada Policy Research Institute** kicked off a year-long effort to examine election integrity in the Silver State in January by investigating recent changes to state law that increase the risk of electoral shenanigans. In the past year, the Nevada legislature codified a law expanding mail-in voting so that all active, registered voters—more than 1.8 million—will automatically receive a mail ballot before each election unless they specifically opt out. That, coupled with laws that don't require voters to provide identification when casting ballots and allows ballot harvesting, has left the state with some of the laxest voting regulations in the nation. Nevada Policy will continue to work through the 2022 election to highlight alterations to state laws, their potential impact on both elections and voter confidence, and alternatives to reinforce the security of the electoral process. The ultimate goal is to educate Nevadans about the importance of safe, secure elections in which every vote cast is counted.



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## NEW HAMPSHIRE

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

During the 2022 legislative session in New Hampshire, the **Josiah Bartlett Center for Public Policy** is focused on easing economic regulations (with an emphasis on occupational licensing and small business barriers), education freedom, energy and telecom regulations, and further lowering business tax rates. The Center is also embarking on a statewide tour to educate local officials and voters about the severe negative effects of excessive land use restrictions.



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## NEW JERSEY

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

Like many states, New Jersey has not been immune to the increase in violent crime that has impacted so many American cities. With the belief that economic prosperity begins with safe communities, the **Garden State Initiative** has prioritized closing a loophole in the state's successful bail reform efforts that allowed many individuals, after being arrested for committing crimes with illegal guns to be immediately released back into their communities. GSI convened a public policy forum that brought together former NYPD Commissioner & LAPD Chief Bill Bratton with members of NJ's Urban Mayors Association and Sheriffs' Association to discuss recommended legislative changes. After the forum, GSI worked collaboratively to build a diverse and bipartisan coalition of mayors, legislators and law enforcement leaders to produce a legislative proposal intended to close the loophole that was introduced in February and is pending in the Legislature.



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## NEW MEXICO

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

The **Rio Grande Foundation** uses its "Freedom Index" vote tracking site to hold New Mexico legislators accountable for their stances on individual freedom and personal liberty. The Foundation has rated all bills that impact individual freedom that received floor votes for the 2022 session and thus the current Index results are "final." Every bill receiving a score is rated on a scale from -8 through +8 depending on its overall impact on New Mexico residents' personal freedom. The best bill voted on this session was HB 163, legislation that includes several tax cuts. Learn more about the index at [riograndefoundation.org](https://riograndefoundation.org).





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## NEW YORK

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

The **Empire Center for Public Policy** continues to push back against the destructive policies that are driving a mass exodus from New York. As noted by a recent Zogby poll, over a third of those who are considering leaving the state blame exorbitant taxes. In that vein, much of our work has been about raising awareness around issues of lowering this burden; it was only after the Empire Center raised the alarm on federal pandemic emergency fund spending that the NYS Comptroller instituted a federal pandemic emergency spending tracker; senior fellow Bill Hammond briefed legislators in both the Senate and Assembly on the unreported costs of a single-payer healthcare system in the state; and Empire recently launched an extensive research campaign into the hidden costs of the New York Climate Act. In addition, the organization is working to leverage the power of its neighbors with a new project to better equip New Yorkers to advocate for themselves and their bottom lines.

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## NORTH CAROLINA

### JOHN LOCKE FOUNDATION • [johnlocke.org](https://johnlocke.org)

The **John Locke Foundation** had an incredibly successful 2021 legislative session and is excited to bring more policy victories home to North Carolinians. First, the Foundation is holding back the tide on Medicaid expansion while offering free-market solutions to healthcare that prioritize the needs of individuals and families. Several policies in the Foundation's suite of proposals will include certificate-of-need repeal, full practice authority, and telehealth. The Foundation plans to be at the table as the General Assembly committees begin to examine their role in healthcare. In addition, the Foundation is promoting several constitutional amendments that the organization hopes North Carolinians will have an opportunity to vote on. These amendments will include a Taxpayer Bill of Rights, right-to-work protections, and stricter eminent domain requirements. Finally, the Foundation is encouraging lawmakers to pursue occupational licensing reforms market-based affordable housing options.

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## OHIO

### THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE • [buckeyeinstitute.org](https://buckeyeinstitute.org)

**The Buckeye Institute** celebrated its victory in *Phillips v. OSHA*, Buckeye's case challenging the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) unlawful vaccine mandate. The Biden Administration conceded that Buckeye's clients—Phillips Manufacturing & Tower Company and Sixarp LLC—were ultimately likely to prevail in their legal challenge of the mandate and entirely withdrew its emergency temporary standard rule. Buckeye's case began when the Biden Administration attempted to impose one of the most far-reaching and invasive rules ever promulgated by the federal government—an unconstitutional and ill-advised vaccine mandate that not only would have impacted The Buckeye Institute's clients and their employees, but would have devastated an already fragile labor market and supply chains that are still struggling to recover from the pandemic. If the Biden Administration insists on any further attempt at implementing this unlawful mandate through other means including usual notice-and-comment rulemaking, The Buckeye Institute will see them in court—again.



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## OKLAHOMA

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

The **Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs** has several legislative efforts planned, including multiple criminal justice efforts, court reform, and creating a universal school choice program. OCPA's highest priority is universal school choice. SB 1647, filed by Senate President Pro Tempore Greg Treat, would create Oklahoma Empowerment Accounts, or OEAs. These accounts would allow all Oklahomans to use tax dollars to pay for their children to attend any school, including private schools. If passed, this would create one of the most robust school-choice programs in the nation and make Oklahoma a national leader in education opportunity. Additionally, OCPA is seeking to reform Oklahoma's criminal justice system and court structure. The most robust effort includes a constitutional amendment that would repeal Article 7 and 7-B, which created the Judicial Department and directed the selection of judges, and establish a new structure modeled after the United States Constitution. Other legislative efforts include creating a clean slate expungement program, court debt forgiveness, and felony re-classification.



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## OREGON

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

In 2021, the Oregon Legislature devalued the worth of a high school diploma by eliminating requirements that students show minimal levels of proficiency in core subjects. **Cascade Policy Institute** noted the General Education Development (GED) exam could provide an alternative pathway for graduation that would certify high school-level proficiency and allow students to advance to college or a career. The exam is administered by a private entity known as GED Testing Service LLC. Passing the exam means the applicant receives the equivalent of a high school diploma. The GED Testing Service requires applicants to be at least 16 years old. However, in Oregon, applicants under 18 only qualify if they have withdrawn from high school, hold permission from their school district, are married, or are legally emancipated. These barriers discourage many students from taking the exam prior to age 18 who could benefit from it. Cascade is encouraging Oregon legislators to "free the GED" from state-level restrictions. Oregon students deserve a credential that means something. Students who can exercise the responsibility and initiative required to pass the GED successfully should have the freedom to take it.



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## PENNSYLVANIA

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

The *Janus v. AFSCME* decision gave government workers a choice about financially supporting unions, but Pennsylvania law still gives unions many special privileges. Now, the state Legislature, led by **Commonwealth Foundation**, is advancing four bills to restore workers' rights and protect taxpayers' interests. In January, the House Labor and Industry Committee approved a bill that would eliminate the state's "fair share fee" law, which the *Janus* decision made unconstitutional, and notify public employees of their right to join or not join a union without penalty. Another bill would prevent public employees' private contact information from being shared with union officials. A third bill would end the corrupt use of taxpayer resources to collect union political campaign money. The final bill would require collective bargaining agreements to be publicly posted two weeks prior to enactment, shedding light on shadowy negotiations. CF has worked with lawmakers every step of the way to ensure effective legislation was drafted and sponsored.



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## SOUTH CAROLINA

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

On January 25, 2022, the South Carolina Senate, with the encouragement of the **Palmetto Promise Institute**, voted to repeal the state's certificate-of-need statute. Certificate-of-need is an odious, decades-old law that requires permission from the state (and often one's competitors) to build a healthcare facility or even offer a healthcare service. How did this happen? Years of persistent education, lawmakers willing to engage and jump on a strategic opportunity...and a new day in the South Carolina Senate! The hard work of Senator Wes Climer and his colleagues cannot be overestimated. Majority Leader Shane Massey masterfully directed traffic on the floor over the last several weeks, and both Democrats and Republicans rose in support of Climer. It is urgent that South Carolina address this anti-competitive, regulatory "wall" surrounding hospitals and allow the free market to work. Time will tell if a majority of South Carolina House members will answer the call to eliminate the competitor's veto to healthcare. But the fight is worth having.

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## TENNESSEE

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

As many kids across the country returned to school after the holiday break, many others did not. Due to the uptick in COVID cases arising out of the more contagious Omicron variant, some 3,500 schools shut their doors to in-person instruction in January. Since the beginning, the **Beacon Center of Tennessee** has been committed to parental choice in education. And parents' need to choose the best educational path for their children has never been more important than it is now. Robust parental choice will finally put parents in the driver's seat, and the Beacon team is committed to making Tennessee a leader in school choice. This year, Beacon has called on legislators to allow parents to take their money and walk away if school districts (or the unions that often drive their decision-making) refuse to listen when parents say that their children learn best in-person. It's time that Tennessee follows the lead of other states and funds students, not systems. And in that vein, Beacon is also pursuing solutions to overhaul Tennessee's outdated and dysfunctional education funding system by moving to a student-based model, which has been proposed by Gov. Bill Lee.

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## TEXAS

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

The **Texas Public Policy Foundation** announced its top legislative priorities for the 88<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session in 2023. They include several reforms that build on the success of last year's regular and special sessions, as well as refocusing efforts on some issues that have seen progress in recent years but have not been accomplished. "Our top legislative priority for 2023 is to ensure parents are the decision makers in their children's education," said TPPF's CEO Greg Sindelar. "Parents rightly believe they should be the ultimate authority in deciding what is best for their children and shouldn't be locked into a specific school or district simply because of where they choose to live. Texas should remove these arbitrary barriers that prevent parents from choosing the best education for their children." In addition to education reforms, TPPF will continue to keep Texas Texan by focusing on improving state finances, fixing the state's punitive property tax system, ensuring access to affordable and reliable energy, securing election results, overhauling foster care, and putting patients in charge of their healthcare.





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## UTAH

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

Utah has just finished its annual legislative session, and the **Libertas Institute** is pleased to report that it was an absolute banner year for occupational licensure reform for the state. No fewer than six bills focused on this issue have passed the Legislature, including the creation of the Occupational and Professional Licensure Review Board. This board will review all existing licensure laws—with period revisiting—for necessity and scope and will do the same for all future licensure proposals. Also passed was one of Libertas' policy priorities, the creation of the Psychotherapy Mental Health Task Force, which will study the efficacy and safety of psychedelic medications for the treatment of mental health disorders. This year, Libertas has also seen the passage of restrictions to the use of forcible entry warrants as well as a prohibition on deceptive methods used during the custodial interrogation of a minor. All in all, it's been a pretty good year for Utah.



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## VERMONT

**ETHAN ALLEN INSTITUTE | [ethanallen.org](https://ethanallen.org)**

The **Ethan Allen Institute** (EAI) has named Meg Hansen as the organization's new president. She succeeds Rob Roper who led EAI for nine years. Hansen brings a wealth of experience in developing policy and media initiatives that give voice to the overlooked and unmet needs of middle class and working-class Vermonters. She has an established record of effective community engagement and has her finger on the pulse of grassroots issues. Hansen holds a graduate degree in the humanities from Dartmouth College and trained in medicine. She previously served as the executive director of Vermonters for Health Care Freedom, a health policy think tank.



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## VIRGINIA

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

A new Governor (Glenn Youngkin), Lt. Governor (Winsome Sears) and Attorney General (Jason Miyares), along with a slim majority in Virginia's House of Delegates bodes well for a freedom agenda in the Old Dominion. With the **Thomas Jefferson Institute's** president and senior fellow serving on transition working groups in key policy areas, it shows in the final legislative agenda of the new Administration. Prime among these is support for doubling the standard deduction on state taxes—long an objective for Institute Senior Fellow Steve Haner. Equally so is the pushback against Virginia's "Green New Deal" components—starting with Governor Youngkin's decision to accept the Jefferson Institute's recommendation to repeal Virginia's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. Youngkin also introduced legislation expanding the college partnership lab school program—originally written in 2007 by Institute president Chris Braunlich—and creating a mechanism for charter school divisions. Visiting Fellow F. Vincent Vernuccio is equally busy working to rollback Virginia's collective bargaining law permitting public employee monopoly union contracts starting this year.





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

Over the last year the **Virginia Institute for Public Policy** has been working hard on election integrity – on making sure that the people of Virginia can feel secure in the outcomes of our elections. As we reported at the end of last year, the Virginia Institute and our partners in the Virginia Fair Elections (VFE) coalition worked tirelessly to fill the ~14,000 shifts for poll watchers and election officials to secure last November’s election. Now that the 2022 General Assembly session is over, the Virginia Institute is back on the road – traveling all over the United States to discuss The Virginia Model with other state policy organizations and local activists. Working with Conservative Partnership Institute (CPI), the Virginia Institute has helped to develop and coordinate a number of statewide election integrity summits across the nation. We are training thousands of new volunteers on how to get engaged at the local level and be present during the upcoming mid-term elections.

Moreover, our Legislative Impact Program continues to produce actionable legislation addressing significant security gaps in Virginia’s election law. As we continue to slog through the complexities of Virginia’s convoluted election law, and joyfully meet and train wonderful Virginians who are ready to get in the trenches, the Virginia Institute and our coalition is working every day to build legislative consensus toward a simple and democratic ideal – let’s make it Easy to Vote, and Hard to Cheat.

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## **WASHINGTON**

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

The **Freedom Foundation** began 2022 on the heels of a record-setting one-month campaign that resulted in 4,500 public employees across the country resigning their union membership. In the first quarter of 2022, the Freedom Foundation helped hundreds of teachers, from California to Pennsylvania, stop funding the teachers’ unions agenda, and held dozens of teacher roundtables to continue spreading the word about alternatives to the National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers. As skyrocketing inflation and crime rates dominated news cycles, the Freedom Foundation launched new outreach campaigns educating public employees on the East Coast about how their union dues propelled politicians to power who are defunding the police, refusing to prosecute crimes, and supporting policies that result in higher prices at gas pumps and grocery stores. The Freedom Foundation made national headlines during the first quarter with an explosive report revealing that more than 200 labor unions and affiliated organizations—including a dozen teachers’ unions—collected \$37 million in federal COVID relief funds through the Paycheck Protection Program for which they were ineligible.

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## **WEST VIRGINIA**

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

On March 1, the nation’s most expansive ESA program officially opened for applications: the Hope Scholarship. As of May 9, applications approached 1,000 with Cardinal beginning its outreach efforts including postcards to 75,000 households with children, billboards in West Virginia’s five largest cities, and robust digital marketing efforts.



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## WISCONSIN

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

The **Badger Institute** is advancing important reforms on several fronts during this legislative session. One priority is a measure that would restore legislative oversight of federal funds that flow into the state, a responsibility the Legislature relinquished to the governor during the height of the Depression and FDR's New Deal. As a result, Gov. Tony Evers is distributing billions of dollars in CARES Act and ARPA funds without input, oversight or accountability. A related priority is Badger's Tracking the Trillions investigative journalism project aimed at identifying how these monies are being spent. In January, we reported that correctional and other agencies in Wisconsin used these funds to purchase at least 55 disinfection robots at a cost of \$40,000 each. We will also focus on bills inspired by Badger Institute research, including the restoration of work requirements in state public benefits programs, broad licensing reforms, and the elimination of the marriage penalty in the state EITC.



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

The **Institute for Reforming Government**, along with its partner organization IRG Action Fund, helped the Wisconsin Legislature develop and advance a historic K-12 education reform package that gives every child access to a school voucher, breaks-up the failing Milwaukee Public School district, creates a statewide charter authorizer, and enacts a Parental Bill of Rights. This includes, but is not limited to, testifying, waging an aggressive public relations campaign, and finding community leaders to voice their support, like a former Milwaukee school teacher and over 1,000 parents to sign petitions. Not only do these bills dramatically increase the number of educational options for students, they also represent a step forward in putting students and families above Wisconsin's education establishment. The bills are on their way to Governor Tony Evers' desk where IRG is urging him to sign them into law.



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

In December 2021, the **Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty** published, "A Review of the 2020 Election", a 10-month long, in-depth examination of the 2020 election in Wisconsin. *The Wall Street Journal* Editorial Board described the report as "the best summary to date of the 2020 election." While WILL's findings revealed little direct evidence of voter fraud, the report did show there was widespread abandonment of proper election procedures which raised serious questions about the fairness and security of Wisconsin's election process. The report also noted that private funding of election operations had a partisan bias and impact. As a result, WILL has proposed a package of election integrity reforms for Wisconsin lawmakers to pursue in the remaining months of the legislative session. In a related development, the Wisconsin Supreme Court has also agreed to hear *Teigen v Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC)*, a case brought by WILL to determine the legal status of absentee ballot drop boxes and ballot harvesting.



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

1851 Center for Constitutional Law	EFoundation
1889 Institute	EdChoice
Acton Institute	Energy & Environment Legal Institute
America's Future Foundation	ExcelinEd
American Conservative Union Foundation	Federalist Society
American Consumer Institute	First Liberty Institute
American Council of Trustees and Alumni	For Kids & Country
American Enterprise Institute	Forge Leadership Network
American Juris Link	Foundation for Economic Education
American Legislative Exchange Council	Franklin News Foundation
Americans for Fair Treatment	Fraser Institute
Americans for Prosperity	Free State Foundation
Americans for Tax Reform	Free To Choose Network
Archbridge Institute	Free the People
Ashbrook Center	Freedom Center of Missouri
Association of American Educators Foundation	FreedomWorks
Atlas Network	Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge
Beacon Hill Institute for Public Policy Research	Galen Institute
Becket	Heartland Institute
Benjamin Rush Institute	Heritage Foundation
Bill of Rights Institute	Independent Institute
Capital Research Center	Independent Women's Forum
Cato Institute	Institute for Family Studies
Centennial Institute	Institute for Free Speech
Center for Education Reform	Institute for Humane Studies
Center for Growth and Opportunity at Utah State University	Institute for Justice
Center for Independent Employees	Institute of Economic Affairs
Center for Independent Thought	Intercollegiate Studies Institute
Charles Koch Institute	Jesse Helms Center
Citizens Against Government Waste	Judicial Watch Inc.
Citizens' Council for Health Freedom	Leadership Institute
Common Sense Institute	Leadership Program of the Rockies
Competitive Enterprise Institute	Liberty Justice Center
DonorsTrust	Lincoln Network
	Lone Star Policy Institute

Louisiana Family Forum  
Lucy Burns Institute  
Manhattan Institute for Policy Research  
Mercatus Center at George Mason University  
Mountain States Legal Foundation  
National Review Institute  
National Right to Work Legal Defense & Education  
Foundation Inc.  
National School Choice Awareness Foundation  
National Tax Limitation Committee  
National Taxpayers Union Foundation  
New Civil Liberties Alliance  
Next Generation Freedom Fund  
Pacific Legal Foundation  
Philanthropy Roundtable  
Principles That Matter  
Prison Fellowship  
Property & Environment Research Center  
R Street Institute  
Reason Foundation  
School Choice Wisconsin  
Speech First  
Steamboat Institute  
Students For Liberty  
Tax Foundation  
The College Fix  
The Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity  
The Fund for American Studies  
The James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal  
The Policy Circle  
Think Freely Media  
Young America's Foundation  
Young Voices



SPOTLIGHT PARTNERSHIP: [edchoice.org](https://edchoice.org)

Throughout state legislative sessions in 2022, SPN and our state affiliates have worked closely with key national groups to advance education reforms that will improve education opportunities and increase transparency and accountability. SPN has worked alongside EdChoice, a leading national group on education, in multiple states including Oklahoma, West Virginia, and Utah, to support Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) and other school choice initiatives.

Throughout the process, we have shared intel, ideas, and strategized on opportunities across multiple states. We work together to make sure each organization is

leveraging its strengths to build a robust coalition in support of education freedom.

For example, in Oklahoma, EdChoice provided fiscal analysis of the proposed ESA, and our affiliate, Oklahoma Council for Public Affairs, used it in their lawmaker engagement. SPN provided support for OCPA's legislative campaign through our government affairs programming. In West Virginia, SPN has focused efforts on supporting the Cardinal Institute's outreach campaign to spread awareness of the Hope Scholarship ESA program and engage families to sign up. EdChoice, among their many efforts in West Virginia, has been instrumental in working with regulators to ensure the program is implemented via the rule making process and is done so in a way that is family and student centered.



“EDCHOICE IS GRATEFUL FOR STRONG PARTNERSHIPS WITH SPN AND NETWORK GROUPS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. BY WORKING TOGETHER, EDUCATION POLICY CHANGE IS PROVIDING MORE FAMILIES WITH ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL FREEDOM.”

Keri Hunter,  
Vice President of Outreach and Training,  
EdChoice

# Safeguard the Future with Your Legacy



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

## Joining the Thomas Roe Legacy Society

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



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

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

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



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