

March 2019

SPNNEWS

State Solutions. National Impact.



The Freedom Foundation in Washington brought caregiver Miranda Thorpe and her daughter, Serena, to Washington, DC, to tell federal officials how they have been hurt by unions skimming dues from their Medicaid support checks. Learn more about the impact of SPN's federal outreach program on page 3.

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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.

WE DO THIS BY:

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,

State legislative sessions are well underway, and 36 governors have brought fresh mandates; eager state legislators are pursuing new priorities; and attorneys general and other officials are shaping state laws.

Meanwhile, 65 state-based think tanks are engaged in driving policy reforms that make the citizens of their states less reliant on the government and empowered to exercise more control over their lives.



Politicians come and go with each election cycle. But your commitment to state solutions with national impact is not tied to any one administration. It's part of something bigger. Your partnership has sparked an enduring infrastructure — a mobilized force to advance freedom in the states. A force that outlives any election cycle or economic downturn. A force that can reach across tribes and is built to last, regardless of who is in

the Oval Office or governor's office.

We are the antidote to the gridlock in Washington, DC. Our 50-state network is closer to the action and more responsive to the needs of American working families than the federal government can ever be.

So, during this legislative season, be encouraged. Your investment in our state-based Network is paying off. Our policy solutions are being implemented, our messages are resonating with new audiences, our leadership is gaining influence, and our strategy is getting results. And together, we are building a network that endures.

During the next year, you will hear me talk about how our country needs more leaders (outside of politics) who are equipped to respond to the unique needs of the people in their states. Leadership is critical when it comes to getting people back to work, giving parents control over their children's education, and forcing government unions to use their dues for the good of their members (instead of funding special-interest politics). In the last year alone, 150 Network leaders participated in our leadership development programs — and we hope to reach even more in the coming year.

Thank you for your partnership in ensuring the 50-state freedom Network continues to make national impact and serve as a role model for Washington, DC.

Sincerely,



President & CEO



State Policy Network's federal outreach program gives states a voice in DC

SPN and its member organizations have always been engaged in federal outreach. National partners such as the Heritage Foundation, the Cato Institute, and The American Enterprise Institute have worked on federal issues for many years and have earned the respect of Washington insiders.

But the 2016 election created even greater opportunities to bring the states' points of view to Washington.

To seize these opportunities, SPN's federal outreach program has focused on connecting state think tank leaders to federal agencies and lawmakers who are eager to learn what's working — and not working — in the states. In the following interview, **Jennifer Butler, senior policy advisor to SPN**, explains how these state-based leaders and ideas are changing the country from the bottom up instead of the top down.

SPN: *Why is it important for states to have a voice in DC?*

JB: While people in DC have the best of intentions, they can't possibly respond to the complex needs of Americans across all 50 states by issuing one-size-fits-all mandates. As a result of SPN bringing the voice of the states to Washington, federal leaders are shifting their mindset and embracing ways to return power and decision-making back to the states, where they belong. This is a major change from the last administration.

Federal regulations and intervention

cost American consumers and businesses \$1.9 trillion in 2016.¹ According to a recent Mercatus Center study, the federal government spends more than \$500 billion annually on grants-in-aid to state and local governments, making grants-in-aid the third largest item in the budget after Social Security and national defense.² And the federal government uses this as a hook to control state policy and push federal policies at the state level.

Ideas and policy solutions coming out of the states have been more effective in changing lives for the better because they take into account their state's unique needs and environment. The Network has invested in years of ideas that have brought success. Foundation for Government Accountability has developed innovative welfare reforms.

Goldwater Institute has had great success with Right to Try laws, which enable people diagnosed with a terminal illness to decide for themselves—in consultation with their doctors—whether to try investigational medicines that could prolong or even save their lives. Right to Try took root in Arizona, made its way to 40 other states, and eventually became federal law. The Buckeye Institute is now advising states on waiver opportunities to fix healthcare markets in ways that are tailored to each state's unique circumstances.

¹ <https://cei.org/content/costs-and-burden-federal-regulations-reach-19-trillion>

² <https://www.mercatus.org/system/files/Federal-grant-aid-state-and-local-chart-analysis-pdf.pdf>



SPN: *Why does SPN have a federal outreach program?*

JB: The complexity of the federal government is challenging, and SPN provides an easier pathway for state think tanks to participate in policy discussions at the federal level. Having a dedicated SPN contact in DC helps state think tanks make the best of their time in Washington. SPN connects them to the right people, and then the think tanks can foster those relationships themselves and build their credibility. The state think tanks have the ideas; SPN's role is to accelerate the process of getting ideas, stories, and successes from the states into federal leaders' hands, so that state-based solutions have a better chance of creating national impact.

Many solid relationships have resulted from these connections, leading to federal decisionmakers taking up ideas from the states. For example, Sutherland Institute in Utah provided research and guidance to help repeal the designation of Bear Ears as a national monument, reducing the monument by 85 percent and ensuring the local people preserve their history, culture, and livelihoods — all of which depend on access to these public lands and the life-sustaining resources they provide. Likewise, when the US Department of Health and Human Services proposed a rule to end the unions' practices of skimming dues from home healthcare providers' Medicaid support checks, the Center for the American Experiment in Minnesota and Freedom Foundation in Washington helped bring home health-



care workers to Washington, DC, so that policymakers could hear firsthand how they were being hurt by dues skimming.

SPN: *What makes state think tank expertise or state-based stories so valuable to federal leaders?*

JB: People in DC come from the states, but once you get inside the Beltway, it becomes a different world. Even individuals who specialize in certain policy areas don't have real-time information on what's happening in the states. To have a resource like SPN actively providing connections to state leaders is a service to federal policymakers. They could spend all day doing outreach, but knowing they can reach out to SPN and get connections to a multi-state network of free-market, principled policy organizations and leaders is a great value and time-saver for them.

They are grateful to SPN because we can tell them when something is percolating. For example, several states are in line for Medicaid expansion right now. That impacts policy decisions being discussed and made now because, ultimately, what's happening in the states affects what policies the federal government is considering.

Early in the current administration, there was a big focus on engaging with governors. But SPN wanted to make sure policymakers were hearing from other state leaders concerned about the long-term health of their states. As a result of SPN's introductions to state think tank experts, elected officials started to see that they needed to expand whom they talked to



in the states. State think tank leaders now serve as resources to key officials on issues such as jobs, healthcare, and energy.

SPN: *How have state leaders made an impact during the current administration?*

From the start, the current administration didn't want to do business as usual. They are actively trying to push through reforms that give power back to the states. This opened up an opportunity for state-based leaders to not only educate federal decision makers, but to also serve in federal leadership roles.

Former state think tank leaders now hold federal appointments in Washington and are able to make a huge difference. In 2018, Brooke Rollins, former president and CEO of the Texas Public Policy Foundation, became director of the White House Office of American Innovation and the driving force behind the administration prioritizing criminal justice reform. With the president and Brooke advocating for change, along with a coalition led by Texas Public Policy Foundation, Congress passed the most comprehensive criminal justice reform package in 30 years. It will help ex-offenders re-enter society and reduce the likelihood of these individuals returning to prison.

At the Department of Labor, former president of Advance Arkansas Institute, Dan Greenberg, is encouraging occupational licensing reform in the

states. (Right now, government regulation requires people in some states to obtain a time-consuming, expensive license to pursue a particular profession or vocation.) Center for the American Experiment's Peter Nelson, formerly of Center for the American Experiment in Minnesota, is now in charge of insurance markets at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

SPN: *Where do we have the greatest opportunities in 2019 and looking ahead to 2020?*

JB: There is a small window of opportunity on administrative action, and we have free-market advocates in the administration who are hungry for reform ideas. SPN's mission isn't tied to a president, so we'll continue advancing it regardless of who is in the Oval Office. But we need to take advantage of this window of opportunity to loosen the federal government's grip and clear the path for states to innovate.

Now is the time for state think tanks to bring ideas to the administration. They can equip policymakers and officials with real stories of how federal policies are impacting families, workers, and businesses. DC needs sanity from the states, especially blue states that have said no to bad policy ideas that could still emerge at the federal level. SPN's unique opportunity is to connect our state think tanks to federal agencies and the administration even more in the next two years so that states can be part of the discussion and create momentum for reforms that expand freedom and innovation. ♦



State Policy Network brings together the best and brightest policy minds in the states to solve our country's biggest challenges

Despite what the news might tout, 2019 is a year of great opportunity. There are multiple chances to drive solutions that will improve healthcare and education, reduce dependency on welfare, help Americans find fulfilling work, and more.

In many cases, states have led the way on change in these areas.

DC-driven change is slow to occur and tends to expand the federal government's control instead of meeting local realities and needs.

Instead of waiting for Washington, the Network has an opportunity to take a bottom-up (not top-down) approach to solving our nation's challenges. People have better choices in their daily lives when states are empowered to respond to their needs — instead of a mandate from Washington, DC. SPN plays a unique role in facilitating this change by convening the best policy minds from the states through what has been dubbed throughout the Network as “policy working groups.” These groups bring together state-based leaders who, challenged and supported by each other and by SPN, develop and deploy winning strategies on a variety of policy issues that can be applied across states and translate into national impact.

CASE STUDY: The Healthcare Working Group

In response to gridlock over the Affordable Care Act at the federal level, SPN launched the Healthcare Working Group (HWG) to create a collaborative space for healthcare experts to address healthcare challenges in their respective states. All of these leaders have seen the consequences of inaction and poor healthcare policy in their own states.

“In Michigan, we have about one in four people enrolled in our Medicaid program, and that's a staggering number. Depending on what locality you're looking at, sometimes 50-60 percent of births are born on Medicaid,” said Lindsay Killen, vice president for strategic outreach and communications at the Mackinac Center for Public Policy. “We saw that being an alarming trend not just for immediate concern in terms of sustainability, but also for the trajectory of the state.”

The group has created viable state-level healthcare reforms, including direct primary care, scope-of-practice, Medicaid work requirements, Health Savings Accounts, and telemedicine. You may not hear about these reforms in the media or political speeches. But they are the kind of outside-the-box solutions that states can achieve today that will have a

significant effect on improving healthcare for citizens in the long run.

For members, one of the biggest benefits of the HWG members is the ability to stay dialed in to what other states are doing — to learn what works, what doesn't, and how they can strengthen their own reforms.



SPN's State Health Care Toolkit outlines twenty reforms that states can begin seeking immediately, taking advantage of opportunities that already exist. It shows states how to innovate with more affordable, accessible, market-driven healthcare solutions.



"I see SPN as being a really valuable Network for knowledge-sharing and for helping to give states that don't have resources in the healthcare area tools to use to have some success," said Naomi Lopez Bauman, director of healthcare policy at the Goldwater Institute.

The Medicaid Waiver Opportunity

The HWG identified a major opportunity to vastly improve the healthcare system as we know it — using Medicaid waivers as a way to help states create reform. States can apply for a waiver of certain requirements under the ACA to experiment with new reforms, but must demonstrate that the waiver will

Being able to work in a multistate direction really gives you added power, especially in dealing with Washington. There is a big gap between the Beltway and states, and our group really helps bridge that gap.

—Rea Hederman,
The Buckeye Institute

provide access to quality care as comprehensive and affordable as without the waiver.

Christie Herrera, vice president for state affairs and a policy fellow at the Foundation for Government Accountability,



SPN's Healthcare Working Group visited the White House to share their observations and recommendations with senior staff in the administration.

explains it this way:

"The SPN Healthcare Working Group is a great place to craft a shared set of policy goals that are of mutual interest to our sister think tanks. There is strength in numbers, and having multiple groups march in the same direction on healthcare will lead to more victories in the states."

Work requirements represent some of the greatest opportunity to preserve welfare programs for the truly needy — especially in the Medicaid program, which added millions of able-bodied, childless adults to the rolls. Policymakers can and should take advantage of the flexibility offered by the Trump Administration to enact Medicaid work requirements in their states."

For most states, Medicaid has been growing at an unsustainable rate under the ACA and is crowding out spending in other categories like education, public safety, and infrastructure. State leaders must balance their budgets this

year on top of addressing healthcare realities in their states.

To help provide a roadmap for reform, the HWG created a Medicaid Waiver Toolkit aimed at giving state policymakers a suite of options to choose from to better meet their state's individual needs and political climate. Because healthcare reform options can be complicated, the toolkit was written in an accessible format to help demystify the solutions. Members of the group then sprang into action, making sure the ideas reached state policymakers and key contacts on health committees.

"Lawmakers come in different shapes, sizes, and beliefs, and they like having choices. That's the beauty of federalism: we have proposals that may work down south but wouldn't up in New England, and vice versa," said Rea Hederman, vice president of policy at The Buckeye Institute.

For example, Michigan successfully



passed Medicaid work requirements and constructed its waiver legislation to include innovative ideas discussed in the HWG.

“Other states have applied similar types of reforms to their work requirement waivers that make them more impactful,” said Killen. “In Michigan, it sets us up for discussions for other reforms to add as we move into a new legislature. We planted a seed, put a stake in the ground, and laid the groundwork for other innovative reforms.”

So far, 10 states have introduced waivers that include the top 5 waivers recommended in the Medicaid Waiver Toolkit: Alabama, Oklahoma, Missouri, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Michigan. We have seen time again and again that action in the states helps create demand for federal change.

State Change. Lasting Impact.

In response to change at the state level, members of the HWG are now being asked to not only help lawmakers in their state, but also to assist federal officials. Members of the HWG met with relevant healthcare committees in Congress and federal leadership staff to amplify the reforms seen on the state level. They were also asked to write a memo on how states could use waivers for insurance reform.

“Part of the reason we were listened to is because we came in as a group,” said Hederman. “As a unified body, we were able to have more influence and generate more visibility.”

At SPN, we believe in the power of a unified voice. The HWG is one example of the change that happens when leaders come together to build the most effective strategies.

"The SPN Healthcare Working Group is a great place to craft a shared set of policy goals that are of mutual interest to our sister think tanks. There is strength in numbers, and having multiple groups march in the same direction on healthcare will lead to more victories in the states."

—Christine Herrera
Foundation for
Government Accountability

“Being able to find like-minded allies really gave us a unified network that was key in organizing in a cohesive fashion,” Hederman said. “Being able to work in a multistate direction really gives you added power, especially in dealing with Washington. There is a big gap between the Beltway and states, and our group really helps bridge that gap.”

While the HWG has seen successful reforms, there are still uphill battles to fight as states continue to grapple

with Medicaid expansion, rising prescription drug costs, and Medicare for all. The group is set to cast a vision for 22nd-century healthcare — essentially, what healthcare should look like going forward and how states can let innovation flourish.

This kind of collaborative, forward-looking, solutions-driven work is what SPN nurtures every day through these policy working groups. While change can sometimes happen in silos, we believe we have a better shot at creating lasting policies that will improve lives if we instead work together toward common goals. What one state may adopt could benefit another and have a ripple effect across the country.

In 2019, SPN looks to replicate the HWG’s success by convening policy working groups in other areas where forward-looking, state-based strategies are needed: workplace freedom, education, energy, and local government. The HWG will continue its work on waivers and explore alternatives to Medicaid expansion.

The generosity of our supporters and the strength of our network make it all possible. We will continue to play this vital role in identifying cross-state opportunities to give people more freedom of choice, better quality care, and better policy for future generations. ♦



State Think Tank Affiliate Updates



ALABAMA

During National School Choice Week (January 26–February 1, 2019), the **Alabama Policy Institute** dispelled the myths being promoted by critics of Alabama’s Accountability Act, a program that creates more education options for students. Critics say the program will take money away from public schools—even high-performing ones that won’t



lose students to the scholarship opportunities provided through the program. API’s senior fellow Rachel Blackmon Bryars was featured in *Alabama Today* where she explained that public schools aren’t losing money. In fact, schools have the largest budget in decade. The Accountability Act will not interfere with these available funds, and it will give parents, especially in low-income households, the support they need to transfer their children out of under-performing schools. alabamapolicy.org



ALASKA

Statistics for literacy among Alaska’s children are dismal. Alaska’s K–12 education system has arguably the worst student outcomes in the nation in the fundamental task of teaching children to read by age nine. Robert Griffin and Bethany Marcum of the **Alaska Policy Forum** have co-authored a new policy brief that details the problem, examines possible explanations for the poor performance of Alaska’s schools, and puts forward suggested reforms. This policy brief provides statistical data to refute many of the explanations commonly used for Alaska’s poor



educational outcomes: “This is a rural problem.” “It’s because Alaska has more poverty.” “We just don’t spend enough.” “It’s due to our higher diversity rates.” “Pre-K is the answer.” The Forum recommends that Alaska model a solution after Florida’s reading reform program, which put Florida first in the nation for reading scores after just two test cycles. alaskapolicyforum.org



ARIZONA

The **Goldwater Institute** is devoted to working with and assisting our colleagues-in-liberty across the country to advance free-market principles in their legislatures, courtrooms, and communities.

To that end, the Institute is pleased



to announce our new director of strategic engagement, Heather Curry. Curry will handle the Institute’s outreach efforts to and partner-

ship with state and national policy organizations and policymakers. The Institute is always happy to share policy research, model legislation, legislative drafting and analysis, and testimony. Often, what works to advance liberty in one state can be repurposed for all 50.

Goldwater Institute lawyers also work hand-in-hand with state-based litigation centers, developing legal theories, providing legal assistance, helping draft pleadings, providing introductions to expert witnesses, and more. The Institute works as co-counsel, local counsel, or simply as legal consultants, as needed. If your free-market policy organization doesn’t have a lawyer, the Goldwater Institute can help by providing legal representation, either by

itself, or through its American Freedom Network attorneys. Institute lawyers are also available to help groups set up their own litigation centers, through organized trainings (the Institute’s next two-day, in-person session is in March) or on a one-on-one basis.

State Policy Network think tanks who want to partner with or get assistance from the Institute on policy matters can reach out to Heather Curry (hcurry@goldwaterinstitute.org). For litigation matters, contact Kileen Lindgren (klindgren@goldwaterinstitute.org). Goldwater Institute is looking forward to continuing to partner with you to advance and defend freedom nationwide. goldwaterinstitute.org



ARKANSAS

Arkansas policymakers are considering Governor Asa Hutchinson’s proposal to consolidate 42 state agencies into 15, the largest state government reorganization in nearly 50 years.

Governor Hutchinson noted the **Arkansas Policy Foundation’s** role in his proposal: “This independent research organization is a cornerstone in the effort to streamline government operations in our state.” He continued, “The Foundation’s

establishment of the Arkansas Efficiency Project in 2015, a report that reviewed current state government actions and recommended potential steps to improve its functions, was instrumental in beginning the movement to better serve the citizens of Arkansas. My administration’s Office of Transformation and Transformation Advisory Board are products of the project. They





strive to apply efficiency initiatives recommended by the Foundation's report, as well as organize the state's plan of action for transformation."

Hutchinson is serving his second term as Arkansas' chief executive.
arkansaspolicyfoundation.org

The **Foundation for Government Accountability** published a new report detailing how work requirements have helped thousands of able-bodied adults move from welfare to work in Arkansas, leading to increased incomes.

After Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson implemented work requirements for able-bodied adults on food stamps in 2016, enrollment of able-bodied, childless adults dropped by 70 percent. After two years, able-bodied Arkansans leaving food stamps saw their incomes



more than triple, on average. Taxpayers are also saving more than \$28 million a year, and state tax revenues have

increased by more than \$2.3 million. States like Maine and Kansas have seen similar success after establishing commonsense work requirements for able-bodied adults.

FGA also published new research on short-term plans, detailing how these plans offer affordable, flexible health insurance options for millions of Americans priced out of the health insurance marketplace. Between 2013 and 2017, health insurance premiums in the individual market more than doubled, leaving millions of Americans with few options and pricing millions more out of the market altogether. Short-term plans are affordable, temporary insurance plans that offer an alternative solution for individuals and families looking for

more affordable options. According to the report, 2.5 million uninsured Americans stand to gain health insurance under short-term health plans. thefga.org



CALIFORNIA

California Policy Center recently received an unlikely but well-deserved endorsement from the NAACP Branch #1034 for its Parent Union. The Parent Union empowers parents — mostly minority and low



income — to make the best choice for their

students. They are able to attend school district meetings to lobby for better public-school options, or enroll in CPC's 10 Education Commandment classes, or canvass their communities to introduce more parents to local charter schools. CPC's army of parents is demanding the better choices for the next generation of Californians, and that army is growing. The Parent Union now has more than 1,000 members and that number increases every week.

CPC is using a similar grassroots approach to organize and support local elected officials in California through its California Local Elected Officials (CLEO) project. CLEO members are local elected officials who believe in financial sustainability, transparency, and prosperity. As of January 2019, CLEO has 565 active members.

Finally, CPC continues its effort to communicate with 1.4 million government union members regarding their new freedom to choose to keep their union dues. Since the *Janus* decision came down in June 2018, CPC has tried several approaches to reaching this wide audience. They are quickly

learning which tactics are successful and can be duplicated and which need to be adjusted or abandoned. The road to freedom is long and winding, but CPC is using this vast network as its guide.

californiapolicycenter.org

Pacific Research Institute celebrated National School Choice Week in California with a special celebration launching Lance Izumi's new book on charter schools.

Choosing Diversity, available in bookstores soon, profiles 13 different charter schools across the country that are as different from each other as one could imagine.

Izumi writes, "For many parents, choosing a charter school that offers a safe learning environment or a technology-focused curriculum is much more important than test scores alone. Every day, parents choose diversity in sending their children to the charter schools that best meet the individual needs of their kids."

In conjunction with *Choosing Diversity*,



PRI also released a new mini-documentary on charter schools called "Welcome to Change."

The movie profiles one of the schools included in *Choosing Diversity*, Life Learning Academy, located on Treasure Island in San Francisco Bay.

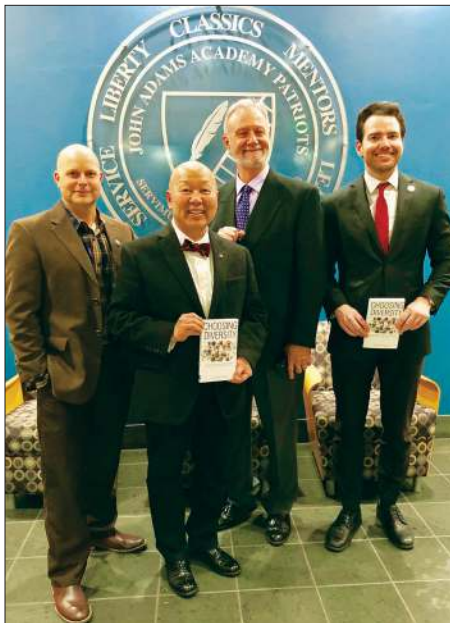
Life Learning Academy is a San Francisco Unified public charter school and is a project of the non-profit Delancey Street Foundation. It serves at-risk students who typically fall through the cracks in traditional public schools—students who are the victims of bullying, violence, and broken homes.



State Think Tank Affiliate Updates

Uniquely, Life Learning Academy is poised to become the only public school in California with a student dormitory on campus. It is presently building a 20-room dormitory to provide a stable and safe living place for students who are either homeless or living from couch-to-couch every night.

“The film shows how charter schools like Life Learning Academy can provide hope for a bright future for students who may otherwise have none,” said Izumi. pacificresearch.org



A special book launch event was held at John Adams Academy in Roseville, a public charter school with a classical education focus, and one of the schools profiled in *Choosing Diversity*. Izumi spoke about his book, and participated in a panel discussion with education leaders about the importance of protecting charter schools in the face of an expected legislative push against them this year.

Speaking on the panel with Izumi, which was moderated by AM 1380 The Answer host Phil Cowan, were State Assemblyman Kevin Kiley; Nathan Herzog, William Jessup University; and Dean Forman, founder of John Adams Academy.



CONNECTICUT

In 2018, Connecticut lawmakers made a concerted push to add tolls to Connecticut highways. The **Yankee Institute for Public Policy** combated those efforts with “toll troll” guerilla marketing, a strong petition campaign, and strategic partnerships with allies. And despite lawmakers’ plans to vote on the tolls last spring, public outcry was so swift and fierce that they backed off — and the proposal faded away.



But the toll trolls are back again. Armed with a new, taxpayer-funded study that calls for an even greater number of tolls, state lawmakers have returned with a new toll bill. The Yankee Institute has been working to build on last year’s momentum to create even stronger and more organized opposition to this proposal — and there are some surprises yet to come.

While tolls are not necessarily bad policy on their own, Connecticut residents already pay painfully high gas taxes and shoulder some of the most expensive highways in the country, on a per-mile basis. The Institute’s work has shown that tolls would mean a massive tax hike on our state’s drivers. Connecticut taxpayers are tired of being nickel-and-dimed in every walk of life — especially on transportation. The state has more than enough money to address the state’s transportation needs and should not need one cent more from hard-working families. yankeeinstitute.org



DELAWARE

Regulated electric utilities want to overcome falling electricity demand by boosting the demand for electric vehicles, perhaps the only growth market available to them. A national wave has started as utilities apply for approval from utility commissions to get into the electric vehicle charging market. The utilities seek permission to invest in chargers and to make around a 10 percent guaranteed profit, with electric customers, who don’t own EVs, paying the cost in higher electric bills. This would allow utilities to enter the charging market with their customers assuming all the cost and risk.

The **Caesar Rodney Institute** is intervening in such a docket in Delaware and has reviewed the utility-sponsored Benefit Cost Analysis used to justify their case. The BCA is typical of what may be used in similar dockets across the country, and the Institute’s review could help fight similar, inappropriate utility efforts in other states. caesarrodney.org



FLORIDA

James Madison Institute released a new policy brief, “Dental Therapists: Sinking Our Teeth into Innovative Workforce Reform,” which found that Florida lags 16 percent behind the national average in dentists per 100,000 residents. In addition, roughly one in four Floridians — about 5.5 million people — live in areas of the state where there are documented shortages of dentists. To combat the problem, the report suggests, state licensing



regulations should be reformed to let the market determine the number and types of Florida's dental care providers, including the relatively new innovation of dental therapists.

Florida is home to several special populations who often have unique oral health needs. Individuals 65 years and older make up one-fifth of the Florida population and usually have a greater need for dental care. In addition, 30 of the state's 67 counties are designated rural areas in which only 2.4 percent of Florida's general dentists practice.



Over the next 10 to 20 years, Florida's population will continue to explode. Florida policymakers will face serious and substantive decisions regarding access and delivery of healthcare services. Dental care should be among the top priorities. jamesmadison.org



GEORGIA

It's a new year, with new Governor Brian Kemp, and new Lieutenant Governor Geoff Duncan for Georgia. The **Georgia Public Policy Foundation** continues its work, bringing speakers to educate Georgia policymakers.

National School Choice Week panelists, Senior Fellow Ben Scafidi and Ashley Berner of Johns Hopkins University, spoke at SPNAM18 about educational pluralism. The Cato Institute's Randal O'Toole discussed "Romance of the Rails" amid a public transportation (rail) push in metro Atlanta. All events focused on educating legislators and policymakers about personal responsibility and government transparency and accountability. And it's working: In January, the Foun-

dation was honored for the second year in a row in the Think Tank Global Go-To Index as one of the "Best Independent Think Tanks" of 2018, along with (big) sister think tank, the Texas Public Policy Foundation. The Global Go-

To Think Tank Index is the result of an international survey of over 1,950 scholars, public and private donors, policymakers, and journalists, ranking more than 6,500 think tanks. The Foundation is proud to be a great return on investment for its Georgia supporters.

At the legislature, the Foundation continues to push for lower taxes; sensible transportation; quality, affordable healthcare; and education choices for families. The Foundation truly is "Changing Georgia Policy, Changing Georgians' Lives." georgiapolicy.org



Celebrating National School Choice Week in Atlanta were education choice fans Monica Henson; Kathaleena Monds of Albany State University; and Benita Dodd, vice president of the Georgia Public Policy Foundation.



HAWAII

The **Grassroot Institute of Hawaii** appeared in The Hill, a top US political website read by the White House and lawmakers, with commentary on how the US Jones Act is failing to deliver on its intended purposes to regulate shipping commerce in US waters and between US ports. In the op-ed, Grassroot Institute's Malia Hill recommends a path forward: "The Jones Act is expensive and ineffective. Trying to prop it up with questionable studies and faulty logic is a path to disaster. Instead of stubbornly insisting that the Act is working, let's look at bringing it into the 21st century with reforms that help shippers, lower its cost, and get it (and the US) working again." grassrootinstitute.org



ILLINOIS

Illinois Policy Institute says, "Illinois' budget crises could be a thing of the past if the state would adopt pension reform, right-size its union contracts, and focus education spending on classrooms instead of on administrative bloat."



The Institute outlines specific solutions in its five-year plan to balance the state's budget, pay off debt, and cut taxes. Along with bringing solutions to the table, the Institute is keeping taxpayers apprised of policy proposals that would take Illinois in the opposite direction. The Institute recently reported that a proposed \$15 minimum wage hike would cost Illinois taxpayers \$1.1 billion. It's also warning



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taxpayers that the so-called “progressive tax” being pushed by lawmakers is really a tax on the middle class that would only expand government power. “In other words,” the Institute cautioned, “voters are being asked for a blank check that would give politicians the ability to charge different rates to



different groups of people without any details on the tax rates.” The Institute is using a variety of

marketing channels to taxpayers about the myths of the progressive tax and mobilize them to fight against it.

illinoispolicy.org



KANSAS

Kansas Policy Institute released its 2019 Legislative Policy Guide, which aims to provide citizens with key questions and facts that will help them understand the issues on the table during the legislative session. This year’s guide covers five issues that KPI believes the state must address in order to support Kansas’ economic and educational future: 1) resolve the budget crisis and the state’s stagnant economy, 2) solve the puzzle of school funding and student achievement, 3) avoid expanding Medicaid and look to short-term health plans and other solutions to improve affordability of and access to care, 4) protect worker freedom by breaking unions’ monopoly on workplace representation, and 5) amend the state constitution to keep the courts from setting school funding. KPI explains these issues and their potential solutions in the 2019 Legislative Policy Guide. Learn more at kansaspolicy.org/lpg2019.

kansaspolicy.org



KENTUCKY

The **Bluegrass Institute for Public Policy** introduced KentuckyPensionTruth.com, a new website to help Kentuckians understand the current state of Kentucky’s pension system and provide a one-stop shop for public pension research, analysis, and commentary from around the state and nation. Institute board chairman Aaron Ammerman said, “It’s vital that Kentuckians hear the truth about where we are, how we arrived at this point, and serious nonpartisan solutions that will bring our commonwealth back from the edge of the economic cliff and return it to the road leading to financial health while providing a secure retirement for state employees.” The site will feature local and national news and commentary on government-administered retirement systems so that Kentucky and other states have access to “transparent and truthful information” about the ways pension crises are putting state economies in vulnerable positions. bipps.org



In addition to the education policy solutions offered in the effort, the Pelican Institute launched a video advertising campaign called “A School That Fits,” which includes one video detailing the vision of the future of Louisiana education and another video explaining the proposed reforms in detail. All of the components of the Pelican Institute’s education reform campaign are housed at the Institute’s website.

In conjunction with the launch of the education reform campaign, Pelican Institute’s CEO, Daniel Erspamer, authored a guest column in *The Advocate* highlighting some of the progress Louisiana has made recently in K–12 education and also offers proposals on how the state can make even greater strides. The Pelican Institute’s education reform package, along with digital and traditional media promotion, continues Pelican’s advocacy for a vision to buck the status quo and bring jobs and opportunity back to Louisiana.

pelicaninstitute.org



MAINE

Before the start of the new legislative session in Maine, **The Maine Heritage Policy Center** released the second edition of its Maine Legislative Guidebook. The book is filled with more than 100 public policy solutions for Maine policymakers to consider

THE
MAINE HERITAGE
POLICY CENTER

during their time in the legislature. Approximately 30 ideas from the second edition of the guidebook have been sponsored by lawmakers for the current legislative session, including measures to reduce Maine’s income tax, reform the direct initiative process, and roll back the state’s minimum wage law.



LOUISIANA

The **Pelican Institute for Public Policy** rolled out the next phase of its Jobs and Opportunity Agenda for Louisiana, which is a comprehensive education reform campaign. This campaign directly addresses the primary problems with the state’s educational system, especially those hampering students’ ability to seize future jobs and opportunities that are currently being afforded to more well-prepared students around the country.





In addition, MHPC recently hosted James Broughel and Jack Shannon of the Mercatus Center for policy luncheon events in Portland and Eliot, Maine, to unveil Mercatus Center's regulatory snapshot of Maine. The analysis found that Maine is home to approximately 113,862 regulatory restrictions. Broughel and MHPC communications director Jake Posik teamed up to write an op-ed published in *The Portland Press Herald* calling on Maine's new governor, Janet Mills, to pursue regulatory reform that mirrors the bipartisan reforms recently enacted in Virginia.

mainepolicy.org



MARYLAND

Maryland Public Policy Institute held their second annual Maryland Policy Orientation. The Forum included some of Maryland's top policymakers



and political analysts, including Lieutenant

Governor Boyd Rutherford; newly installed Commerce Secretary Kelly Schulz; and the Cato Institute's Walter Olson, who co-chairs Maryland's Redistricting Reform Commission.

Attendees gained new insights on Maryland's high-stakes debate over de-politicizing the state's decennial redistricting process, prospects for meaningful tax relief for small businesses in Maryland, and the right path for meaningful K-12 education reform.

The Institute also took aim at two flawed proposals in Maryland: one to mandate a \$15 minimum wage state-wide and another to spend billions of additional taxpayer dollars in spending on K-12 public education.

Rather than mandating wages to small businesses operating on thin margins, the Institute has published research urging an expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit to increase purchasing power for the working poor. On K-12 education, the Institute released a report in 2018 showing that Maryland is already among the nation's highest spenders on public education. In addition, massive school spending increases in the past have not produced the academic results that the teachers' union and other advocates promised.

mdpolicy.org



The Maryland Public Policy Institute's second annual Maryland Policy Orientation was held in Annapolis in January.



MASSACHUSETTS

Pioneer Institute has created a suite of free websites called MassWatch, which is dedicated to advancing the public's access to state and local data. With these tools, citizens can find out their community's public pension debt and state employee earnings. For local officials, there are tools for benchmarking against peer communities and sharing best practices with fellow local leaders. The Institute is also monitoring



the current legislative session for attempts to

undermine the *Janus* decision through legislation. While the *Janus v. AFSCME*

decision was a monumental national victory for restoring workers' First Amendment rights, Pioneer Institute cautioned in an article published by WGBH News that local public unions may look for ways to reverse the *Janus* decision at the state and local level during this legislative session.

pioneerinstitute.org



MICHIGAN

The **Mackinac Center for Public Policy** is pursuing some key court cases to clarify and reinforce the First Amendment rights that the *Janus v. AFSCME* decision restored. The Supreme Court indicated in *Janus v. AFSCME* that it was an open question whether the ruling prohibiting agency fees would apply to railway and airline employees subject to the Railway Labor Act. The Mackinac Center



filed a lawsuit on behalf of three airline workers forced to pay agency fees to a union they did not willingly join. This suit is the first of its kind post-*Janus* to seek an answer to that question. The Mackinac Center Legal Foundation is also representing three New Jersey public employees who are challenging a law that makes it harder for union members to exercise their right to choose whether to join a union. The current law grants union members only 10 days to opt out of paying union dues. This case argues that these three public employees should have the right to leave a union and cease paying dues at any time. **mackinac.org**



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MINNESOTA

In January, **Center of the American Experiment** filed an *amicus curiae* brief



in support of *Uradnik v. Inter Faculty Organization*,

a case brought by The Buckeye Institute that would be the first of its kind following the *Janus v. AFSCME* decision to approach the US Supreme Court with a challenge to exclusive representation. Under exclusive representation, unions force public-sector employees to accept the union as their sole representative in workplace matters and negotiations. The *Uradnik* case argues that exclusive representation is unconstitutional because it violates public-sector employees First Amendment rights. Center of the American Experiment garnered the signatures of 17 additional organizations, including 12 SPN state think tank affiliates. Their support is significant because *amicus curiae* briefs provide the Court with relevant information and insight that may help the Court decide whether to accept the case.

americanexperiment.org

In 2010, elected officials in Lake County, Minnesota, received \$66 million in grants and loans from the federal government. The purpose of the ARRA infrastructure grants and loans was “to increase broadband access and usage in unserved and underserved areas of the Nation.”

The **Freedom Foundation of Minnesota** has been following this municipal broadband project since its inception. Lake County has spent \$66 million from federal coffers and at least \$15 million from local taxpayers to construct and operate a network (Lake Connec-

tions). Despite dire warnings about securing network subscribers and other concerns, Lake County officials built a network the majority of county residents didn't want or need.

On December 18, 2018, this costly and failed municipal broadband network was sold for just \$8.4 million. According



to a previously arranged agreement with the federal government, the discounted sale bid will satisfy the nearly \$40 million in remaining ARRA debt owed by Lake County. Local taxpayers will feel the pain of this failed broadband project for years to come.

The lessons from Lake County are the same as those recently learned by the Minnesota communities of Monticello and Moorhead and hundreds of other failed government-owned broadband networks all across the country. There exists no municipal broadband network built and operated by government that is able to become profitable within five years. Indeed, they are wired to fail.

The Freedom Foundation has shared the Lake County broadband report with state and local Minnesota policymakers. It hopes that the failed Lake County broadband experiment will be the last attempt by government officials to build, own, and operate a broadband network.

freedomfoundation.publishpath.com



MISSISSIPPI

Empower Mississippi Foundation's

Employability and Criminal Justice Reform initiative has been widely successful in the state of Mississippi. Safely reducing the prison population, while removing barriers to employment for those released, has been a goal for the Foundation. To that end, it has launched the “Broken” series to highlight broken pieces of Mississippi's criminal justice system, how they impact people, and



how they can be fixed. The Foundation has told stories of nonviolent offenders

who are currently incarcerated and serving years for addiction related crimes. It has talked with parents, ex-offenders, and members of law enforcement who agree there is a better way to treat non-violent offenders.

More than 1,000 students, teachers, parents, and legislators gathered for the School Choice Rally on January 22. The theme was #ChoiceNow for all Mississippi students. Families of students with special needs are still waiting for the legislature to take action on laws that would expand the state's special needs education scholarship account.

Empower Mississippi is working this legislative session to ensure that barriers are removed so all Mississippians can flourish. **empowerms.org**

Mississippi Center for Public Policy announced that Ilya Shapiro will lend his voice and expertise as a senior fellow and as the chairman of the newly formed advisory board of the Mississippi Justice Institute.



Shapiro, who clerked for US Fifth Circuit Judge E. Grady Jolly in Jackson, is the director of the Robert A. Levy Center for Constitutional Studies at the Cato Institute and is regarded as one of the preeminent Constitutional scholars in the country.

"It has long been an American tradition to engage the citizenry in public discussion of the important matters of the



day," said Jon Pritchett, president and CEO of

Mississippi Center for Public Policy. "It is a vital component of a functioning republic. Today, we often refer to this as 'thought leadership,' and I can think of no more thoughtful leader in today's debates about our liberty than Ilya Shapiro."

Shapiro joins a team of contributing fellows who are dedicated to the ideas of personal, economic, and religious liberty; limited government; and market-based policy solutions. They contribute to these ideas through their research, teaching, speaking, and writing.

"As Washington is ever more polarized and paralyzed, new ideas will have to come from the states," Shapiro said. "MCP and MJI have been developing policy solutions and legal arguments that benefit Mississippians' daily lives. I look forward to helping with that necessary work."

As chair of the MJI advisory board, Shapiro will work with MJI Director Aaron Rice to provide input and expertise on the selection and legal strategy for cases in which MJI defends constitutional rights. mspolicy.org



MISSOURI

Show-Me Institute released a new short film, "Zoned," which highlights the absurdity of limiting education options based on zip code. The purpose of this film is to convince policymakers and the public to reconsider their stance on the current design of the public education system, both in Missouri and across the country. Show-Me Institute wants them to question whether this system benefits the nation's children, or if it reflects a status-quo rut that is failing American kids. Increasing school choice in Missouri is a long-standing policy priority at the Show-Me Institute, and bolstering the scores of blog posts, op-eds, and essays produced by Institute scholars, "Zoned" represents a new approach for moving the needle on this critical issue. showmeinstitute.org



NEBRASKA

Nebraska's average property tax rate is the seventh highest in the nation, and home prices have increased the sixth fastest in the country over the last decade.

But unless the eight Nebraska state senators who sit on the legislature's Revenue Committee can reach an agreement, major property tax increases may be facing many Nebraskans in the near future, as double-digit valuation hikes have hit many taxpayers recently.

To help policymakers reach a compromise, the **Platte Institute for Economic Research** polled a total of 3,000 voters



from their districts. The results show several key areas of agreement that can help the Nebraska Legislature approach the state's unresolved property tax problem.

A majority of voters in every district favored a new state law to place additional limitations on the ability of local property taxing boards to levy tax rates and valuations. Among voters, 62 percent favored additional property tax limitations, while 17 percent were opposed, and 21 percent were unsure. Unlike many states, Nebraska assesses residential and commercial property at full market value, and though there is a legal limit on tax rates, the caps are still above 2 percent of property value.

While many voters opposed cutting government spending to enable property tax reductions, a plurality of voters in every district favored one constructive way to pay for property tax cuts. About 47 percent of respondents supported eliminating exemptions in the state's sales tax base, as long as all the proceeds were used to reduce property taxes. Another 33 percent of respondents opposed ending the carveouts, while 21 percent were unsure. platteinstitute.org



NEVADA

Nevada Policy Research Institute reports that "beginning this July, contribution rates to the state Public Employees'



Retirement System will increase to 29.25 percent of salary, an all-time high. This means that for every \$10,000 spent on teacher salaries, Nevada school districts must send an additional \$2,925 to PERS." But this increase will



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not benefit current teachers; instead, the rate hike will go directly to the state's unfunded liabilities. According to NPRI, "The debt component is now so large that 45 percent of what Nevada teachers will pay to PERS next year will go towards funding other people's retirement, rather than their own, future benefit." NPRI is urging state lawmakers to reform the system and is providing insights on the pros and cons of legislation being brought forward in this legislative session. npri.org



NEW JERSEY

The **Garden State Initiative** is publishing a five-part series focused on the true size of New Jersey's expansive government, its spending in certain categories,



and the reforms needed to make it work more efficiently. The first report, "Adding It All Up: An Impartial Look at NJ's \$117

Billion Government," offers practical solutions that will maintain the quality of services offered and save \$1 billion tax dollars. In producing the report, GSI analyzed more than 1,000 government agency budgets so that residents could understand just how much it costs to deliver government services in the state. gardenstateinitiative.org



NORTH CAROLINA

To kick off the 2019 legislative session, **Civitas Institute** released "Open for Business", an academic study that highlights the significant benefits to eliminating the corporate income tax in North Carolina.

Whether it's creating 43,000 jobs, moving the state's Tax Foundation ranking to

fifth best business tax climate in the nation, or reducing opportunities for cro-



nyism, it's clear that eliminating the corporate income tax is

a decision that will help North Carolina workers and business. nccivitas.org



NEW MEXICO

In November New Mexico lurched leftward politically, placing the **Rio Grande Foundation** in a more defensive posture.



In local government the Foundation has been leading the charge against a 19 percent property tax being floated by the

Albuquerque Public Schools. As the Foundation has pointed out, the district has seen its student population decline while its property holdings and budgets have risen.

The City of Albuquerque is considering banning plastic bags and straws while also putting forth a reprise of the mandatory paid sick leave measure voters turned down in 2017.

The legislature is in session, and the Foundation will be working to lock in Governor Martinez's occupational licensing reforms, especially the ones that increase employment opportunities for ex-cons and the "consumer choice" provision which removes licensing barriers between a willing buyer and a willing seller.

The Foundation will be attempting to slow the rush toward new spending and taxes. The newly elected governor plans a year-over-year spending increase of 12.7 percent, and tax hikes

are on the table despite a \$1 billion oil-generated surplus.

On a more optimistic note, the Foundation hosted an event with Kenneth Starr, the former independent council famous for prosecuting former President Bill Clinton. Between the Mueller investigation of President Trump and the rise of the #MeToo movement, Starr and his legacy are as relevant as ever.

riograndefoundation.org



Ken Starr and Barbara Bruin, Foundation board member.



OHIO

The Buckeye Institute has filed the first significant First Amendment labor-law challenge in the US Supreme Court since the landmark June 2018 decision in *Janus v. AFSCME*. The case, *Uradnik v. Inter Faculty Organization*, calls for an immediate end to laws that force public-sector employees to accept a union's exclusive representation.



Upon filing the case, Robert Alt, a lead attorney on the case and the president and chief executive officer of The Buckeye Institute, said, "After years of being forced to speak through a union that advocated against her interests, today Professor Uradnik spoke in her own voice, and asked the Supreme Court to



protect her First Amendment rights.”

Twenty-one nationally renowned public policy organizations filed amicus briefs calling on the Supreme Court to hear the case, including the Competitive Enterprise Institute, National Association of Scholars, National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, and a coalition of 18 leading policy organizations.

Kathy Uradnik’s case was filed just hours after the Supreme Court’s landmark *Janus* decision was handed down, and is one of three cases The Buckeye Institute has filed calling on courts to end compelled exclusive representation. Buckeye is representing Professor Kathy Uradnik in Minnesota, Professor Jonathan Reisman in Maine, and Jade Thompson in Ohio. Hear why each of them have taken the courageous step to demand their First Amendment rights be respected. buckeyeinstitute.org

OKLAHOMA

The **Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs** won a hard-fought, six-week fight for donor privacy. The state’s campaign



finance regulators had proposed to label almost anyone sharing an opinion about legislation as a lobbyist. The ill-conceived and unconstitutional proposal would have forced disclosure of some donors’ personal information.

OCPA experts testified against the measure at three hearings. Targeted media outreach convinced print and television reporters to cover the issue, resulting in 45 news and editorial mentions. A social media campaign reached 108,229 Oklahomans, generating 27,614 engage-

ments and more than 3,400 petition signatures.

In the end, the regulators threw up the white flag and declared their own proposal dead. Thanks to OCPA’s campaign, the help and support of state and national allies, and effective expert testimony, this assault on donor privacy turned into a public lesson: Transparency is for government; privacy is for people. ocpathink.org

OREGON



Katie Eyre

Katie Eyre was recently elected the newest board member of **Cascade Policy Institute** in Portland. Eyre, a certified public accountant, is a tax partner at Fordham

& Co LLP in Hillsboro and is a former Oregon state legislator. The Cascade board of directors elected Eyre in late 2018 to begin her term in January 2019.

Eyre joined Oregon accounting firm Fordham & Co in 1998

where she manages the firm’s tax practice as well as providing tax consulting services for closely held business, mergers and acquisitions, and estate planning. Prior to joining Fordham & Co, Eyre was controller at a financial service company with more than \$1 billion under management, all in multi-family housing. There, she gained experience in integrating and consolidating the financial operations of multiple companies.

Eyre represented House District 29 in the Oregon House of Representatives



during the 2011–2012 Oregon Legislative Session. She has also served on the Hillsboro Planning Commission for more than 10 years, most recently as president.

Cascade President John Charles said, “Katie Eyre has a long record of community service at both the local and state levels. She also understands complicated tax-related problems. Her life experiences and leadership skills will significantly strengthen Cascade’s capacity to design innovative public policy solutions.”

Founded in 1991, Cascade Policy Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy research and educational organization that focuses on state and local issues in Oregon. Cascade’s mission is to develop and promote public policy alternatives that foster individual liberty, personal responsibility, and economic opportunity. cascadepolicy.org

PENNSYLVANIA

Pennsylvania’s prison population dropped by 1,068 individuals in 2018, according to new Department of Corrections numbers—the sharpest decline ever recorded.

This historic development is the direct result of criminal justice reforms championed by the **Commonwealth Foundation**. In 2012, CF led a bipar-



tisan coalition that prompted the unanimous passage and signing of the state’s Justice Reinvestment Initiative. These reforms have helped reduce Pennsylvania’s prison population for five consecutive years without compromising public safety.

The initiative produced almost \$97



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million in savings, a portion of which was invested in public safety efforts, including victims' services, more effective policing, probation improvement, and re-entry strategies for former inmates.

This fall, Pennsylvania took additional steps to improve its criminal justice system by making it easier for former prisoners to find work. CF strongly endorsed the "clean slate" bill that Governor Tom Wolf signed into law, which seals some criminal records, and a second bill which ended driver's license suspension for nonviolent, non-driving offenses.

CF has identified further criminal justice reforms that promise to reduce costs while positively impacting society, ensuring that the commonwealth is not overspending on an ineffective criminal justice system.

Both Governor Wolf and the General Assembly have signaled that criminal justice reform remains a top priority in 2019. CF is mobilizing lawmakers to enact a second Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI2) which contains multiple bills that expand parole for nonviolent offenders and improve sentencing. With the recent passage of the First Step Act by Congress, the most significant federal sentencing and prison reform in 30 years, momentum is building for Pennsylvania to follow suit.

commonwealthfoundation.org



RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island Center for Freedom & Prosperity continued its MyPayMy-



SayRI public awareness campaign, informing public employees of their restored constitutional rights following

the historic US Supreme Court *Janus* decision. With the 2019 legislative session underway in Rhode Island, the Center hopes to advance asset forfeiture reforms, estate tax repeal, and easing of regulatory burdens — all while working to fight off some of the most extreme progressive state-based legislation in the country: single-payer healthcare, carbon taxes, \$15 minimum-wage mandate, legalization of marijuana, and virtually limitless abortions.

rifreedom.org



SOUTH CAROLINA

Palmetto Promise Institute celebrated National School Choice Week with its partner organization, My SC Education, Lieutenant Governor Pamela Evette, and 1,500 students across the state — and to see resolutions of support in the state House and Senate.



PPI helped turn this strong show of support into legislative action. PPI is excited to see "spend smart, not more" ideas presented in its Help Our Pupils Excel (H.O.P.E.) Plan getting traction. A transformative Equal Opportunity Education Scholarship Account bill is gaining momentum in the lower chamber, with nearly half of House members signed on as co-sponsors.

And House Speaker Jay Lucas' monumental education reform bill had its first public hearing in January. Included in that bill are H.O.P.E. Plan ideas such as creating more flexible teacher pay, expanding pathways to certification, and consolidating small and shrinking school districts. An identical bill has been introduced in the Senate as well. These are just some of the key reforms that could help free up resources

trapped in bureaucracy and redirect them to the classroom.

The money South Carolina spends per student is high — relative to surrounding states — while comparative student performance is poor. These bills making their way through the Statehouse, however, would help put South Carolina students on a path toward unleashing their full potential. palmettopromise.org



TENNESSEE

As support for education choice continues to grow nationwide, **Beacon Center of Tennessee** remains focused on giving parents more options in Tennessee. Beacon recently released its two-part study on education spending, "Counting Dollars and Cents."

The first part of the study focuses on where education dollars are actually spent. It highlights how education outcomes are not just linked to education spending, especially as fewer and fewer tax dollars make it into the classroom



but are instead siphoned away on administrative costs. In the second part of the study, Beacon exam-

ines the economic impact of education savings accounts in Tennessee. It shows that giving families at all income levels true educational choice leads to better education outcomes, as well as higher financial, economic, and societal benefits. Every child is unique, and allowing parents to customize the education to their child's needs not only benefits that child but society as a whole.

Beacon has partnered with other education-focused groups in Tennessee and with parents and families across



the state to educate individuals on the benefits of education choice and, specifically, education savings accounts. On the second episode of “Over-Caffeinated,” Beacon’s Justin Owen and Mark Cunningham sat down with Tennessee Speaker of the House Glen Casada during National School Choice Week. When asked about implementing education savings accounts in Tennessee, Casada said, “This is the time to do it.” beacontn.org



TEXAS

It was standing-room only at a February hearing where the **Texas Public Policy Foundation** testified on Texas’ proposed property tax reform bill. TPPF’s research is helping Texans grasp just how profound their property tax burden is and



why reform is needed. A *Dallas Morning News* editorial cited TPPF’s

research, saying, “The Texas Public Policy Foundation estimates property taxes have risen in Texas by 212 percent from 1998 to 2017, which is twice the rate the average homeowner can afford.” To educate lawmakers on solutions for property tax reform, as well as other key issues facing Texas, TPPF launched txlegithub.com, a website featuring research, policy recommendations, talking points, and everything from taxes and education to budgets and land use. texaspolicy.com



UTAH

Utah law enforcement may soon need to obtain a search warrant before accessing individuals’ digital information stored on third-party



programs like Dropbox or Google Drive. The **Libertas Institute** helped write the proposed bill, HB 57, which may be the first of its kind. The bill is up for consideration in Utah’s legislative session.

libertasutah.org

Sutherland Institute launched its new policy guide, “Innovation in Education.” In it the Sutherland Institute calls for a willingness to innovate and for better outcomes for students as individuals. Sutherland believes that the best solutions emerge when our laws assume the competence of those on the ground closest to the issues, and then let them lead the way. More legislative changes are not necessary — rather, freedom will allow innovative and sensible changes by those working with students: parents and teachers.



At a minimum, Sutherland Institute hopes this publication serves as a resource for educators and policymakers to find new ideas, to weigh the merits of policies found therein, and to decide how the ideas might apply to students in different regions or states. Though the Institute doesn’t necessarily endorse or recommend any specific policies in this publication, it believes each idea is worth sharing. Topics within the publication include the teaching profession, competency-based education, school discipline, higher education, education choice, industry pathways, and more. Its authors include some of the brightest minds from think tanks and some of the bravest hearts in public schools. For those looking for specific ideas, this publication has a lot to offer.

Sutherland hopes that in Utah, and in other states, this work becomes a launching point for a robust conver-

sation about innovation. What if the ultimate compliment for a state were its willingness to innovate in order to meet the needs of the student?

The remainder of the policy guide, “Innovation in Education,” is available at: sutherlandinstitute.org/download.

sutherlandinstitute.org



VERMONT

The Vermont 2019 legislative session presents a number of policy challenges, including efforts to pass a \$15 minimum wage; a government-run, mandatory paid family leave program funded by a new payroll tax; and some form of a carbon tax on transportation and home heating fuels. The **Ethan Allen Institute** is educating the public about these issues, as well as preparing a comprehensive campaign reaching out to government union members regarding their rights and opportunities following the Supreme Court *Janus* ruling.

EAI’s service profiling individual legislators will take on a heightened relevance this year, as the state website has ceased providing any contact information for senators and representatives beyond their official email address and a generic phone number to the Sergeant-at-Arms office—a clear effort to isolate elected officials from their constituents.

ethanallen.org





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VIRGINIA

When the **Thomas Jefferson Institute** saw that federal tax reform was going to result in a two-year, \$1.2-billion tax increase, and the governor planned to spend it all on existing programs, the Institute knew it would need reinforcements. So, Institute President Mike Thompson brought on Senior Fellow for State and Local Tax Policy Steve Haner for the duration of the fight.

Haner, a former journalist and lobbyist for the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, also was a director of administration in the state attorney general's office and a political operative. He offers not only strategic advice but a daily physical presence in the state's capital, providing an informed authority during the General Assembly's session.



Senior Fellow for State and Local Tax Policy
Steve Haner

The move paid off. Following release of the Institute's tax plan in November, legislators and reporters regularly consulted Haner for advice in crafting their own tax legislation. Of the 15 tax proposals filed by the pre-filing deadline, 10 included elements of the Jefferson plan, and five were exact duplicates of the plan.

Haner also rapidly became the "go-to" source for reporters and commentaries from Haner and Institute President Thompson were published by every

major newspaper in the state, reaching 5.4 million Virginians.

"Steve has been an invaluable resource for the cause of limited government and tax reform," noted Thompson. "Bringing him on and expanding our reach was the smartest thing we did in this General Assembly session."

thomasjeffersoninst.org



WASHINGTON

The **Freedom Foundation**, whose presence spans Washington state, Oregon, and California, is remaining vigilant in its focus to free public employees from forced union membership and reduce



unions' influence in politics and policy. And the vigilance is

paying off. A Freedom Foundation legal victory in August forced Service Employees International Union and the state of Washington to cease unauthorized union dues deductions from 6,000 Medicaid-paid home caregivers, according to recently obtained state payroll data. A quarter of Washington caregivers are no longer having dues withheld from their pay—the highest percentage since the Supreme Court's *Harris v. Quinn* decision made dues payment optional in 2014. So far in 2019, the Foundation has been actively discussing workplace freedom issues in the media. In an op-ed published on FoxNews.com, the Freedom Foundation explained how legislation proposed in Oregon would require taxpayers to fund government union operations. Unions are backing the bill to offset membership losses experienced since *Janus v. AFSCME*. During the Los Angeles teachers strike, the Foundation's op-ed in the *Los Angeles Times* urged California to allow for pub-

lic observation of collective bargaining negotiations between public employers and government unions.

freedomfoundation.com

To celebrate National School Choice Week, **Washington Policy Center** published a new video entitled "Why Does Washington State Discriminate against Charter School Students?" The video highlights the challenges low-income and minority students (and schools) face when seeking public education options outside of a traditional public-school model. Along with education reform, WPC is looking out for citizens when it comes to taxes. WPC launched an advertising campaign as a proactive effort to combat a proposed income tax, which is being presented to taxpayers as a capital gains tax. Anticipating this proposed tax to be a key issue during the legislative session, WPC launched a marketing campaign to get this message



out to taxpayers. WPC took out a half-page ad in the *Seattle Times*, and the Center's messaging was picked up by other groups, legislators, and even the media. The marketing campaign also included radio and social media ads.

washingtonpolicy.org



WEST VIRGINIA

West Virginia does not yet have any educational choice programs, though Education Savings Accounts have recently attracted some legislative attention. As **Cardinal Institute** explains, "ESAs allow parents to withdraw their children from public district or charter schools and receive a deposit of public funds into government authorized savings accounts with restricted, but multiple, uses. Those funds—often distributed to fam-



ilies via debit card—can cover private school tuition and fees, online learning programs, private tutoring, community college costs, higher education expenses, and other approved customized learning services and materials.” In late 2018, EdChoice administered a first-of-its-kind survey of West Virginia private school leaders to glean findings that could inform potential education choice programs. The survey found that West



Virginia private schools project to have 6,300 open seats

for K-12 students. Nearly half of these schools are familiar with ESAs, and 74 percent would likely participate in general ESA program.

cardinalinstitute.com

Should West Virginia’s state government run hospitals? The **Public Policy Foundation of West Virginia** released a new report pointing out critical issues with the current state-owned hospitals. The Foundation recommends partial to full privatization as a solution to the problems of underfunding and high staff turnover. **pfwv.org**



WISCONSIN

The **Badger Institute** announced four additions to its staff, and it moved to a new office location in Milwaukee to accommodate this growth in talent. “It’s an exciting time at the Badger Institute,” said president Mike Nichols. “We’re hiring some extremely talented and experienced people to bolster our policy analysis and fundraising efforts. This team will help us have an even greater impact



on key issues that affect Wisconsin residents.” The Institute’s policy priorities for 2019 include transportation funding, criminal justice reforms, removing regulatory barriers to jobs, and a fair and competitive tax structure.

badgerinstitute.org

In late January, the **MacIver Institute** reported that the latest Bureau of Labor Statistics shows “Wisconsin has seen a decrease over the past year in the percentage of union memberships. In 2017, there were 2.8 million people in the workforce in Wisconsin. Of that 2.8 million, 230,000, or 8.3 percent, were in a union. In 2018, the number of employed people in the workforce dropped to



2.7 million. Of that, 219,000 workers were union members, or 8.1 percent.” The Institute attributes the most substantial decreases to the passage of right-to-work in 2015 and the passage of Act 10 in 2011, which gave union members the right to disaffiliate with their union if they so desired.

maciverinstitute.com

The **Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty**, on behalf of two wedding barn owners, sued the Tony Evers administration in defense of Wisconsin wedding barns. The lawsuit, filed in Dunn County Circuit Court, asks a judge to remove the cloud of uncertainty created by an opinion from the Wisconsin Department of Justice that suggested wedding barns are subject to alcohol permitting requirements.

Despite their popularity —or perhaps because of it— the wedding barn industry has been under attack from a special interest group for the last year. In November, former Attorney General Brad Schimel issued an informal opinion that

wedding barns do indeed need liquor licenses—even though they are not public places, nor do they sell alcohol.

WILL is suing on behalf of two Wisconsin wed-



ding barn owners: the Weddin’ Barn, owned by John and Julie Govin and located in Menomonie, Wisconsin, in Dunn County; and Farmview Event Barn LLC, owned by Bob and Jean Bahn and located in Berlin, Wisconsin, in Green County.

WILL’s lawsuit received significant media attention in the Badger State. It was covered by the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, Associated Press, *Wisconsin State Journal*, *Cap Times*, Wisconsin Public Radio, and numerous television and radio interviews with WILL attorney’s and clients.

As wedding season approaches, WILL hopes that a judge will provide clarity and strike a blow for economic liberty that protects the rights of Wisconsin wedding barn owners. **will-law.org**



WYOMING

Like a few other states, Wyoming is seeing proposed legislation that would introduce a corporate income tax, and by extension, a personal income tax.



Seeing how quickly the proposal was gaining traction, the **Wyoming Liberty Group** created a

video and blog post to educate policymakers and the public about the negative impact that such a law would have on the state economy. **wyliberty.org**



The **1851 Center for Constitutional Law** is spearheading efforts to overturn “ticket taxes” in Columbus and throughout Ohio. Cities tax tickets for entertainment, such as movies and concerts, and explicitly earmark all revenue for the operations of a private corporation that funds questionable public art. This violates the First Amendment and Ohio’s gift clause by taxing expression, compelling the funding of objectionable expression, and forcing taxpayers to pay directly to fund private operations. ohioconstitution.org

1889 INSTITUTE

1889 Institute has released “The Oklahoma Supreme Court’s Unchecked Abuse of Power in Attorney Regulation,” a major critique of attorney licensing in Oklahoma. It indicts all three branches of government in Oklahoma, but especially the state’s Supreme Court, for violating basic principles of American liberty and governance. This is due to the Oklahoma Supreme Court commandeering legislative and executive powers when it unilaterally declared for itself the sole power to authorize and administer the regulation of attorneys in the state. In addition to violating the separation of powers, the Court has violated the free speech rights of attorneys by requiring Bar Association membership and deputizing the Bar to enforce attorney licensing. 1889institute.org

ACTON INSTITUTE

The **Acton Institute** recently unveiled its revamped institutional podcast, “Acton Line.” Formerly known as “Radio Free Acton,” this innovative podcast features everything from interviews with scholars to cutting-edge journalism. Downloads have increased by 78 percent in the past year, placing it in the top 20 percent of podcasts worldwide. “Acton Line” is distributed through a variety of platforms, including Apple Podcasts, Google Play, iHeartRadio, SoundCloud, Spotify, Stitcher, and YouTube.

Acton is also preparing for its largest conference, Acton University, which welcomes people from more than 70 countries every year for a four-day exploration of the intellectual foundations of a free society. With courses ranging from “An Introduction to Austrian Economics” to “Was Jesus a Socialist?,” Acton University fosters robust dialogue and educational formation. With a faculty of world-renowned experts drawn from the ranks of academics and public intellectuals alike, Acton University provides an unmatched educational and networking experience for intellectual leaders throughout the United States. acton.org



American Enterprise Institute’s Morgridge Fellow in Poverty Studies, Robert Doar, has been selected to succeed Arthur Brooks as the Institute’s 12th president. Doar has dramatically expanded the Institute’s work on poverty since joining AEI in 2014, and the department is now one of AEI’s leading research areas. Known for working across the political aisle, Doar was a principal member of the AEI-Brookings Working Group on Poverty and Opportunity that issued the widely circulated report “Opportunity, Responsibility, and Security: A Consensus Plan for Reducing Poverty and Restoring the American Dream.” He was most recently a member of the AEI-Brookings-Opportunity America study group that published “Work, Skills, Community: Restoring Opportunity for the Working Class.” Both reports offer sensible steps that states can take to improve outcomes for low-income families and the working class.

AEI has also released its 2018 annual report, featuring AEI’s increasing outreach in the states. View the interactive version of the report online. aei.org



Claire Kittle Dixon and Brian Wilson joined **America’s Future Foundation’s** board of directors.

Kittle Dixon is the executive director of Talent Market. Her career has focused almost exclusively on talent development. She served as the program officer



for leadership and talent development at the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation. Before launching Talent Market, she served as the vice president and director of research of The Buckeye Institute, Ohio's free-market think tank.

Wilson is an entrepreneur and Marine Corps veteran, and works in the tech startup industry. He is a graduate of the US Naval Academy and St. John's College. He's also active in the charity world, having founded CrossFit Walter Reed, CrossFit for Hope on the National Mall, and Combat & Classics.

AFF looks forward to working with Kittle Dixon, Wilson, and the rest of the board of directors to continue to accelerate AFF's growth and impact in 2019.

americasfuture.org



Atlas Network changed its grant deadlines schedule in 2019. The new quarterly grant deadlines are: February 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15. Please keep this change in mind as you prepare your 2019 grant applications.

Organizations in the US are now eligible to participate in Atlas Network's Doing Development Differently Campaign by applying for Liberating Enterprise to Advance Prosperity Grants. These grants range from \$15,000 to \$40,000 and support projects to improve public policy and regulatory environments in communities. Projects should improve policy, particularly in relation to limits on enterprise and entrepreneurship as measured in the Doing Business Index, Economic Freedom of the World Report, and other relevant indices.

Atlas Network is offering free registration to Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner 2019 for partner staff up until March 1. This year Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner will be held November 6–7 in New York City. The Network is also hosting Regional Liberty Forums in Sri Lanka (February), Greece (May), the Dominican Republic (June), and Kenya (August).

atlasnetwork.org



Benjamin Rush Institute is expanding rapidly, announcing three new chapters this year: Stanford University School of Medicine, Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, and University of South Carolina School of Medicine. If you know a medical (MD, dentistry, or nursing) student interested in starting a BRI chapter, contact:

rebecca@benjaminrushinstitute.org

BRI continues to sponsor chapter leaders and members at healthcare policy conferences and symposiums throughout the year. BRI will be bringing up to 20 leaders to this year's FMMA Annual Conference in April, as well as many other events across the country. If you are a medical student or you know a student interested in a sponsorship to a healthcare policy conference, apply for a scholarship at: bit.ly/bri_scholarshipapp.

Thanks to free-market, free-enterprise partners and donors, BRI will celebrate its 10th year in 2019. Help BRI continue its growth to every state and medical school, into resident programs and dentistry schools. Make a donation today.

benjaminrushinstitute.org



As "America's Investigative Think Tank," **Capital Research Center** studies the organizations, foundations, and movements on the left, which operate with the specific mission of influencing the public policy process. But as the media becomes more polarized and special interests capture more and more of the airwaves, retweets, and clicks, it's increasingly difficult to separate good information from partisan propaganda. That's why the CRC's signature project, InfluenceWatch, is so important.

Since its launch in August 2017, visits to CRC's InfluenceWatch.org have skyrocketed. More than 200,000 visitors have relied on InfluenceWatch as a resource about groups and movements on the left. Some of CRC's most popular entries include Pueblo Sin Fronteras (more than 17,000 visits), Antifa (more than 10,000 visits), and Black Lives Matter (more than 9,000 visits).

This free source is available to help the public learn the truth about the people and movements shaping the lives of everyday Americans. Feel free to link to CRC's research. Send tips or corrections to influencewatch@capitalresearch.org.

capitalresearch.org



Citizens Against Government Waste

published three op-eds—on cable franchise fees, online gambling, and reforms to the budget process in the wake of the recent government shutdown. Deborah Collier, telecommunications and technology director for CAGW, wrote in Morning Consult about the problems with cable franchise fees being imposed on cable providers.

Before Super Bowl LIII, CAGW President Tom Schatz highlighted the problems with an opinion issued by the Department of Justice on online gambling that could adversely affect state lotteries and gaming operations.

Schatz also wrote an opinion piece for The Daily Caller, discussing the need for reforms to the budgeting process. The sole approach should be to solve the problem in the most practical, measurable, and cost-effective way possible. Lawmakers should find a silver lining in the recent shutdown, and use it as an opportunity to reform the budget process, save the taxpayers' money, and get the nation's fiscal house in order. cagw.org



Citizens' Council for Health Freedom

delivered citizen petitions (from 49 states) to the White House in December, and is working on a second batch to deliver to President Trump. The petition asks for an executive order (EO) to be signed by the president that

would let senior citizens voluntarily opt out of Medicare without losing their Social Security Benefits. The policy in place today denies seniors their Social Security benefits if they refuse Medicare Part A. If they dis-enroll, they must repay the benefits they have already received. This EO would undo what the Clinton Administration did without Congressional approval in 1993.

While in Washington, CCHF had discussions with high-level officials in the administration and with Congressional staff on this issue, as well as providing educational materials about free-market healthcare solutions.

To add your voice to help restore freedom to seniors, visit CCHF's website and sign the petition. cchfreedom.org



In the latest report from **EdChoice**—*The Future of K-12 Funding*—experts in education finance Marty Lueken and James Shuls envision a new, practical way for policymakers to improve how states fund K-12 public education. Not only did they identify the three core values that should drive policymakers' decisions—equity, efficiency and opportunity—but they also delved deeper into three states' K-12 funding formulas for added context. Learn more at: edchoice.org/research/the-future-of-k-12-funding. edchoice.org



Each state takes a unique, and often complex, approach to funding education. These variations are often compounded with career and technical education funding. **ExcelinEd's** newest CTE playbook, *Funding for Value: Maximizing the Impact of CTE Funding*, presents various funding models state policymakers can consider as they prioritize their state CTE program offerings and desired outcomes.

This CTE playbook offers three sections of information and guidance for state policymakers ready to create their CTE funding approach: a look at the various ways states currently structure their CTE funding, five steps states can take to seize the opportunity of Perkins V and maximize the impact of their CTE funding, and four state profiles on CTE funding for a deeper examination of what states are doing.

ExcelinEd's CTE playbook series explores strategies and processes states can use to strengthen CTE program quality and provide students with pathways to post-secondary credentialing and middle- and higher-wage career opportunities. Learn more at ExcelinEd.org/CTE-Playbook-Series. excelined.org



Utah places first in the **Fraser Institute's** latest Generosity Index, an annual review of private monetary giving based on charitable-donations data from personal income tax returns. Following perennial front-runner Utah are Maryland, Georgia, the District of Columbia, and Connecticut. As it has in previous years, this latest Generosity Index reveals a substantial "generosity gap" between the US and Canada. The highest-scoring Canadian province (Manitoba) ranks only 42nd overall out of 64 North American jurisdictions measured. In addition, 24.8 percent of American tax filers donate to charity, compared to just 20.4 percent of Canadians, and Americans give more than two times as much of their aggregate income to charity.

To stay current on all things Fraser, sign up for the institute's US newsletter at: fraserinstitute.org/subscribe.
fraserinstitute.org



The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals is weighing three cutting-edge Constitutional cases brought by the **Freedom Center of Missouri**. Dave Roland, the Freedom Center's director of litigation, argued in one case that the Fourth Amendment forbids law enforcement officers from stopping and searching vehicles when the officers have no reason to suspect any violation of the law. In the other case, Roland argued that the Fourteenth Amendment prohibits cities from forcing their residents (on pain of extraordinary fines and possible prison time) to uproot perfectly lawful plants of the owner's choosing and replace them with turf grass—a government-mandated plant that makes the clients sick.

Last November, the Eighth Circuit handed down a sharply divided opinion in which the majority held that the government has an interest in knowing who is trying to influence public policy. It also held that the First Amendment did not protect citizens from being forced to register and report to the government as lobbyists, even if those citizens were neither being paid nor giving legislators any money to buy their attention. The Freedom Center and its co-counsel at the Institute for Free Speech asked for a rehearing of this case before the entire Eighth Circuit. On January 28, the court granted that request. The Eighth Circuit grants less than one percent of requests for re-hearing, and a grant like this usually results in a victory for the party that requested the re-hearing.

mofreedom.org



The **Heartland Institute** has launched a new project called "Stopping Socialism." Led by Executive Editor and research fellow Justin Haskins and graphic designer and podcast host Donny Kendal, the project has garnered national attention via three appearances on the Fox News Channel and several more on One America News Network by Haskins. The project pre-dated the rise of avowed socialist "superstar" Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, but Haskins' consistent high-profile push-back against her statements and agenda makes for perfect timing.

Haskins, author of *Socialism is Evil*, was on *Tucker Carlson Tonight* and *Fox & Friends* recently to talk about AOC's "Green New Deal" — which he wrote about at FoxNews.com, an opinion piece that was read more than one million times in just three days. Learn more about Heartland's Stopping Socialism project, and watch a growing list of videos Heartland has produced on the subject. Go to: stoppingsocialism.com.
heartland.org



The Heritage Foundation launched its 25th anniversary Index of Economic Freedom. For twenty-five years the Index has delivered thoughtful analysis in a clear, friendly, and straight-forward format. With new resources for users and a website tailored for research and education, the Index of Economic Freedom helps readers track advancement in economic freedom, prosperity, and opportunity, and promote these ideas in their homes, schools, and communities. This year's Index revealed that Trump's free-market policies that Heritage has advocated for, lower taxes and deregulation, moved the United States from being ranked 18th in the world in 2018 to being ranked 12th in the world in 2019.

Heritage is also very engaged in the podcast world. "Heritage Explains," is a weekly podcast that takes complex policy issues and explains them in a clear and concise way. Listen to it at: heritage.org/heritage-explains.

The Heritage Foundation's Annual Resource Bank will be held May 28–May 31, 2019, in Scottsdale, Arizona. Visit www.resourcebank.org for more information. **heritage.org**



Judicial Watch announced that it signed a settlement agreement with the State of California and County of Los Angeles under which they will begin the process of removing from their voter registration rolls as many as 1.5 million inactive registered names that may be invalid. These removals are federal law. Judicial Watch also submitted a court-ordered discovery plan for the depositions of several top former government officials involved in the Clinton email scandal, including Obama administration senior officials Susan Rice, and Ben Rhodes, Jacob Sullivan, and FBI official E.W. Priestap.

In light of Speaker Pelosi's recent travel request, Judicial Watch obtained documents through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit against the Air Force detailing \$134,587.81 plus \$50,000 for an advance of funds for an "escort officer" for a total of \$184,587.81 for then-House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi's (D-CA) Congressional delegation (CODEL) to Italy and Ukraine in 2015. **judicialwatch.org**



The California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has won the **Independent Institute's** seventh California Golden Fleece® Award, given to California state or local agencies or government projects that swindle taxpayers or break the public trust.

During the past year, long lines reflected a dramatic increase in wait times for California residents, while state lawmakers and their staff have access to a secret DMV office near the Capitol that does not require queuing. News stories about employees sleeping on the job and selling fraudulent driver's licenses highlight a shocking lack of oversight and accountability. The mishandling of voter registrations, disability parking placards, and Real IDs underscore a culture of negligence at the DMV.

The report outlines that other states have implemented changes to benefit their customers, including reducing dependence on the DMV for services and looking to the private sector for technological assistance. Californians deserve a well-functioning DMV, and targeted reforms are needed.

independent.org



Independent Women's Forum highlighted National School Choice week in January by releasing a new video, publishing several op-eds, and interviewing several in the school choice movement via podcast and FB Live. IWF also promoted an infographic on "Understanding School Choice."

IWF hosted the March for All Women in response to the Women's March. Several SPN groups spoke at the rally. Hadley Heath Manning, IWF's policy director, testified in Colorado in favor of a free-market paid family leave bill. And IWF submitted comments in favor of the Department of Education's new Title IX policy change on sexual assault cases. Registration is open for IWF's next event



on February 13, in New York City, entitled "Who's Afraid of Sex Differences." iwf.org



The **Institute for Justice** returned to the US Supreme Court to defend Doug and Mary Ketchum in *Tennessee Wine and Spirits Retailers Association v. Blair*. The Ketchums moved to Tennessee to own and operate a mom-and-pop liquor store in order to earn a living and have a flexible schedule to take care of their disabled daughter. But Tennessee's anti-competitive licensing laws require liquor license applicants to be a resident of the state for at least two years. A victory in this case will mean disabling those who use government power to keep out competition, thereby protecting the economic liberty rights of all Americans.

IJ's long battle for food freedom in Chicago reached the Illinois Supreme Court. IJ senior attorney Robert Frommer argued on behalf of the city's food truck owners against Chicago's unjust vending law. The law made it illegal for food trucks to operate within 200 feet of any fixed business that serves food. It also quadrupled the fines imposed for violating the 200-foot rule, up to \$2,000. IJ awaits decisions from both courts on these two economic liberty cases. ij.org



A new book, *On the Edge: America Faces the Entitlements Cliff*, by **Institute for Policy Innovation** resident scholar Merrill Matthews and former actuary Mark Litow, reveals the path to getting millions of Americans out of underfunded programs with overpromised benefits to real financial independence.

On the Edge shows how the United States can move away from unsustainable government programs and address funding for healthcare, welfare, and retirement in a way that is financially sustainable long term. Matthews and Litow propose reforms that would allow working Americans to set aside their own money in their own accounts that invest in and grow with the economy.

"If Congress were to implement these changes, it would dramatically reduce the size of government and its role in our finances and our lives," they write. "And we would expect an economic explosion the likes of which the country has never seen, as trillions of dollars enter capital markets instead of government coffers."



Get your copy of *On the Edge: America Faces the Entitlements Cliff* at ipi.org.



In the **James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal's** most recent video, "A Higher Education Moment: Freedom of Assembly and Student Fees," policy fellow Chris West discusses how the equitable distribution of student fees to student groups is important in protecting students' right to freedom of assembly.

"It is not only a moral imperative to provide unbiased, fair funding for the freedom of assembly on public campuses, it is necessary for a free and flourishing society," says West.

To find out more about students' First Amendment rights on campus and how they can be endangered by the partial distribution of funds for student groups by public universities, please watch this important video and subscribe to the Center's YouTube channel.

jamesgmartin.center.org



THE JESSE HELMS CENTER
ESTABLISHED 1988

The **Jesse Helms Center** recently announced its 2019 Free Enterprise Leadership Challenge locations and dates. The first session is on the campus of Houston Baptist University, Houston, Texas (June 3-7). The second session is on the campus of Wingate University, Wingate, North Carolina (June 16-20). The third session is on the campus of Palm Beach Atlantic University, West Palm Beach, Florida (July 7-11). The fourth session is on the campus of Campbell University, Buies Creek, North

Carolina (July 14–18). And the final and fifth session is at Midland's Technical College, Columbia, South Carolina (July 22–26).

Since FELC launched in 1995, more than 10,000 rising high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors have participated in this intensive course in free enterprise and leadership. The life-changing program utilizes experiential learning activities focused on entrepreneurship, principled leadership, and ethical decision making while providing an understanding of our free enterprise system and our country's founding principles. For more information about FELC or to register, go to: felcexperience.org. jessehelscenter.org



With free legal aid from **National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation** staff attorneys, Minnesota police clerk Sandra Anderson and 30,000 civil servants in Ohio successfully challenged union bosses' "window period" policies to trap them in forced dues.

In the US Supreme Court's *Janus* ruling, briefed and argued by Foundation staff attorneys, the Supreme Court ruled that charging any government employee union fees as a condition of employment violates the First Amendment.

Union officials have resisted the direct challenge to their forced-fees privileges, resorting to tactics such as "window period" schemes in efforts to undermine *Janus*. With "window period" policies, union officials attempt to block civil servants from resigning their union membership and halting union dues de-

ductions from their paychecks, claiming they can only do so within a window of time—often mere days.

Foundation staff attorneys are litigating several lawsuits to challenge such tactics. Two of those lawsuits have ended in settlements halting union's "window period" policies. nrtw.org



The National Park Service experienced a lapse in funding during the recent partial government shutdown, but the administration wanted to keep parks open to the public. Stories of garbage accumulation, overflowing toilets, and landscape destruction filled the headlines, while concessionaires, nonprofits, volunteers, and state governments stepped in to help.

It's time to take politics out of the parks. **Property and Environment Research Center** believes efforts to make our parks less reliant on the whims of political funding decisions will help meet the National Park Service's mission "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

Our national parks need protection from Washington's budget fights. Learn more about ways to make national parks more self-sufficient in "Get Politics Out of Our Parks" by PERC's Shawn Regan in *Outside Magazine* or checking out "Parks Without Politics" on PERC's website. perc.org



Journalists with less than five years of experience and recent college graduates are invited to apply for The Joseph Rago Memorial Fellowship for Excellence in Journalism. The annual fellowship provides a nine-month internship with *The Wall Street Journal's* editorial team, along with a salary of approximately \$5,000 per month from **The Fund for American Studies**. The application deadline is March 15, 2019. tfas.org



In its new housing brief, **The Policy Circle** takes a look at housing policy—particularly affordable housing in America. The brief should help Policy Circle women better understand government involvement in housing, what this has meant for affordable housing programs and housing values, and the trends related to housing and the American Dream.

Policy Circles will explore various housing issues including homelessness, how housing impacts their communities, and ways to get engaged locally on these issues.



Does your organization have state-specific information to share on this topic with Policy Circle members? Learn how to share this information with Policy Circle women by contacting Nicole Cline at ncline@thepolicycircle.org.
thepolicycircle.org



In Ben Shapiro's first stop on **Young America's Foundation's** exclusive *Fred Allen Lecture Series*, he reached more than 400 students at The George Washington University.



But the morning before Shapiro's lecture conservative students in GW's YAF chapter found posters warning them to "get security," with a red X superimposed on a photo of Shapiro.

Authorities at GW dismissed the threat and refused to investigate. But GW YAF activists didn't back down. The result was another capacity audience, proving that YAF's events are in demand, and students want to hear conservative ideas on campus.

Following up on this victory, Aimee Triana, GW YAF co-president, joined *Fox & Friends* to discuss the shameful tactics of the left. She also emphasized the impact a single YAF lecture or activist can have on students: "I've been told by my peers that I'm the first conservative they've ever met."

YAF is ensuring that the rising generation is exposed to conservative ideas—often for the first time—in lecture halls and classrooms across the country.

yaf.org



Young Voices is a nonprofit dedicated to promoting the policy perspectives of libertarians and conservatives under 30 in the media. Young Voices' premier project is its Contributors Program, providing pro bono op-ed editing and media placement services to talented young writers knowledgeable in the classical liberal tradition. After a rigorous application process, accepted contributors gain access to Young Voices' copy editing and public relations capabilities. Young Voices' staff works as each contributor's personal communications team, editing and pitching his or her work for publication and TV/radio opportunities.

Young Voices is training the best rising stars in the movement to become future thought leaders for liberty. Potential applicants can learn more and apply at: young-voices.com/apply.

Have a question or recommendation? Feel free to email Executive Director Casey Given at cgiven@young-voices.com. **young-voices.com**



State Policy Network's Annual Meeting heads to Colorado Springs in 2019

State Policy Network's Annual Meeting is the premier gathering of organizations and people dedicated to promoting state policy solutions that strengthen communities and improve the lives of Americans.

This year SPN's 27th Annual Meeting will take place in Colorado Springs, CO--the location of the first SPN Annual Meeting in 1992, which drew a small group of leaders pioneering the state-based freedom movement. Today, SPN's Annual Meeting draws more than 1,300 attendees representing all 50 states.

SPN hosts this meeting to strengthen the state-focused Network by:

1. Inspiring attendees to go further—whether that be improving the operations of their organization or advancing policy change through effective leadership, education, outreach, and communications.
2. Providing an environment where policy ideas can be shared, tested, and sharpened so that state solutions that improve the lives of individuals and families can have national impact.
3. Connecting attendees with peers, mentors, philanthropic partners, and experts who can help them to grow and achieve personally and professionally.





Join us for the SPN 27th Annual Meeting

October 29–November 1, 2019
Colorado Springs, CO
The Broadmoor

This premier networking event is often referred to as
a family reunion.

But it is so much more than that.

This is iron sharpening iron.

Join us to meet the visionary leaders of the freedom movement,
connect with other like-minded philanthropists,
and be inspired by individuals and organizations dedicated to
promoting state policy solutions that improve communities nationwide.

The Network is stronger after every Annual Meeting.
Our key supporters — people like you — leave the meeting more
engaged on strategic ideas, more in sync with movement leaders,
and more aligned with a vision that will change the course of our country.

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



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