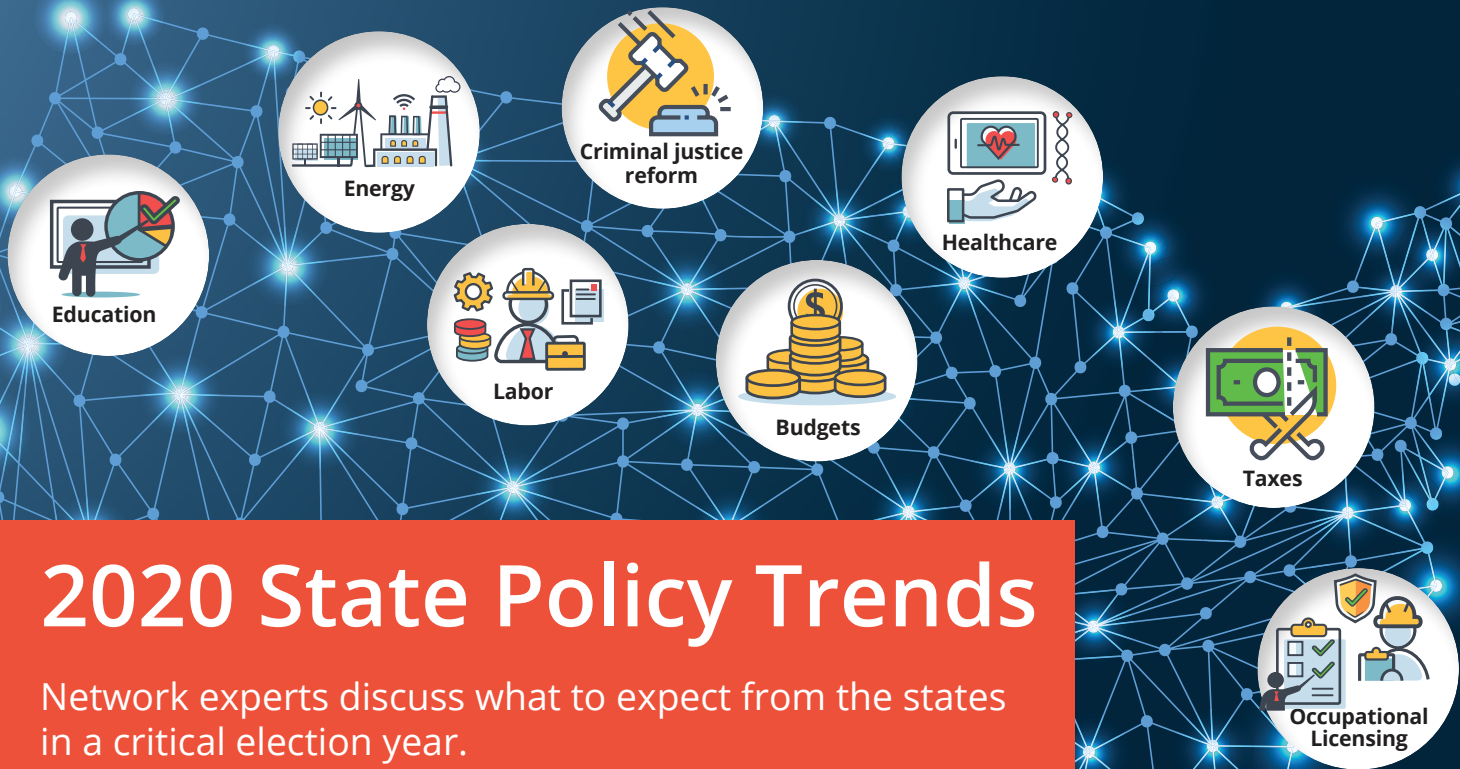




State Solutions. National Impact.

SPRING 2020



2020 State Policy Trends

Network experts discuss what to expect from the states in a critical election year.

Tracie

A MESSAGE
FROM THE
PRESIDENT

1



NETWORK
HIGHLIGHTS

2



THINK TANK
AFFILIATE
UPDATES

8



NATIONAL
ASSOCIATE
UPDATES

26



CONTACT US

1655 North Fort Myer Drive
Suite 360
Arlington, VA 22209

Phone: 703-243-1655
Fax: 703-740-0314
info@spn.org

SPN.org

 /StatePolicy

 @StatePolicy

 /company/state-policy-network

OUR VISION

State Policy Network is pursuing a vision of an America where personal freedom, innovation, opportunity, and a more peaceful society help all Americans flourish. State Policy Network was founded to support the growth of a collaborative and entrepreneurial network of state think tanks, including 64 independent state think tank affiliates and more than 90 associate partners.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

State Policy Network's mission is to work side by side with these leaders to catalyze thriving, durable freedom movements in every state, anchored with high-performing, independent think tanks.

OUR STRATEGY

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

LEADERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT TEAMS

Tracie Sharp
PRESIDENT AND CEO

Tony Woodlief
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

Teresa Brown
VICE PRESIDENT OF
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Carrie Conko
VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

Lynn Harsh
VICE PRESIDENT OF STRATEGY

Rebecca Painter
VICE PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT

Crystal Bouziden Baker
DIRECTOR OF DONOR RELATIONS

Victoria Bartolomeo
DIRECTOR OF ADVANCEMENT

Kristiana Bolzman
FOUNDATION OPERATIONS MANAGER

Sam Cosby
CORPORATE AND SPONSOR
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Michael Harden
SENIOR DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Cindy Kilduff
SENIOR DIRECTOR OF
INSTITUTIONAL GIVING

Ladan Nowrasteh
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT
COMMUNICATIONS

Christina Pajak
MANAGER OF DONOR RELATIONS

Caroline Willcox
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thomas A. Roe
FOUNDING CHAIRMAN (1927–2000)

Gaylord K. Swim
(1948–2005)

Whitney L. Ball
(1962–2015)

Theodore D. Abram
AMERICAN INSTITUTE
FOR FULL EMPLOYMENT

Lawson Bader
DONORSTRUST

Karen Buchwald Wright
ARIEL CORPORATION
AND ARIEL FOUNDATION

Carl Helstrom *(Chairman)*
THE LYNDE AND HARRY
BRADLEY FOUNDATION

John Hood
JOHN WILLIAM POPE FOUNDATION

Adam Meyerson
PHILANTHROPY ROUNDTABLE

Tracie Sharp
(President)
STATE POLICY NETWORK

Stanford D. Swim
(Secretary)
THE GFC FOUNDATION

Bridgett G. Wagner
THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Thomas Willcox
(Treasurer)
THOMAS ROE FOUNDATION

For the full SPN staff list,
visit spn.org/staff

Dear Friends,

In advance of the 2020 elections, candidates are debating issues of critical importance to the direction of the nation. In this issue of *SPN News*, Network experts preview some of the biggest debates you can expect to see coming from the states. But behind these issues is something more.

The most critical issues to voters this year are not abstract concepts or intellectual arguments. They are issues that we *feel* deeply in our own lives—things like access to quality healthcare, education, and a strong economy that creates opportunities for us to build the lives we want to live. When we get caught up in political fights at our dinner tables and on social media, we often forget that these issues have *real consequences* for people in our communities.

For example, cities with overzealous zoning requirements stop entrepreneurs in their tracks. People like Kim O'Neil of Chandler, AZ, who want to work from home so they can also take care of loved ones, are denied permits or forced to pay thousands of dollars for office space because of laws that prevent people from running businesses from their homes.

States with few K-12 school choice options preclude students from finding educational environments that fit their needs. Students like fourth grader Janiyah Davis from Philadelphia, PA, wait for years to receive a scholarship to leave low-performing schools. But because of a federal scholarship program and Pennsylvania's recent scholarship expansion thanks to the Commonwealth Foundation, she came off of the waitlist this year.

Military spouses who dedicate their lives to this country, like Brianna McKinnon of Ohio, face difficulties keeping their jobs due to burdensome licensing requirements when they move across state lines. But thanks to a recent Buckeye Institute victory, Ohio doesn't have to be one of those states anymore. Dozens of states are taking action and passing occupational licensing reforms.

Because of obscure medical licensing laws, or "certificate-of-need" requirements, hospitals across the country do not have the equipment they need to care for people with life-threatening problems—like the mother from Roanoke, VA, who lost her baby because she had the misfortune of delivering at the wrong hospital.

This is why we are so grateful that you support this thriving network of 64 think tanks in 50 states. The Network is here so that people in every state have a place they can look to that will stand for the policies that will empower individuals, break down barriers, and foster greater prosperity for generations to come.

(continued on page 7)





2020 State Policy Trends

States across the country are debating critical issues over policies that impact everyday people. These reforms often take hold in multiple states, having a national impact.

Because of your support, State Policy Network has built a Network of 64 think tanks and over 90 national organizations ready to take on critical policy reforms in 2020. These are not only issues that matter to Network members—these are issues that voters have identified as among the top factors in their election decisions both at the state and national levels.

Experts from the Network preview some of the biggest trends and opportunities for reform in the states this year.

Reducing Barriers to Job Opportunities



LAURA EBKE
SENIOR FELLOW
FOR JOB LICENSING REFORM
PLATTE INSTITUTE

States are reevaluating licensing requirements that create barriers for people pursuing careers in more than 1,000 different occupations. Within the next five years, I expect that most states will pass some form of occupational licensing reform.

tional licensing reform.

Several types of licensing reform are trending in states this year. We are seeing states, including Nebraska, look at **universal licensing recognition** like what was passed in Arizona last year. This type of reform would mean that people could keep doing the jobs they love even if they have to move across state lines.

There are many reforms going around that would make it easier for **veterans** and families of **military members** to find and keep jobs. This year, thanks to The Buckeye Institute, Ohio signed into law a bill that grants reciprocity to military spouses for their valid out-of-state licenses. This reform is a victory

Top issues State Think Tanks are Working on in 2020

- ✓ EDUCATION
- ✓ OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING
- ✓ LABOR
- ✓ TAXES
- ✓ BUDGETS
- ✓ CLIMATE AND ENERGY ISSUES

TOP: Students and school choice activists band together on the steps of the Supreme Court for the *Espinoza v. Montana* oral arguments. This case will decide if states can or cannot discriminate against religious options when offering school choice programs. Photo credit: Institute for Justice.

for people like Melonia Lillie, a registered nurse and military spouse who has moved four times and had to pay licensing fees each time to keep her job.

Many states are applying **criminal justice reform** to licensing requirements so that those reentering society can more easily find work. Last year, more than 10 states passed reforms easing licensing barriers for people with criminal records.

In 2018, Nebraska passed major reform that *The Wall Street Journal* called a “model for licensing reform.” **The Occupational Board Reform Act** requires a regular review of licensing laws so that the government can continue to assess the need for such laws. It was satisfying to see that in 2019, even though a couple of bills were introduced that would expand licensing, policymakers were actually asking how those would fit into the new review process.

The Platte Institute recently added capacity so that it can collaborate with other states interested in enacting licensing reforms that work in their states. Every state will be different in terms of their needs and political climate. Iowa, South Dakota, West Virginia, Michigan, and Mississippi have promising reforms underway this year.

We will soon get to the point where states will need to reform their laws to be competitive with others. The growth of licensing has happened because when licenses pass in one state, they can easily justify it in another. We need to turn the tide by saying that states should decrease licenses to be competitive rather than increase them.



Thanks to The Buckeye Institute's tireless efforts, Ohio now recognizes out-of-state occupational licenses for the spouses of active-duty military members. Buckeye CEO Robert Alt joined the Ohio Governor, legislative leaders, and military families on stage at the bill signing.

Education Reform



KATHERINE BATHGATE
SENIOR ADVISOR, STATE POLICY NETWORK

In the 2020 education-reform arena, I'm most excited about the *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue* case currently before the US Supreme Court. This case takes on Blaine Amendments, which have been used for years to block private school choice programs on the basis of religious discrimination. If the Institute for Justice and the state think tank staff who wrote *amicus* briefs succeed, the court's decision could open the door for private school programs in more than 30 states.



Think tanks across the country came together for SPN's Education Issue Campaign Summit, where they learned from each other and honed their strategies for 2020 policy reforms.

If the decision is favorable, there will still be work to do to pass school choice programs in those states, and state think tanks are ready and willing to take up this work.

Also exciting for 2020 is a renewed effort to advance school choice in other states. Tennessee and West Virginia will be helping steward implementation of their 2019 Education Savings Account (ESA) and charter wins, and 27 state think tanks report that school choice is their top 2020 education priority.

This year is also the first time that school report cards, as required under the Every Student Succeeds Act, must report per pupil spending at the school level in addition to already-reported student outcomes. Knowing what each school spends, and being able to compare that to their academic performance, will spur discussions about how schools are funded; highlight inequities within funding systems; and shine a light on areas where we need to improve school funding. The SPN-sponsored School Finance Working Group is looking forward to using this data to ignite important discussions about how we can and should reform school funding formulas.

Although big school finance overhauls happen infrequently, we want to be ready when the opportunities arise. For example, in

2019 **Texas passed its new school finance formula**, and Texas Public Policy Foundation (a member of the School Finance Working Group) was part of influencing those conversations.

Labor Reform



VINCENT VERNUCCIO
SENIOR ADVISOR, STATE POLICY NETWORK
SENIOR FELLOW, MACKINAC CENTER FOR
PUBLIC POLICY

This year, states are working to implement and expand upon victories won for workers in 2018 and 2019. At least 28 groups in the Network are working on labor reform.

The *Janus v. AFSCME* Supreme Court decision is far from over. **States are still working to fully implement the decision** to ensure that workers have the freedom to choose if they want to be union members and pay dues. Florida, Kansas, and Oklahoma introduced bills this year that would protect workers by making sure public employers have the necessary evidence to deduct dues from their employee's paychecks.

In early 2020, the Virginia Legislature considered a bill that would have repealed its longstanding right-to-work law. However, members of the Network pushed back, showing how these policies harm workers, job opportunities, and the state's economic competitiveness. The bill failed to pass, preserving right-to-work for the time being. However, the General Assembly passed a bill lifting the state's ban on collective bargaining and allowing localities to pass laws giving public sector unions the ability to bargain with them, threatening the future vitality of the state. Now the focus goes to the local level, educating local lawmakers about the harms of public sector collective bargaining.

In 2019, the Department of Health and Human Services ended the practice of "**dues skimming**," in which unions took dues from home healthcare providers' Medicaid support checks whether or not they chose to participate in the union. Once implemented, \$150 million per year will no longer be skimmed from home healthcare providers' support checks. The **11 affected states will need to implement and enforce the rule**, ensuring that providers keep their hard-earned money. For example, in Washington state, unions are trying to establish a third-party entity as the employer so they don't have to comply with the rule.

In 2020, state think tanks are supporting an end to **dues skimming for home childcare providers**. If successful, this will ensure **nearly \$50 million returns to workers** every year.

The Department of Labor proposed a federal rule that would require transparency in union financial data to public employees and workers across the country. The **Intermediate Bod-**

ies Rule would require intermediate public-sector unions, or unions at the regional, district, and state levels, to disclose financial and election data just like national organizations. This is an important check against corruption and will help public and private employees make an informed choice on union membership. SPN has been beating the drum on this issue for more than a year and will continue to support protection for workers.

Local Government



CHRISTINA SANDEFUR
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, GOLDWATER
INSTITUTE

Across the country, local governments are using their power to get involved in how private citizens use land, run businesses, and use sharing-economy services. Advocates of big government have learned that it's easier to cripple businesses and get these measures through on the city level with fewer people paying attention than in statehouses.

Cities are responding to new sharing innovations by imposing restrictions that threaten their viability. For example, cities are rapidly moving to outlaw or severely restrict short-term rentals like **AirBnb**. Some of the rules limit whether someone has to be home at the time of the rental, or that you can't advertise your listing. The list of cities is a mile long. We saw this happen with ridesharing a couple of years back with services like **Uber and Lyft**. Although ridesharing has mostly prevailed, cities like Phoenix have imposed a fee on drop-offs and pickups from the airport only for ridesharing vehicles. In Washington, DC, **scooters** are so highly restricted that Bird, one of the big operators, said that new regulations "would render it impossible for any provider to serve the DC community and truly advance the shared mission of reducing short car trips."

Cities are now exploring regulations that would **threaten workers who own businesses out of their homes or who telework**. Cities like Chandler, AZ are saying that you can't operate a business out of your home if you live in a residential area or if you don't have accommodations for customers like a commercial parking lot. In Nashville, it is illegal to serve a customer in one's home regardless of the business—meaning that people who unobtrusively cut hair, teach violin lessons, or tutor schoolchildren, are outlaws if they do so from home rather than a traditional office. Portland, OR allows up to eight clients to visit a home-based business each day, but only if the homeowner gets a permit and passes a home inspection. In San Francisco, it's legal to have a group of friends over to watch a movie, participate in a book club, or even sew a quilt, but it's against the law to invite the same people over for business purposes. **It is a scary trend that threatens the future of work.**

States can act to ease local government restrictions. The Goldwater Institute is working on the **Permit Freedom Act**, legislation designed to combat bureaucracy associated with local permits. It will require local governments to publish clear timelines and processes for obtaining permits and appealing permit denials. Similar legislation is also under consideration in Tennessee and Utah and could be adopted by multiple states.

Despite these threats to individual freedom, some cities are acting to ease restrictions. In 2019, Minneapolis addressed rising housing costs and gentrification by eliminating **single-family zoning**. I haven't seen so many cities consider eliminating single-family zoning as we're seeing now.

Environmental Policy



JENNIFER BUTLER
SENIOR ADVISOR,
STATE POLICY NETWORK

This year, more than 25 State Policy Network affiliates are working on, or are interested in pursuing, environmental reforms. Several states are undertaking major initiatives, given the prominence of this issue in political and public conversation.

In 2020, we can expect **environmental policies to get more aggressive than ever before**. We will see politicians use these policies to try to remake entire economies. Many are promising to increase Renewable Portfolio Standards and zero-emissions goals.

In the Northeast, states are coming together to push back against the **Transportation Climate Initiative**, which would impose a significant interstate gas tax on residents in order to lower carbon emissions. States that are engaged include Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia. Estimates indicate that the Initiative would likely increase gas prices between five and 17 cents a gallon. The money would go towards electric vehicle charging stations and mass transit rather than much-needed infrastructure and road repair.

State Policy Network brought organizations together to share stories of the plan's impact and collaborate on the best strategies in each state to address the issue.

Several state think tanks are exploring how states can address urgent challenges, such as wildfires, disease, and invasive species, in **federal forests**. Federal forests in general are not maintained as well as those run by states because they don't have the local knowledge or resources to be the best stewards of this land. We want to ensure that those in communities that lives

near the wildlife and understand the land are the ones making the decisions. We know local control is more effective than Washington, DC, coming in and saying that they know better.

States like Michigan, Arizona, and Washington are all looking to lay the groundwork to serve as models for how this can be done across the country. There is currently nobody on the ground pulling these parties together, so this is a ripe opportunity to improve the environment, give local governments greater control over their lands, and bridge between both the Left and Right.

Finally, the Network is developing a **positive vision for free-market energy and environmental policy**. We know policies built on the freedom to choose effective approaches to stewardship lead to cleaner water, air, and the environment, without enacting policies that unintentionally harm the economy and everyday people. The more prosperous a society is, the more we have to invest in preserving our environment.

Tax Reform



MICHAEL LUCCI
VICE PRESIDENT OF STATE PROJECTS,
TAX FOUNDATION

In a lot of cases, states are **responding to changes coming from the federal government** when it comes to tax policy because all states are connected to the federal tax code in some way.

States are still responding to the **2017 federal tax law** as well as the **South Dakota v. Wayfair** Supreme Court decision in 2018 that said states can impose sales taxation on the remote sales of businesses that don't have a physical presence in the state. States are also looking to fill budget gaps by **taxing new industries** that are now legalized, including marijuana and sports betting.



Organizations in the Northeast came together to voice opposition to the Transportation Climate Initiative. They argue the policy is a hidden tax on residents and does little to improve environmental conditions or infrastructure.

States that are **highly dependent on energy production for tax revenue** need to take a harder look at the sustainability of their budgets. For example, states like Wyoming and Alaska are not getting the revenue they need from energy production. Wyoming has the most competitive tax code, but its weak energy revenues are prompting potentially harmful changes to the corporate income tax. Texas serves as a good model of an energy-heavy revenue state because it has a more diversified tax portfolio than Alaska or Wyoming.

States have the opportunity to advance pro-growth tax policies similar to Utah's 2019 legislation. It took a significant step towards broadening its sales tax base and reducing the income tax rate, resulting in a net tax cut. **Utah has been a leader over the years in tax policy**, and more states will start to take notice and look to reform their codes in the same way. For example, Oklahoma is considering substantial **business and corporate reform** that would be very positive for the state, while West Virginia is considering reform to decrease the tax burden for manufacturers.

Other states are raising taxes. In 2019, Illinois doubled its gas tax and voted to pass a Constitutional amendment to enact a progressive income tax. The measure will come to the ballot this fall. Also this fall, Californians will vote on whether to dramatically increase property taxes on commercial and industrial properties, in an environment where taxes are already a problem for the business community.

While it's not the only factor, **state tax codes can influence people's moving decisions**. Residents are migrating from high-tax environments like California, Illinois, New Jersey, and New York to lower-tax states like Utah, Florida, and Texas.

Healthcare Reform



RUSS WALKER
SENIOR ADVISOR,
STATE POLICY NETWORK

Since the enactment of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the healthcare industry has been, by and large, run by the federal government and has been the focus of significant national debate. This is the year state think tanks are doubling down on state-level reforms

that demonstrate **states can and should be innovating in healthcare**.

Several state think tanks are building on 2019 healthcare wins. Georgia Public Policy Foundation, Mississippi Center for Public Policy, and the James Madison Institute (Florida) are coming together to pursue certificate-of-need and scope-of-practice reforms, which will make it easier for states to offer new or additional medical services—lowering cost while improving quality and access to care.

Although the ACA imposes a heavy regulatory burden, states have been able to test reforms via waivers. Section 1332 of the ACA lets states apply for **State Innovation Waivers** to pursue innovative strategies for providing high quality, affordable health insurance while retaining the basic protections of the ACA. Several states—among them Alaska, Colorado, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, New Jersey, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin—have waivers in place. Most allow states to create reinsurance programs that provide payments to health insurers and help offset the costs of patients with large medical claims and lower premiums.



THIS IS THE YEAR STATE
THINK TANKS ARE DOUBLING
DOWN ON STATE-LEVEL
REFORMS THAT DEMONSTRATE
STATES CAN AND SHOULD BE
INNOVATING IN HEALTHCARE.

Russ Walker
Senior Advisor,
State Policy Network

In 2019, thanks to the efforts of the Georgia Public Policy Foundation, **Georgia submitted a robust 1332 waiver** that will dramatically reshape its individual health insurance market. The waiver offers a reinsurance program, and a plan to move people from the government-run health insurance marketplace to a private marketplace that offers lower-cost plans with lower coverage for those who do not need comprehensive plans. *According to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, this is the biggest win to date in ACA reform efforts.*

States continue to challenge ACA provisions in the courts. In 2019, the US 5th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in **Texas v. Azar** that the individual mandate of the ACA is unconstitutional. The case is now headed to the Supreme Court. The SPN-sponsored Healthcare Working Group will be sharing messaging and reforms that highlight the benefits of market-based alternatives to the ACA status quo.

States have a significant opportunity to lead in **price transparency**. Polling indicates that transparency—understanding the cost of services in order to shop for the best prices and make informed decisions—is the number one healthcare issue. If we don't move quickly on a free-market approach to transparency, a top-down approach will come forward.

The Right to Transparency

A proposed US Department of Labor rule would give workers greater oversight on how public-sector unions spend their money.

Workers in over 139 public-sector unions across the country could soon have access to much-needed information about how their unions run elections and spend their money—a move that would increase **transparency, democracy, and integrity** to the benefit of union members.

The Department of Labor's proposed **"Intermediate Bodies Rule"** would revive a Bush administration law that requires public-sector unions operating at the regional, district, and state levels to disclose financial data just as private-sector unions are required to do.

The Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) was originally enacted in 1959 to address widespread corruption and other misconduct from unions. Currently, public-sector unions operating at the "intermediate" and local levels are not required to disclose financial data to the public or the members from whom they collect dues. Under LMRDA, only private-sector unions and government unions representing both private and public employees, like many national unions, are required to disclose financial information.

But unions have significantly changed how they are organized and run since the law was established. They now resemble large corporations with interrelated finances and activities. The Intermediate Bodies Rule argues that, because money flows from national organizations to intermediate-level organizations, the regulation applies to them as well.

According to the Department of Labor, "This proposed rulemaking would increase financial transparency, encourage responsible union democracy, and foster accountability of union officials."

Your generous support of State Policy Network (SPN) and this Network have made it possible for momentum to build around the issue and prompt change from the federal government to support workers across the country. It is another example of problem-solving going on in the states that has led to national impact.

Over the last several years, SPN has beat the drum about the need for greater transparency, bringing affiliate think tanks to Washington, DC, to educate policymakers on the need for reform. Think tanks across the country are submitting comments, spreading awareness, and sharing sto-

ries from workers. Substantive comments in favor of the rule outnumber comments against the rule by 4:1. Many of the comments came from current and former teachers who want better information about their union's spending and activities.

"People might be surprised to see how their money has been spent, especially with the flow of money out of New York," said Ken Girardin, a policy analyst at the Empire Center for Public Policy. "For example, if you are in the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) union, \$154 of your dues are shipped out of state."

"Workers deserve to know how unions are spending every dollar they pay in dues. This is an opportunity for federal regulators to bring them that much closer," he said.

The Intermediate Bodies Rule, if finalized, would be an important step in ensuring workers make informed decisions about union membership and requiring unions better serve their members. Currently, the proposed rule is under review while the Department of Labor solicits public interest comments from stakeholders to learn more about potential effects of the rule.

In 2019, we saw the impact of your support when Network organizations came together to end the "dues skim" through federal action. That rule, once implemented, would benefit hundreds of thousands of home healthcare providers and return up to \$150 million to providers per year. **Now, thanks to your partnership, SPN has the opportunity to bring state voices to the national stage again to fight another important battle for worker freedom.**

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

continued from page 1

This is why we fight: What we do today matters for the well-being of everyone in our country. It is not about taking sides or winning an argument; it is about helping people achieve their dreams without government getting in the way. And when we succeed in one state, other states join—leading to nationwide impact.

Thank you for all that you do,

Tracie



President & CEO



ALABAMA

ALABAMA POLICY INSTITUTE • alabamapolicy.org

In the 2020 legislative session, the **Alabama Policy Institute** is working to ensure that the state's prison problem does not become a crisis management issue resulting in an increase in taxes, but rather a carefully deliberated issue in which cost-saving measures and private partnerships are prioritized. In between the noise of the larger issues, API is pursuing another topic—occupational licensure reciprocity—and expects widespread support and, hopefully, the passage of this important economic freedom and development reform. The largest opportunity API has identified, however, is neither prisons nor occupational licensing—but education. When 2019's National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores listed Alabama in dead last, the need for education reform was spotlighted like never before. This attention might be exactly what Alabama needs to drive real and meaningful change for Alabama's children—through innovative and paradigm-breaking school choice programs.



ALASKA

ALASKA POLICY FORUM • alaskapolicyforum.org

In the 2020 legislative session, **Alaska Policy Forum** plans to advance critical education reforms. For decades, Alaska's fourth graders have been among the worst readers in the country. Many have fallen over a year behind peers in other states. APF has been on the forefront of this issue, building reform momentum by increasing awareness, educating parents and teachers, forming supporter coalitions, providing testimony, and publishing op-eds. Not long ago, Florida's fourth graders were also struggling to read proficiently. In response, Florida implemented common sense reforms—including early reading interventions, personalized lesson plans, and resources for teachers and parents. Now, fourth graders in Florida are among the best readers in the country. Following the Florida model, APF will change the future for Alaska's students—ensuring they have the reading skills needed to succeed not just in school, but throughout life.



ARIZONA

GOLDWATER INSTITUTE • goldwaterinstitute.org

The **Goldwater Institute** is working with its partners coast to coast on bills designed to eliminate barriers to work. In 2019, Arizona passed landmark legislation making it easier for licensed workers to continue working when they relocate to the state. Rather than ask trained professionals to disrupt their careers with duplicative testing and training, Arizona now recognizes out-of-state occupational licenses. Pennsylvania quickly followed Arizona's lead, passing a version of the same reform with bipartisan support. In 2020, Ohio passed licensing reciprocity for military families. Goldwater looks forward to working with partners in other states on this critical licensing reform, which benefits workers and their families, as well as employers and consumers. Additionally, Goldwater is working with partners nationwide to expand school choice options and protect the property rights of homeowners who want to rent their homes to overnight guests on platforms such as Airbnb.

ARKANSAS

ARKANSAS POLICY FOUNDATION • arkansaspolicyfoundation.org

In 2020, the **Arkansas Policy Foundation** will focus on fiscal policy, education reform, and occupational licensing. On July 1, 2020, the top Arkansas income tax rate will be reduced to 5.9 percent—a recommendation the Foundation has advanced since its founding in 1995. The Foundation will focus research efforts on identifying savings and other fiscal policies to reduce the rate to 4.9 percent, close to the regional average. Some policies originated with the Efficiency Project, a Foundation initiative conducted in cooperation with Governor Asa Hutchinson's administration. The Foundation will continue to educate parents, students, and policymakers about the growing market of charter, homeschool, and private school students. Additionally, the Foundation will provide research and recommendations to the Arkansas Legislature's task force charged with reviewing licensing policies prior to the 2021 session.



CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA POLICY CENTER | californiapolicycenter.org

In 2020, **California Policy Center** is working to address crony capitalism, educate public employees about their workplace rights, and help parents make better decisions regarding their children's education. Crony capitalism is a system where government grants favors to special interests. CPC collaborated with the Claremont Institute to educate local officials in Orange County on how they can avoid engaging in cronyism. For decades, government unions have pushed policies that harm families and communities. These unions have stripped away individual choice, raised the cost of living, and engaged in activities that bankrupted cities and school districts. Instead of getting involved with state propositions and other ballot initiatives, CPC will address the source of the problem: Government union funding. By educating workers about their rights, many workers will choose to stop paying union dues, and unions will feel the financial effects. Additionally, CPC is continuing its partnership with the Mackinac Center to educate public employees about their rights post-*Janus*. By using digital advertising and a robust grassroots program, CPC has helped decrease the number of California public employees that pay union dues.



FREEDOM FOUNDATION OF CALIFORNIA • freedomfoundation.com

California teachers unions are pushing a ballot initiative campaign called the California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act. The ballot measure's stated purpose is to repeal Prop. 13, the final legal hurdle preventing localities from increasing property rates beyond the statewide mandated limit. If passed, the Act would siphon an estimated \$12 billion annually from property owners and small businesses to unions and their friends in local government and on school boards. The California Teachers Association (CTA) is pushing for passage of the Act under the guise of "funding education." In reality, CTA needs these property tax dollars after the **Freedom Foundation's** successful outreach efforts to educate teachers on their right to stop paying union dues. Freedom Foundation has sent hundreds of thousands of emails and mail to teachers, informing them of their Constitutional rights under *Janus* not to fund unions. This education is critical because it empowers workers to exercise their rights and leaves unions with less money to spend on special-interest projects like ballot initiatives.



Educating Americans about the pitfalls of government-run healthcare tops the **Pacific Research Institute's** 2020 legislative agenda. As Governor Gavin Newsom's Healthy California for All Commission begins its push toward single-payer healthcare, PRI President and CEO Sally Pipes released her new book, *False Premise, False Promise: The Disastrous Reality of Medicare for All*. PRI is also countering the governor's plan for a new California prescription drug label. Through a new issue brief and a recent interview on PRI's "Next Round" podcast, Senior Fellow Wayne Winegarden, PhD, argued that price caps and more government controls won't help patients or lower costs. Other items on PRI's agenda include showing how school choice helps students with special needs, making the case for entrepreneurship and its role in growing the gig economy, and fostering innovation. PRI will also address California's ongoing homelessness crisis. An upcoming book will evaluate government anti-homelessness efforts and explore private-sector reforms to address the roots of the problem and mitigate its cascading effects.

COLORADO

Career and technical education (CTE) provides students with specialized, career-oriented skills. Some studies indicate that students enrolled in CTE programs demonstrate higher graduation rates than their peers in more traditional educational tracks. In 2020, the **Independence Institute's** Education Policy Center will publish a paper that explores career and technical education, providing the public, school districts, and state legislators with information on the current state of CTE programs in Colorado; the policy landscape surrounding technical and career education; and the issues facing such programs. Independence wishes to ascertain what makes Colorado CTE programs successful and what barriers may limit further success—or hinder it altogether.

CONNECTICUT

After Connecticut's 2019 legislative session, legislators regularly pushed for a vote on tolls, and even went as far as planning a public hearing and a vote just days before the 2020 regular session started in February. After pushback from the **Yankee Institute For Public Policy**, No Tolls CT—a grassroots movement committed to stopping tolls from coming to Connecticut—and the public, the vote on tolls was cancelled once again. Furthermore, Yankee is armed to fight harmful legislation anticipated in 2020, including bills that limit free speech through donor disclosure laws. Yankee believes that transparency is for government and privacy is for the people, and Yankee will focus on this conviction throughout 2020. In January, Yankee released "Ideas to Make the Connecticut Legislative Process More Open and Transparent," a study that gained traction with lawmakers and the media. Yankee will continue to educate Connecticut residents about why they pay some of the highest taxes in the country and what can be done to change that.



DELAWARE

CAESAR RODNEY INSTITUTE • caesarrodney.org

The **Caesar Rodney Institute** is launching two new initiatives in 2020. First, CRI will lead the charge to repeal Delaware's certificate-of-need law, a policy that requires healthcare providers to first prove to federal or state regulatory agencies that the community needs the planned services. The law is up for sunset review this legislative session—an evaluation of the need for the law's continued existence. CRI sponsored the Competitive Healthcare Fund for those who see the need to focus on repeal of this law and other healthcare initiatives, including price transparency and occupational licensing reforms. Second, CRI will focus on Delaware's continued failure to provide an adequate K-12 education. CRI is sponsoring a new fund specifically for the communication effort on an overhaul of the state's education from top to bottom. If a solution is found, students, parents, and the economy of Delaware will benefit.



FLORIDA

JAMES MADISON INSTITUTE • jamesmadison.org

In January 2020, the **James Madison Institute** released "20 for 20: 20 Ways We Will Protect Florida Prosperity in 2020." The brief outlines JMI's list of resolutions to advance liberty in Florida. Some of the items on the list: Promote job opportunity through occupational licensing reform; address challenges in Florida's criminal justice system via effective sentencing reform; advance the principle that "funding follows the student" in both K-12 and post-secondary education; oppose encroachment by local governments into areas that are best served by private markets; and expand patient-centered, market-based healthcare reforms to address Florida's healthcare shortages. Florida continues to be an aggressive state in advancing conservative governing principles. Armed with these principles and encouraged by the boldness of Florida's Legislature, JMI is optimistic about the future that its 20 big ideas for 2020 could shape.



GEORGIA

GEORGIA CENTER FOR OPPORTUNITY • georgiaopportunity.org

Georgia Center for Opportunity is working behind the scenes to get Georgia legislators up to speed on how their policies directly impact those in poverty in Georgia's communities. In January, GCO hosted national and state leaders in a discussion on ways to reform Georgia's adoption and foster system. Foster care reform is a key goal of the governor and legislators this session and GCO is leading the discussion to expand tax credits and eligibility. Throughout the legislative session, GCO is also hosting at least one monthly event for legislators to discuss subjects like paid family leave, civil asset forfeiture, and improving Georgia's standing on international rankings of prosperity. On paid family leave, GCO's goal is to offer solutions designed to promote family stability while reducing the negative impact on local businesses and communities through burdensome laws. Finally, GCO will distribute a handbook outlining policy impacts on poverty to each legislator. This will lay the groundwork for legislative discussion throughout 2020.





GEORGIA PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION • georgiapolicy.org

In the 2020 legislative session, Georgia will face a budget struggle: How can state elected officials create a budget that delivers the governor's promised teacher pay increase and the General Assembly's promised tax cut? As **Georgia Public Policy Foundation** President Kyle Wingfield pointed out in his weekly column, legislators have no reason to set aside the tax rate cut they promised. The Foundation is working to educate Georgians on why the state is facing budget cuts in the first place: Spending priorities. In January, the Foundation marked its 29th anniversary with an Anniversary Celebration and Freedom Award Dinner at Atlanta's Fox Theatre, with keynote speaker John A. Allison of the Cato Institute. About 300 supporters attended, and the Foundation presented the prestigious Freedom Award to Sunny Park. Park, a former Foundation board member, is an immigrant, businessman, philanthropist, mentor, and motivational speaker who focuses on promoting civic engagement of immigrants in the community and on mentoring at-risk youth.

HAWAII



GRASSROOT INSTITUTE OF HAWAII • grassrootinstitute.org

The Hawaii Legislature meets from January to May and considers an avalanche of new tax hikes, fees, and other proposals in a compressed time frame. During the 2020 session, **Grassroot Institute of Hawaii** has prioritized bringing reason and fiscal accountability to legislative discussions. In the wake of the recent announcement that the state faces \$88 billion in unfunded liabilities by 2030, Grassroot hopes to persuade lawmakers to reconsider expensive new programs and expenditures. In addition, Grassroot will focus on promoting policies to help reduce the cost of living in the nation's most expensive state. Grassroot will serve as a voice to speak out against taxes, fees, regulations, minimum wage proposals, and occupational licensing laws that limit Hawaiians' opportunities to live prosperous, happy lives.

IDAHO



IDAHO FREEDOM FOUNDATION • idahofreedom.org

During the 2020 legislative session, the **Idaho Freedom Foundation** will focus on three initiatives that will make a dramatic difference in Idahoans' day-to-day lives: Major tax relief, occupational licensing, and education. IFF regularly chronicles annual property tax hikes of 30 to 40 percent, along with stories of struggling families about to be evicted from their homes due to skyrocketing property taxes. IFF drafted several bills to help these Idahoans and championed an immediate property tax freeze. If enacted, these bills will enable Idahoans to keep more than \$113 million in their pockets in 2021 alone. IFF is also focusing on eliminating occupational license barriers that thwart people with conviction histories from getting a potentially life-changing job. IFF testimony and research helped inform proposed legislation to end vague "morality" requirements for licenses. Finally, to foster better education options, IFF's research has inspired proposals to redirect higher education spending from university bureaucracy to university academics, and foster accountability in K-12 spending.

ILLINOIS

ILLINOIS POLICY INSTITUTE • illinoispolicy.org

Illinois taxpayers suffer from uncontrolled state spending and political corruption, so the **Illinois Policy Institute** is spearheading two legislative efforts: Fiscal solutions and ethics reform. Illinoisans are moving out of the state because Illinois' taxes are among the nation's highest. IPI's policy solutions aim to change how the Illinois General Assembly operates by forcing lawmakers to spend only what taxpayers can afford. During the 2020 legislative session, IPI is championing a state spending cap and extensive pension reforms. IPI is the only Illinois organization researching and reporting on fiscally responsible solutions to these issues. IPI is also promoting anti-corruption reforms. In fact, IPI's research team determined Illinois corruption costs more than \$550 million in lost economic opportunity per year. In response, IPI is working to restrict lawmakers from voting on issues that are conflicts of interest and to prohibit legislators from lobbying directly after leaving office.



IOWA

TAX EDUCATION FOUNDATION OF IOWA • tefiowa.org

During the 2020 legislative session, **Tax Education Foundation of Iowa** is focusing on occupational licensing reform and creating a pro-growth tax code for Iowa, both of which will create and encourage opportunity and economic growth. TEF Iowa worked with The Buckeye Institute to publish "A Better Path Forward for Iowa Tax Reform," a report that demonstrates how Iowa could create a more competitive economic climate and have greater economic growth by lowering income taxes. TEF Iowa is shaping Iowa's tax debate by promoting the study on radio, on televised public affairs programs, and in op-eds. In January 2020, John Mozena, president of the Center for Economic Accountability, Dean Stansel, senior research fellow at the O'Neil Center for Global Markets and Freedom, and Patrick Tuohy, director of policy at the Better Cities Project, all contributed essays on the need for a free-market approach to economic development. Additionally, in this presidential election year, TEF Iowa is working to remind Iowans about the importance of the Electoral College, an institution under attack. Through op-eds and media appearances across the state, TEF Iowa discussed the need to protect and defend the Electoral College.



KANSAS

KANSAS POLICY INSTITUTE • kansaspolicy.org

This legislative session, **Kansas Policy Institute** is demanding that legislators, as well as city and county officials, be honest about property tax increases. KPI launched a campaign exposing the behind-closed-doors process that politicians use to raise property taxes while claiming they are "holding the line." Local officials only refer to a change in the mill rate, but Kansas property owners are likely paying more in property taxes because of valuation increases, not mill rates. The result: An honesty gap. KPI's campaign exposes the honesty gap, targeting the Kansas Statehouse and educating citizens through a grassroots educational campaign. KPI is demonstrating to legislators that this gap should be closed by requiring politicians to vote on the whole package, not just the mill rates. In addition to property taxes, KPI is also focusing on worker freedom reforms, operating a media campaign that educates voters and legislators about the significance of the 2018 *Janus v. AFSCME* US Supreme Court decision.



KENTUCKY



BLUEGRASS INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY SOLUTIONS • bipps.org

The **Bluegrass Institute for Public Policy Solutions** partnered with ousted Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) members to file a federal lawsuit challenging Governor Andy Beshear's executive order that reorganized the body. Teachers unions endorsed Beshear in his campaign against incumbent Matt Bevin after Beshear promised to get rid of the pro-school choice board members and, by proxy, Commissioner Wayne Lewis, PhD, who resigned after Beshear's new appointees were seated. Lewis upset unions by advocating for school choice and challenging the lack of accountability and improvement, particularly in Louisville's Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), Kentucky's largest district. Under Lewis' leadership, Jefferson County Public Schools were placed on probation because they did not address repeated incidences of abuse involving special needs students and because they did not close the widening achievement gap and turn around longtime failing schools. Bluegrass and the ousted KBE members are urging legislators during this year's General Assembly to create a buffer protecting the commonwealth's public education system from the brutalities of partisan politics.



PEGASUS INSTITUTE • pegasuskentucky.org

This legislative session, the **Pegasus Institute** is focused on three major issues—local tax reform, reducing jail crowding, and creating a permanent funding mechanism for Jefferson County Charter Schools. In 2018, Kentucky began reforming its tax code. Those reforms—created by Pegasus Institute researchers—reduced personal and corporate income tax rates and focused on making the state tax structure more competitive. The next step in this process is doing the same with local governments, who currently rely too heavily on production side taxes to raise revenue. With an eye towards public safety, Pegasus will also work to safely reduce county jail populations by reducing the pipeline into jail and reducing recidivism. Pegasus research has driven much of this conversation for the past two years and will continue to do so this session. Finally, Kentucky remains one of only a handful of states without charter schools. Though Kentucky passed a charter law in 2017, that law lacked a permanent funding mechanism. Pegasus is committed to changing that this session.

LOUISIANA



PELICAN INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • pelicaninstitute.org

The **Pelican Institute for Public Policy** is preparing for a robust legislative agenda this year. With the 2020 regular legislative session beginning on March 9, 2020, legal reform is leading the charge among several other major policy reforms being promoted by the organization. Louisiana's legal climate remains one of the worst in the nation, and this problem is leading to a loss of approximately 15,000 jobs and \$44 to \$113 million per year in economic activity for the state. Aside from legal reform, the Pelican Institute's other key legislative priorities for the upcoming session include education transparency, occupational licensing reform, expenditure limit cap on state spending, criminal justice reforms to ensure newly returning citizens are "Reentry Ready," crowd out reporting for Medicaid expansion, rural broadband access, regulatory reform, and workers' rights, among others.

MAINE

MAINE POLICY INSTITUTE • mainepolicy.org

One of the most important issues facing Maine in 2020 is the Transportation Climate Initiative (TCI), a regional cap-and-trade program that would impose a five to 17 cent-per-gallon tax on gas and diesel. The **Maine Policy Institute** is circulating petitions to concerned citizens and urging them to contact Governor Mills to oppose the TCI. Maine Policy is also circulating model language to lawmakers. Another priority for Maine Policy is correcting a regulatory issue that brought a local business close to ceasing operations. In 2019, Maine's Secretary of State sent a letter to all municipalities, informing them that town officials were no longer allowed to register, title, or assign vehicle identification numbers for tiny mobile homes. Only one Maine company, Tiny Homes of Maine, produces these units. State government is clearly intervening to protect special interests and prevent competition in the manufactured housing sector. Maine Policy is working to pass a bill that would allow people to title a tiny house as a trailer to ensure Tiny Homes of Maine can keep its doors open and continue to meet consumer demand for their product.



MASSACHUSETTS

PIONEER INSTITUTE • pioneerinstitute.org

The **Pioneer Institute** is preparing for the US Supreme Court's decision in *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue*, a case that will decide whether or not states can exclude religious schools from school choice programs. In the event of a favorable ruling, Pioneer will ensure that Massachusetts families can take advantage of increased opportunities for school choice access. In addition, Pioneer is resuming its campaign against a legislatively driven graduated income tax that would undo Massachusetts' constitutional provision for a flat tax. Lastly, Pioneer is working to ensure renewal of an oversight board for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), Boston's public transit system. Pioneer has long called for a review of the operations and finances of the troubled system.



PIONEER INSTITUTE
PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH

MICHIGAN

MACKINAC CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • mackinac.org

The **Mackinac Center for Public Policy** has a range of 2020 priorities. It will work to eliminate corporate handouts and other frivolous spending that benefit a select few at the expense of Michigan taxpayers; continue to protect workers' rights to disassociate from a union; and work to reduce unnecessary regulation. In addition, Mackinac will push to ensure each student has access to quality education by continuing to promote policies that give more options to parents and put competitive pressure on schools. As healthcare costs continue to soar, Mackinac will focus on policies to help contain costs by putting guardrails on Michigan's expensive healthcare programs. Mackinac will also push for responsible energy policies that reduce the cost of electricity for all consumers. Finally, Mackinac will promote criminal justice reforms that reduce overcriminalization, treat all former offenders equally, and reduce costs for taxpayers. 2020 provides a unique opportunity for bipartisan collaboration, and Mackinac looks forward to reporting this session's hard-won successes.





MINNESOTA

CENTER OF THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT • americanexperiment.org

Center of the American Experiment kicked off the legislative session with the debut of its State Government Scandal Tracker, a tool to track various reports of wasteful spending, corruption, and mismanagement at Minnesota's agencies. The Scandal Tracker complements American Experiment's recent *Thinking Minnesota* magazine cover story, "The Masquerade of Good Government," which documented government scandals from 2013 to present, challenging the view that Minnesota is generally better run than other states. Estate tax repeal is another major 2020 initiative. American Experiment is taking a humorous approach to this morbid topic, placing advertisements with the phrase "Minnesota Taxes Dead People" and artwork that replaces a corpse's toe tag with a \$100 bill. The ads drive Minnesotans to a microsite that explains why the tax is unfair and to an economic analysis that shows the death tax drives people away from Minnesota.



FREEDOM FOUNDATION OF MINNESOTA • freedomfoundation.publishpath.com

In January, the **Freedom Foundation of Minnesota** kicked off its 2020 "Ask the Experts" series for legislators. These 90-minute policy discussions feature a nationally recognized expert who, after a brief presentation on a topic, allows legislators to ask questions and share their concerns on some of the toughest issues facing Minnesota. These wide-ranging policy discussions focus on helping legislators identify market-based policy solutions. Topics include: How to encourage affordable housing construction; what drives consumer cost of prescription drugs; what role the state should play in making insulin more affordable; and the Electoral College. FFM CEO Annette Meeks notes that these issue-based discussions are an excellent forum for legislators to come together and learn more about factors contributing to certain policy problems and how Minnesota can become a catalyst for change. FFM is planning five additional "Ask the Expert" forums in 2020.

MISSISSIPPI

EMPOWER MISSISSIPPI • empowerms.org

In the 2020 legislative session, **Empower Mississippi** is focused on two issues: Saving the Education Scholarship Accounts (ESA) program and criminal justice reforms that get people out of unproductive incarceration and into productive work. Through the #SaveOurESA campaign, Empower Mississippi identified a number of families to attend the national school choice celebration held at the State Capitol in January. These families walked the halls of the Capitol asking their legislators to vote to save the ESA program, which is at risk of expiring in June 2020 if lawmakers do not take action. Empower Mississippi also launched Broken, a campaign highlighting the broken pieces of Mississippi's criminal justice system and how they can be fixed. Mississippi has the third highest incarceration rate in the world. The need for criminal justice reform in Mississippi is critical, as recent highly publicized riots, prisoner deaths, and poor prison conditions attest. Empower is sharing much-needed solutions using two videos to educate key audiences about the system's problems and opportunities to address them.



MISSISSIPPI CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • mspolicy.org

The **Mississippi Center for Public Policy** will be busy encouraging policies that grow the economy and expand opportunities for all Mississippians in 2020. During the legislative session, MCPP will promote a model to stem the growing tide of regulations in Mississippi: A one-in, two-out policy that removes two regulations for every new regulation that is adopted. Additionally, MCPP will fight for universal recognition in occupational licensing and a “permissionless innovation” policy that allows the state’s entrepreneurs to innovate freely with new technologies and business models. MCPP will also work to reform certificate-of-need laws. Currently, these laws require healthcare providers to get permission from the state before expanding or opening a new healthcare facility. These laws raise healthcare costs and limit options for consumers, so MCPP will champion reforms to remove these constraints on healthcare providers, which, in turn, will increase healthcare access and affordability for Mississippians. With Mississippi’s Education Scholarship Accounts (ESA) program set to expire in 2020, MCPP will encourage lawmakers to renew the program since it allows parents to customize their child’s education based on their unique needs. Finally, MCPP will work to abolish civil asset forfeiture, the process that allows the government to confiscate property on the grounds that it is connected to a crime—even if no conviction has been made.



MISSISSIPPI CENTER FOR
PUBLIC POLICY

MISSOURI

SHOW-ME INSTITUTE • showmeinstitute.org

The **Show-Me Institute** will launch an informational Medicaid campaign during the 2020 legislative session. Medicaid expansion will likely be a ballot initiative in Missouri this year, and both the public and elected officials need to understand the true cost of expansion and its likely consequences. In 2020, the Institute will also focus on transportation funding. The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) is experiencing a funding crunch, and there is debate about the best way to address this problem. The Institute is advocating user fees in the form of tolling or increased gas taxes. The low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) is another hot 2020 issue. Missouri halted its match of the federal program a few years ago, but there are persistent efforts to restart the program. Research consistently demonstrates that the LIHTC does not increase the supply of low-income housing, despite being prohibitively expensive. When the issue resurfaces in this legislative session, the Institute will be the leading voice in opposing the revival of the LIHTC.



NEBRASKA

PLATTE INSTITUTE • platteinstitute.org

In 2019, the **Platte Institute** successfully opposed more than \$750 million in tax increases before the Nebraska Legislature’s Revenue Committee, where every proposal to hike income taxes, sales taxes, or excise taxes is guaranteed a hearing. In 2020, legislators have received the message that the Platte Institute is watching. Of nearly 500 new bills introduced in the current session, there are no major tax increase proposals. Instead, numerous bills to cut property, income, and sales taxes were introduced. Platte provided testimony in support of a property tax reform package that aligns closely with recommendations from Platte’s report, “Get Real About Property Taxes.” The plan calls for making a 15-20 percent cut in school district property tax assessments and imposes stronger caps on spending and tax rates. In exchange, the plan requires states to provide funds to help balance local school budgets without raising taxes. Thanks to the Platte Institute’s members supporting these efforts, ineffective “tax relief” programs based on spending and subsidies are increasingly being replaced with proposals for fundamental tax reform.



NEVADA



NEVADA POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE • npri.org

In 2019, the **Nevada Policy Research Institute** spearheaded a broad and diverse coalition to strengthen the state's transparency laws. The coalition included everyone from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to virtually all media organizations in the state—and those efforts resulted in policy changes that have had substantive impact on government transparency. That success resulted in an even larger group of supporters, partners and advocates asking to be a part of the coalition. And so, an independent organization, the Nevada for Open Government Coalition, was formed as a permanent transparency-focused non-profit, with Nevada Policy named as a permanent board member. Between now and the 2021 legislative session, Nevada Policy is building on this success. Nevada Policy is strategically partnering with groups from all over the political spectrum on key issues, to continue to move sound policy solutions forward—regardless of what the state's political landscape looks like in the next session.

NEW JERSEY



GARDEN STATE INITIATIVE • gardenstateinitiative.org

In late 2019, the **Garden State Initiative** partnered with Fairleigh Dickinson University to conduct a poll asking residents who were considering leaving New Jersey about issues driving their decision. More than 40 percent of these residents said property taxes and the state's unaffordability were the key drivers. The results garnered GSI intense media interest and focused discussion on taxation and affordability issues, along with outmigration. In 2020, GSI will continue to highlight the impact that high taxation and spending have on New Jersey, and GSI will propose solutions to restore the state as a beacon of opportunity. In his State of the State Address, Governor Murphy repeated demands for an increase in income and sales taxes after the Legislature denied both proposals in 2019. After the governor's speech, GSI highlighted his unwillingness to address the state's structural issues and noted that the state's large revenue collections present an opportunity to cut taxes.

NEW MEXICO



RIO GRANDE FOUNDATION • riograndefoundation.org

New Mexico has a massive budget surplus driven by oil and gas revenues. Rather than growing state government, the **Rio Grande Foundation** would like to see tax reform or tax cuts this session. The Foundation compared New Mexico's spending levels and economic performance with neighboring Colorado and its Taxpayers Bill of Rights (TABOR), a constitutional amendment that prohibits state and local governments from raising taxes without voter approval. Findings show that Colorado has benefited greatly from its spending and tax limitation. The Foundation worked with a legislator to introduce TABOR during New Mexico's 2020 legislative session. The Foundation is also prioritizing reform of the state's dysfunctional gross receipts tax, especially the tax on contractors, who pay tax rates of up to nine percent in parts of New Mexico. Additionally, the Foundation is working on state pension reform and educating policymakers about the fallacy of "free" college.

NEW YORK

EMPIRE CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • empirecenter.org

In 2020, the **Empire Center for Public Policy** will continue efforts to encourage fiscally sound policies in the New York Legislature. This endeavor includes proposing ways to curb Medicaid spending, fighting expansion of the Excelsior scholarship (a tuition-free college program), and warning against the dangers of a prevailing wage. The Center will also continue to keep government agencies accountable with SeeThroughNY.net, New York's go-to government transparency website. Empire Center's newest project, DeregulateNY, will highlight regulations that artificially drive up costs and make it harder for new firms to enter a given industry or market.



NORTH CAROLINA

CIVITAS INSTITUTE • nccivitas.org

North Carolina is a battleground state in the 2020 presidential election, leading to interest from Democratic presidential hopefuls, national media, and interest groups. **Civitas Institute** polls will provide insights to both state and national media as they seek to understand the political climate. One of Civitas' primary objectives is to foster a fair, business-friendly tax environment in North Carolina. The most effective way to accomplish this goal is by repealing the state's corporate income tax. Civitas will also give attention to agriculture and energy policy, as both of these areas continue to be significant sources of economic activity in North Carolina and the nation. Education is another pivotal policy priority since it is an opportunity to capture the moveable middle as the demand for school choice continues to grow.



JOHN LOCKE FOUNDATION • johnlocke.org

In the 2020 legislative session, the **John Locke Foundation** will remind lawmakers of the ideas that launched North Carolina's economic renaissance and the potential they have to eliminate barriers and unleash opportunities. JLF will urge lawmakers to adopt JLF's recommendations for criminal law reform, empowering them to take critical next steps on overcriminalization. JLF will also press for constitutional protection that shields property owners from eminent domain abuse, and encourage an amendment to ensure rules dictate how election districts are drawn, no matter which political party draws them. To guide lawmakers on a freedom-forward path, JLF has released a comprehensive resource guide, Policy Solutions 2020, with background, key facts, and action items for reforms in budget and taxation, regulation and law, education, and healthcare. These exciting opportunities coincide with the arrival of JLF's new CEO, Amy O. Cooke, who previously served as executive vice president at Colorado's Independence Institute.



OHIO

THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE • buckeyeinstitute.org

The Buckeye Institute, which filed the first significant post-*Janus* challenge with the US Supreme Court, continues its fight for worker freedom through the courts. Buckeye's appeal to the US Supreme Court in *Reisman v. AFUM*, along with its two other cases—*Uradnik v. IFO* and *Thompson v. MEA*—have raised the question: If it violates the First Amendment to compel financial support for union advocacy, how can states require these same public employees to speak through unions that many of them choose not to join? Another group of professionals has suffered as a result of entrenched interests: Many seeking to work and to advance their careers have faced expensive, time-consuming obstacles as a result of a restrictive occupational licensing regime. Thanks to The Buckeye Institute's tireless ef-



forts, Ohio now recognizes out-of-state occupational licenses for the spouses of active-duty military men and women. In January, the Ohio governor signed Senate Bill 7, legislation that allows military spouses who move to Ohio to continue working in their profession of choice—without being forced to comply with layers of bureaucratic red tape.



FREEDOM FOUNDATION OF OHIO • freedomfoundation.com

In October 2019 **Freedom Foundation** opened operations in Ohio and immediately began an aggressive outreach campaign to bring awareness of workers' rights to public employees and state lawmakers. Working with members of the Ohio House and Senate, the Freedom Foundation is designing a legislative strategy simultaneous to Freedom Foundation's statewide outreach campaign launch. The legislation will provide an opportunity for public employees around the state to inform lawmakers of the corruption, deception, and intimidation they experienced at the hands of government union bosses. In addition to giving public employees a voice and a choice in union membership, the legislation will be a catalyst for a public relations campaign to build on the successful start Freedom Foundation has experienced in Ohio.

OKLAHOMA



OKLAHOMA COUNCIL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS • ocpathink.org

Via the Oklahoma Equal Opportunity Education Scholarships program, Oklahoma leverages private funds to help students. Nonprofit organizations receive charitable donations to support rural public schools or to grant scholarships to students attending private schools. Donors to these organizations receive a state tax credit. This program is already helping children who were bullied, have special needs, or need specialized education programs. However, this program is currently capped, limiting the number of students who can benefit. During this legislative session, the **Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs** will advocate for Oklahoma children by encouraging legislators to raise the cap on this successful program. This bill would allow up to 5,000 more children to benefit from privately funded scholarships and inject up to \$27 million in private funding into traditional public schools in Oklahoma. It would also give parents more freedom to direct their children's education.

OREGON



CASCADE POLICY INSTITUTE • cascadepolicy.org

Cascade Policy Institute's top legislative priority for this legislative session was defensive: Support the broad-based coalition opposing the legislative majority's cap-and-spend plans and publicize electric resource reliability in the wake of scheduled coal-fired power plant shutdowns in the Northwest. Oregon leaders' progressive climate agenda would increase energy costs across the economy. Combined with less available power load, cap-and-spend would create an economic crisis affecting all Oregonians. Given Oregon's total greenhouse gas emissions peaked in 1999 and have dropped steadily since (despite its growing economy), cap-and-spend is a legislative proposal in search of a purpose. Cascade will recommend a more useful energy resource agenda that includes investigating extension of the regulatory life of Portland General Electric's Boardman coal plant and considering a referendum to re-legalize nuclear power.



FREEDOM FOUNDATION OF OREGON • freedomfoundation.com

Since the *Janus* decision in 2018, **Freedom Foundation of Oregon** has communicated with Service Employees International Union (SEIU 503) members via hundreds of thousands of pieces of mail, emails, and texts, as well as visits to homes and government buildings—all

with the purpose of educating them about their First Amendment right to leave their union. This outreach had a big impact. Payroll data obtained through public records requests revealed 33 percent of state employees and more than 40 percent of homecare providers represented by SEIU 503 have exercised their right to opt out of union dues within the first year of *Janus*. In its 2019 LM-2 report, SEIU 503 reported collecting \$2 million less in members' dues in 2018 than 2017, and reduced its political spending by more than 60 percent.

PENNSYLVANIA

COMMONWEALTH FOUNDATION • commonwealthfoundation.org

The **Commonwealth Foundation's** fight for criminal justice reform has measurably improved public safety in Pennsylvania. On December 18, 2019, Governor Wolf signed two of the most transformative bills for parole and sentencing reform ever to pass the Pennsylvania Legislature. This victory, part of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI) 2, has been a goal for CF since 2012 when the first Justice Reinvestment Initiative passed. The bipartisan achievement of JRI in 2012 helped reduce Pennsylvania's prison population by 10.4 percent in eight years—nearly 6,000 fewer inmates. The population decline continues to accelerate: 2019 saw the sharpest drop in state history. However, Pennsylvania's probation population remains the fifth largest in the nation. CF is pushing for probation reform legislation that alleviates this problem. Safer, more compassionate justice in has a bright future in Pennsylvania, and provides a tested model for other states struggling with over-incarceration.



SOUTH CAROLINA

PALMETTO PROMISE INSTITUTE • palmettopromise.org

To shift healthcare conversations from coverage to care, **Palmetto Promise Institute**, along with several South Carolina lawmakers, released the 2020 Healthcare Freedom Agenda for South Carolina. State lawmakers and physicians supported Palmetto Promise at a news conference where the report was released. Solutions include protecting direct primary care, repealing certificate-of-need regulations, empowering patients with the right to shop for healthcare services, and protecting Healthcare Sharing ministries. Legislation on all four of these solutions areas was introduced during the first week of the 2020 legislative session. Palmetto Promise believes that these reforms will directly address the growing problems with the state's healthcare system, providing greater access to quality care for all South Carolinians, not just expensive insurance coverage for some.



**PALMETTO
PROMISE**
INSTITUTE

TENNESSEE

BEACON CENTER OF TENNESSEE • beacontn.org

The **Beacon Center of Tennessee's** annual "Pork Report," exposes government waste, fraud, and abuse. While the "Pork Report" is a fun and creative outlet for Beacon's team to expose the top 25 most ridiculous instances of government spending in the past year, it calls for state and local governments to cut the waste from their budgets. State and local taxpayers fund all of the "pork" found in this year's report. The 2019 "Pork of the Year" went to the Richard Siegel Soccer Complex in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Although Murfreesboro is losing nearly \$150,000 per year on the complex, the city added to the complex and upgraded the lights—at a cost of \$14.5 million. Television outlets, radio stations, and newspapers across the state feature the "Pork Report" and have asked Beacon experts to weigh in on how this year's report differs from previous years. Beacon has also fielded media requests regarding solutions to remedy Tennessee's the waste, fraud, and abuse.





TEXAS

TEXAS PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION • texaspolicy.com

Texas has a biennial legislative session, so the Legislature will not meet again until 2021. But that doesn't stop the **Texas Public Policy Foundation** from working hard to better the lives of everyday Texans. TPPF kicked off 2020 with its three-day policy conference, Policy Orientation 2020. The conference featured 32 panels on topics ranging from criminal procedure, innovative solutions to school choice, property tax reform, a path forward after the Affordable Care Act, and workforce development. Speakers included Rep. Dan Crenshaw, Rep. Chip Roy, Tim Carney, Texas Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, Former US Sen. Jim DeMint, Executive Director of the US Interagency Council on Homelessness Robert Marbut, Alice Johnson, political commentator Jason Chaffetz, and George Forman. The conference was attended by nearly 1000 activists, legislative staffers, and concerned citizens—and was a great launching point for conversations and legislative priorities for the 87th legislative session. Learn more about all of the work TPPF is doing by visiting texaspolicy.com.



UTAH

LIBERTAS INSTITUTE • libertasutah.org

In 2019, **Libertas Institute** received SPN's Bob Williams Award for Biggest Win for championing Utah's landmark data privacy law, House Bill 57. Building on that success, Libertas is working to secure passage of the country's first DNA privacy law. As millions of people provide DNA to obtain health and family relationship information, these databases are a tempting resource for law enforcement. DNA use in criminal justice can be very useful to exonerate innocent individuals. But the shared nature of DNA (among family members) provokes a range of questions: Can a person consent to share his or her DNA with law enforcement? Does this sharing constitute consent on behalf of relatives who share that DNA? Is this sharing legal if relatives wish to remain private? Libertas published a policy brief on the issue and will advance model legislation to lock DNA databases so that governments cannot use them to conduct a mass search of innocent individuals.



SUTHERLAND INSTITUTE • sutherlandinstitute.org

Nobody can deny the need for improving civics education. In fact, some are calling Americans' abysmal understanding of history and civics a "quiet crisis." In 2020, **Sutherland Institute** is prioritizing efforts to improve civic education, starting with what Utah legislators can do as they take on civics education laws in the state of Utah. Sutherland advocates for a holistic contemplation of how civics can go from a classroom topic to a robust set of attitudes and habits that shape our future republic. Sutherland's research includes innovative opportunities for hands-on civic engagement, an examination of how today's history education impacts civics outcomes, and Utah's approach to assessing civic learning. For more information, go to SutherlandInstitute.org.

VERMONT

ETHAN ALLEN INSTITUTE • ethanallen.org

The 2020 Vermont Legislature is the prime target of well-organized and passionate climate organizations, outraged at Governor Phil Scott's foot dragging on climate issues. These organizations are hoping to defeat climate change through three proposals. First, by forcing Vermont to join the multistate Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI), a proposal to implement a motor fuel tax to subsidize electric vehicles. Second, through the Global Warming Solutions Act, a proposal that gives state agencies full power to make Vermonters stop contributing to climate change, including citizen lawsuits to get judges to force the rule-makers to move further and faster—all without a vote of our elected representatives. Third, by adding a "defeat climate change" requirement to the state's development control law. The **Ethan Allen Institute** is working hard to mobilize a resistance to these plans.



VIRGINIA

THOMAS JEFFERSON INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • thomasjeffersoninst.org

The **Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy's** primary objectives in the legislative session include fending off the multistate Transportation and Climate Initiative and efforts to gut Virginia's right-to-work law. TJI is also urging rebates for more than 200,000 Virginia taxpayers who should have received them last year as a result of tax reform. Additionally, the Institute kicked off a VTeacherChoice offensive, urging Virginia teachers to leave the Virginia Education Association, join alternative professional educator groups, and take their \$700 in dues with them. Early indications show the social media, digital, and postal mail campaign is having an impact. Following the passing of the Institute's Founder and Chairman Mike Thompson, the Board elected Randal C. Teague as chairman and John Hager as Treasurer. Teague is a long-time conservative activist and former executive director of Young Americans for Freedom, now serving as chairman of The Fund for American Studies. Hager is a former Virginia Lieutenant Governor, who also brings business and strategic experience to the position as a former business executive.



VIRGINIA INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • virginiainstitute.org

In 2020, the **Virginia Institute for Public Policy** will focus on combatting efforts to reinstate the estate tax; eliminate the value of every Virginian's vote with the National Popular Vote Compact; and repeal the Commonwealth's 70-year-old right-to-work legislation. Positive movement is on the horizon, too. Solid bipartisan efforts are underway in healthcare innovation, competitive energy, and occupational licensing reform. It seems both libertarian-leaning conservatives and liberal Democrats are reaching for a consensus that special carve-outs and privileges for certain industries, businesses, and individuals are not right for the future of Virginia. The Virginia Institute for Public Policy is in complete agreement.





WASHINGTON

FREEDOM FOUNDATION OF WASHINGTON • freedomfoundation.com

Government unions in Washington state are pushing legislation designed to prevent the **Freedom Foundation** from communicating with public employees about the right to leave unions. In October 2019, the Washington Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in favor of a Freedom Foundation request for public employees' birth dates under the Public Records Act. Since then, government unions and allies have waged PR and legislative campaigns to scare the public about identity theft—even passing legislation that bars birth dates from public records requests. House Bill 1888 is their key weapon this session. But numerous Washington media outlets, including the *Seattle Times* and *The Spokesman-Review*, have joined Freedom Foundation in opposing HB 1888.

WASHINGTON POLICY CENTER • washingtonpolicy.org

In January 2020, **Washington Policy Center** began educating citizens on a legislative proposal to tax capital gains. Proponents call it an "excise tax." In radio and digital ads, WPC quoted the IRS confirming it is an income tax. Using public records requests, WPC obtained documents detailing lawmakers' strategies for imposing income taxes via the courts and shared those documents with media and concerned citizens. Prospects for halting the income tax in the Legislature are promising, but efforts in the courts remain.

WISCONSIN

BADGER INSTITUTE • badgerinstitute.org

Occupational licensing remains a top 2020 priority for the **Badger Institute**. In January, Badger released two publications on the subject. "Absence and Violation" found that Wisconsin licensing boards routinely violate laws requiring public representation. "A Primer on Occupational Licensing," published in partnership with the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty, examined how occupational licensing affects employment and consumer costs. Badger testified on sunrise review (a process where impact is outlined before legislation is enacted) and military spouse bills before the Legislature, and it plans to co-host with WILL a panel on occupational licensing at the Wisconsin Capitol in winter 2020. Additionally, Badger is focusing on policies that promote work. Badger published "Wisconsin's Missing Rung," a report on the state's efforts to promote work through federal safety-net programs. In criminal justice reform initiatives, Badger leads the Wisconsin Criminal Justice Coalition in education campaigns targeting lawmakers, employers, and the public.

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

Like many states, Wisconsin is spending more on K-12 education than ever before. But test scores and academic achievement are flat and, in some cases, declining. Taxpayers have limited access to public school budgets; it is nearly impossible to determine where education money is spent and how much reaches the classroom. To address the problem, **Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty** will, in the 2020 legislative session, push public school spending transparency legislation. The bill WILL is advocating for would require the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction to collect and publish public school spending data on an accessible, public website. If enacted, this legislation will empower local taxpayers to hold school districts accountable for spending actions.

Join us for the SPN 28th Annual Meeting

State Solutions. National Impact.



Annual Meeting

“Annual Meeting is the best event of the year. Everybody’s here. It’s fun, interesting, challenging, and inspiring all at once.”

— Courtney Myers, Searle Freedom Trust

AUGUST 31 – SEPTEMBER 3, 2020 • CHICAGO MARRIOTT MAGNIFICENT MILE • CHICAGO, IL



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 engaged, connected, and inspired by our shared vision of improving lives through free markets and local leaders.

For more information, contact
Victoria Bartolomeo at
victoria@spn.org
or visit SPN.org/AnnualMeeting.



AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE • aei.org

In 2019, the **American Enterprise Institute** convened a group of scholars to take a fresh look at high recidivism rates for US prisoners. In January 2020, AEI Resident Fellow Brent Orrell released a new edited volume, *Rethinking Reentry*, which develops key working group insights. Featuring leading voices from the last 30 years of reentry research, the volume discusses what has worked, what hasn't, and what can be done to improve both reentry efforts and the future of returning citizens. With a foreword by former Speaker of the House and AEI Distinguished Visiting Fellow, Paul Ryan, the volume provides a framework for evidence-based reentry programming that enabling more people to leave the revolving door of the justice system behind for good.



AMERICA'S FUTURE FOUNDATION • americasfuture.org

Several **America's Future Foundation** chapters are collaborating with experts on issues raised in state legislative sessions and important to young voters. AFF-Mississippi Gulf Coast held a legislative overview event, examining issues like infrastructure, gasoline tax increases, and Medicaid expansion that were central to 2019 legislative campaigns. AFF's Columbus Ohio chapter discussed Ohio's efforts to ensure voter rolls and election infrastructure are secure during the upcoming election. Chapters in Jackson (Mississippi), Milwaukee, Rhode Island, and Dallas will all host events exploring education and school choice and featuring experts from organizations like Empower Mississippi, Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty, the Rhode Island Center for Freedom & Prosperity, and the Foundation for Government Accountability. AFF-Detroit will host a discussion on the Overton Window and how change and social movements affect policymaking.



AMERICAN LEGISLATIVE EXCHANGE COUNCIL • alec.org

Both the **American Legislative Exchange Council** and the American City County Exchange (ACCE)—a division of ALEC for elected local officials—were active across the states to promote free enterprise and individual liberty at the beginning of state legislative sessions. In January 2020, ALEC attended the Consumer Technology Association at CES (the world's gathering place where next-generation innovations are introduced to the marketplace), a member event in South Dakota, a New Legislator Academy in Louisiana, and a task force issue briefing on labor policy in Florida. In February 2020, the team traveled to Mississippi for a New Legislator Academy and to Wyoming for a Tax Academy, among other events. The big issues of 2020 will be covered at the hundreds of trips the ALEC team makes to each state. For instance, donor privacy legislation—both good and bad—is appearing across the states. The courts have repeatedly upheld the Constitution and donor privacy rights, but many states like New Jersey, Oregon and New York have enacted bills that put donor privacy in jeopardy. However, Iowa, Oklahoma and West Virginia are leading the way with legislation that plays a positive role in protecting donor privacy.

ATLAS NETWORK • atlasnetwork.org

Applications for **Atlas Network's** annual Templeton Freedom Award (TFA) are now open. TFA application also qualifies US applicants for consideration for the North American Liberty Award. The generosity of the Templeton Religion Trust enables the Templeton Freedom Awards Prize Program to award \$270,000 in prizes each year. Direct questions about TFA applications to Erik.Eppig@AtlasNetwork.org. Registration is open for the Los Angeles-area Lights, Camera, Liberty storytelling, messaging, and film production workshop. Participants are invited to submit an expression of interest to participate in Atlas' new film pitch competition. A shortlist of applicants will be selected prior to the workshop. Those selected will have opportunity to pitch film ideas to a panel of industry experts during the workshop. Please direct questions to Vale.Sloane@AtlasNetwork.org.



CITIZENS' COUNCIL FOR HEALTH FREEDOM • cchfreedom.org

The Minnesota Health Records Act (MHRA) is the nation's strongest medical privacy and patient consent law. It is also the last state law standing against unconsented sharing and use of patient data in and outside of the exam room. Since 2014, **Citizens' Council for Health Freedom** has worked to defend MHRA against large data corporations, health industry giants, and government agencies seeking its repeal. Employer groups, hospitals, health plans, and state government agencies want to repeal Minnesota's consent requirements for treatment, payment, and healthcare operations, and require alignment with the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) data-sharing rule. (Under the permissive HIPAA rule, Ascension healthcare is sharing medical records of 50 million Americans in 21 states with Google.) CCHF is pressing state legislators to defend the Minnesota Health Records Act and encouraging states to adopt similar state privacy laws shielding citizens from HIPAA's permissible privacy violations.



COMPETITIVE ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE • cei.org

A **Competitive Enterprise Institute** report criticized the Centers for Disease Control and state health departments for spreading misinformation about lung illnesses related to vaping. Instead of warning against illicit substances containing THC, a compound found in marijuana, government agencies warned against all e-cigarette use. The result is an unwarranted crackdown on e-cigarette companies and retailers. CEI Fellow Ryan Radia issued a report on California's A.B. 5 labor law, detailing how it affects freelancers and independent contractors and will negatively impact rideshare companies, drivers, and customers. In January 2020, CEI senior editor Richard Morrison was appointed research fellow. Previously, he collaborated with CEI founder Fred L. Smith, Jr. to establish CEI's Center for Advancing Capitalism.



EXCELINED • excelined.org

New **ExcelinEd** research examines seat-time requirements for awarding credit and graduation in traditional schools. It reveals that all 50 states and Washington, DC, have either fully or partially authorized schools to shift from seat-time to mastery. Furthermore, ExcelinEd's 2019 report "State Progress Toward Next Generation Learning: A National Landscape" notes that 33 states and Washington, DC, have innovation or pilot programs to explore next generation learning, including a broad range of innovative learning models and approaches. Most next generation program statutes allow schools to apply for flexibility with or waivers from policies, including seat-time requirements. For more information on next generation learning and other student-centered policies, visit ExcelinEd.org.



FIRST LIBERTY INSTITUTE • firstliberty.org

On January 14, 2020, **First Liberty Institute** sent a letter to the United States Marine Corps Trademark Licensing Office, urging it to allow Shields of Strength (Shields), a private, faith-based, business to continue producing military-themed items such as replica dog tags and jewelry. A complaint from the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF) prompted the United States Marine Corps (USMC) to ban Shields from producing replica dog tags with inspirational Bible verses. The USMC decision required Shields to decline a request from a Marine Corps unit for 2,000 replica dog tags to be distributed upon request to individual Marines. In its letter, First Liberty argues, “Once the government has created a limited public forum via a trademark licensing regime, it cannot ‘discriminate against speech on the basis of its viewpoint.’ The Marine Corps is therefore prohibited from discriminating against [Shields] because of its inclusion of biblical references on its products, in its advertisements, or on its website.”



FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITY • freopp.org

The **Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity** is working this legislative session to advance ideas to decrease prescription drug prices. In particular, FREOPP is briefing members of Congress and their staff on the Senate Finance Committee’s bipartisan Prescription Drug Pricing Reduction Act. FREOPP continues its work to lower hospital prices through increased competition among highly consolidated hospital systems. In December 2019, FREOPP held a half-day conference on the topic, featuring the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Administrator Seema Verma and leading scholars across the political spectrum who offered bipartisan paths to lower costs for patients. In this legislative session, FREOPP will talk with policymakers about the importance of hospital competition, highlighting two bills: Rep. Jim Banks’ (R-IN) Hospital Competition Act—which aims to freeze the practice of hospital consolidation in which large companies buy smaller hospitals and then raise their prices for higher profit—and Rep. Bruce Westerman’s (R-AR) wide-ranging Fair Care Act—which would expand health insurance coverage while reducing costs and increasing innovation.



FREE STATE FOUNDATION • freestatefoundation.org

The **Free State Foundation** held its 12th Annual Telecom Policy Conference, “Broadband Beyond 2020: Competition, Freedom, and Privacy,” on March 10, 2020, at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. Keynote addresses were delivered by Brendan Carr, Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission (FCC); Michael O’Rielly, Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission; Ajit Pai, Chairman, FCC; Jeffrey Rosen, Deputy Attorney General, Department of Justice; and Christine Wilson, Commissioner, Federal Trade Commission (FTC). In addition to the keynotes, senior officials; experts from the FCC and other government agencies; and industry, academic, and think tank professionals discussed internet freedom and net neutrality, broadband deployment, competition policy, the 5G rollout, privacy regulation, the changing video services landscape and regulatory environment, universal service, and more.

FREEDOM CENTER OF MISSOURI • mofreedom.org

Representation in legislative assemblies is the bedrock of America's constitutional form of government. Unfortunately, Missouri governors have been too willing to leave this state's citizens without proper representation in its state legislature—a bipartisan problem. In 2014, the **Freedom Center of Missouri** sued Democrat Governor Jay Nixon for refusing to call for elections that would allow voters to fill four vacant seats in the Legislature. The lawsuit ultimately prompted Nixon to schedule the elections. The state's current governor, Mike Parson, created multiple legislative vacancies and announced that he would not call special elections to fill those vacancies. Freedom Center director of litigation, Dave Roland, authored an op-ed in the *Kansas City Star* calling on the governor to uphold constitutional principles by letting the voters choose new representatives. The Freedom Center also partnered with Southeast Legal Foundation to file a new open records lawsuit against St. Louis Circuit Attorney Kim Gardner. Prominent journalist John Solomon asked Gardner's office to produce records related to communications between the circuit attorney's office and a number of prominent politicians and political donors in advance of Gardner filing criminal charges against then-Governor Eric Greitens.



THE INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE • independent.org

California's state and local politicians, government regulators, and anti-development activists have created the worst housing crisis in America. These actors are the deserving recipients of **The Independent Institute's** winter 2019 California Golden Fleece Award, given to a state or local government spending program, tax, or regulation that fleeces California taxpayers, consumers, or businesses. Independent Institute Senior Fellow Lawrence McQuillan, PhD, says burdensome environmental, labor, and zoning regulations are preventing new housing construction, which is desperately needed to address California's expensive housing and homelessness. McQuillan proposes that voters make house-building a constitutional right in California. This solution would afford the quickest exit from the regulatory thicket crushing the California housing market. Eliminating rent control and "affordable housing" mandates, along with certain state building codes and fees, would encourage entrepreneurial innovation, which may solve the housing crisis driving middle-class citizens out of the Golden State.



INSTITUTE FOR FREE SPEECH • ifs.org

As 2020 legislative sessions commence, the **Institute for Free Speech** expects more than half the states to consider speech-chilling laws or regulations. Of primary concern are efforts to expose the private information of Americans that support nonprofit groups. Fueled by perceived threat of foreign interference in elections online and within nonprofits, and a desire of some policymakers to silence those with whom they disagree, these proposals are designed to chill think tank and advocacy groups' contributions to civic debates. Threats to free speech and citizen privacy are particularly pronounced in Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Virginia. Already, voters in Alaska, Arizona, Michigan, and Oregon may see measures on 2020 ballots that harm citizen privacy and freedom of political speech. The Institute for Free Speech remains vigilant and will collaborate with an array of national and state-based groups to educate lawmakers and the public about the dangers these proposals pose to free speech, citizen privacy, and a healthy democratic discourse.





INSTITUTE FOR JUSTICE • ij.org

On January 22, 2020, the **Institute for Justice** argued one of the most important education cases heard by the US Supreme Court in half a century. In *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue*, IJ defended the rights of parents to participate in generally available scholarship programs and send their children to religious schools. The Montana Department of Revenue had excluded parents who wanted to select religious schools for their children, thus violating their constitutional rights. In addition to defending school choice, IJ has launched a new effort to hold government officials accountable for abusing power. Rebecca Brown was flying home from Pittsburgh with her father's life savings, over \$82,000. Before Brown could board, the Transportation Security Agency (TSA) and Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) confiscated the monies and, at this writing, have not yet returned a single cent. Additionally, IJ launched a new immunity and accountability initiative. When single mother Shaniz West allowed police into her home, she never expected them to destroy it. Returning to a shell of her former house, peppered with shotgun-fired tear gas-grenades, her family was left homeless and with no resolution from local authorities. IJ is petitioning the US Supreme Court on behalf of West.



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

The **James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal** addresses protection of students' due process rights on campus. Students accused of non-academic misconduct (sexual or non-sexual) are often deprived of a fair hearing from campus officials. Unlike a court of law, which requires a "clear and convincing" or "beyond a reasonable doubt" standard of evidence to find the accused guilty, college campuses can penalize, suspend, or expel a student based on the "preponderance of the evidence" standard. The use of this much lower standard of evidence means that campus officials only have to prove that "it is more likely than not" that misconduct occurred. The Department of Education, under Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, has proposed new regulations that would require colleges and universities to provide important procedural safeguards, such as the right to cross-examine witnesses. But federal regulations can be changed by future administrations. That's why the Martin Center encourages states to pass their own laws enshrining due process on college campuses.



THE JESSE HELMS CENTER • jessehelmscenter.org

On February 6, 2020, **The Jesse Helms Center** sponsored its ninth annual Jesse Helms Lecture at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, DC. Ambassador Kay Bailey Hutchison, the United States' permanent representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), spoke on the importance of a strong NATO. The Center also continued its Admiral James W. Nance Lecture Series in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. On March 4, 2020, Dr. Michael Rubin discussed American relations with Iran and the Middle East. This summer the Center will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Free Enterprise Leadership Challenge (FELC), a five-day summer camp where high school students learn free enterprise values. Established in 1995, over 10,500 students have graduated from the program. For more information on The Jesse Helms Center's free enterprise programs, visit freeenterprisenow.org and felcexperience.org.

JUDICIAL WATCH • judicialwatch.org

Judicial Watch discovered a violation of the National Voter Registration Act when it found millions of extra registrants on voting rolls in 19 counties in the United States. Despite Judicial Watch's successful litigation to bring counties and states into compliance, voter registration lists across the country remain significantly out of date. So far, Ohio, California, and Kentucky have agreed to take measures to clean up their voter rolls. Additionally, Judicial Watch released more FBI-recovered emails from former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, which indicate Clinton used her private email to transmit classified information. The new emails also show Clinton used text messages to conduct government business.



NATIONAL RIGHT TO WORK FOUNDATION • nrtw.org

National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation's staff attorneys have successfully pursued legal action to defend and enforce new right-to-work laws in Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and Kentucky. The Foundation is currently fighting on behalf of West Virginia's right-to-work law in a multiyear case brought by the unions. In this case, union lawyers are seeking to dismantle West Virginia's right-to-work law and restore their ability to force workers to pay dues—whether they want to be in a union or not. Foundation staff attorneys have filed 10 legal briefs in the case. These legal briefs are an important avenue for making sure the court hears and considers the worker freedom perspective. The Foundation's latest amicus brief was filed for West Virginia nursing home employee Donna Harper. Harper, like many other workers in West Virginia, chose not to pay union dues or fees, which is her legal right in a right-to-work state. In addition to defending state right-to-work laws, the Foundation has litigated hundreds of cases in right-to-work states to enforce workers' rights to stop dues payments when unions violate the law. In Michigan alone, Foundation staff attorneys have assisted employees in over 100 cases since Right to Work went into effect in early 2013.



PACIFIC LEGAL FOUNDATION • pacificlegal.org

What happens to Americans who miscalculate and underpay their property taxes—even by just a few dollars? In at least 13 states, the government can seize their property, sell it, and leave them with nothing. In 2020, the **Pacific Legal Foundation** is focusing on fighting home equity theft in the courts and legislatures. Currently, PLF is litigating two home equity theft cases in Michigan: *Rafelli LLC v. Oakland County* and *Perez v. Wayne County*. However, after last year's victory in obtaining legislative reform of home equity theft in Montana and the ongoing positive reception of the cases in Michigan, PLF is expanding its legislative and litigation goals for the issue. In 2020, PLF will target four states: Arizona, Colorado, Massachusetts, and Nebraska, and is currently working with allies in Arizona on a bill to reform the practice in the state. PLF is eager to connect with partners and supporters over this important issue.





PROPERTY AND ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH CENTER • perc.org

Founded in 1980 by a handful of outdoor-oriented economists in Bozeman, Montana, **Property and Environment Research Center** is a conservation and research institute dedicated to free-market environmentalism and committed to improving environmental quality through property rights and markets. PERC's research examines the unintended conservation-stifling consequences of wildlife policies and offers market-based solutions. PERC believes that, by turning wildlife from liabilities into assets, private citizens have incentive to invest in habitat preservation. Likewise, PERC seeks to foster more effective management of our nation's public lands by harnessing the power of entrepreneurship, markets, property rights, and cooperative partnerships. PERC supports greater freedom and flexibility for public land managers to implement locally responsible solutions and engages users in funding our public lands. On its 40th anniversary, PERC is looking ahead to find innovative, market-based approaches that improve wildlife conservation and public lands management.



R STREET INSTITUTE • rstreet.org

As state legislative sessions lumber into gear, **R Street's** 2020 agenda is also coming into focus. R Street will engage in dozens of states, working on issues like property and casualty insurance reforms; helping veterans and military spouses get back to work by removing unnecessary licensing barriers; reimagining states' occupational licensing regimes; promoting tobacco harm reduction; and advocating for criminal justice reforms—especially clean slate proposals and juvenile justice reforms. While these issues may seem unrelated, they are key pieces of one puzzle: Each reform will help improve Americans' well-being. R Street's work gives justice-involved individuals a second chance, cuts unnecessary regulations to make products more accessible and affordable, removes barriers to work, and emphasizes public health over economic protectionism and misinformation.



SPEECH FIRST • speechfirst.org

In January 2020, **Speech First** filed its fourth free speech case—this time against Iowa State University (ISU). The complaint alleges that ISU maintains three policies that have both the purpose and effect of limiting speech—particularly political speech. Specifically, ISU prohibits students from using school email addresses to send emails supporting candidates or ballot initiatives. Additionally, it banned “chalking” by individuals and non-registered student organizations. Add this sentence: Chalking, which is simply writing messages on campus sidewalks, is one of the primary ways that students have learned about presidential candidates' appearances in the area. Finally, it maintains a “Campus Climate Response System (CCRS)” that encourages students to report incidents of alleged bias on campus. ISU's bias incidents include support for President Donald Trump, Governor Kim Reynolds, and Rep. Steve King. Students have a constitutional right to discuss politically charged topics at a public college without fear of disciplinary repercussions.

THINK FREELY MEDIA • thinkfreelymedia.org

Following its inaugural Great Communicators Summit, **Think Freely Media** introduced the Great Communicators monthly newsletter, which shares how organizations can improve policy advocacy effectiveness by harnessing the power of marketing and technology. Great Communicators helps organizations navigate the fluid marketing landscape using proven principles and innovative tactics. Each newsletter includes a success story, market research, how-to articles, and critical need-to-know news. Each newsletter includes at least one action item and keeps readers up to date on the August 2020 Great Communicators Summit in Chicago. Visit thinkfreelymedia.org to sign up for the Great Communicators newsletter and learn more about the 2020 Great Communicators Summit.



TRUTH IN ACCOUNTING • truthinaccounting.org

Truth in Accounting released its fourth annual “Financial State of the Cities” report, which ranks the 75 largest US cities by fiscal health. Truth in Accounting analysts draw data from publically available, audited, comprehensive annual financials for each city. “Financial State of the Cities” breaks down complicated financial numbers to a per-taxpayer level with Truth in Accounting’s trademarked “Taxpayer Burden.” The Taxpayer Burden is the money needed to pay city bills, divided by the number of city taxpayers. This year’s study found that 63 of the 75 most populous US cities lack sufficient funds to pay their bills. The average Taxpayer Burden across the 75 largest cities is more than \$7,000.



THE COLLEGE FIX • thecollegefix.com

In addition to garnering nearly one million pageviews each month, **The College Fix’s** 2019 work was picked up by mainstream media outlets such as *Fox News*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, and *New York Post*. *The College Fix* also hired a cartoonist, whose compelling images have influenced hundreds of thousands of people on social media and helped crystallize higher education issues for the “meme reader.” In fall 2019, *The College Fix* polled college students nationwide to capture opinions among young people. Findings include: Nearly 30 percent of Democratic college students favor banning “Make America Great Again” hats on campus. Only eight percent of Democratic college students are very proud to be American. 73 percent of Republican students have withheld political views in class for fear their grades would suffer.

THE COLLEGE FIX

YOUNG AMERICA’S FOUNDATION • yaf.org


In 2019, **Young America’s Foundation’s** programs made headlines as millions of students learned from conservative leaders who champion freedom and limited government. Attempts to derail YAF events were unsuccessful; YAF’s activists ensured principles of free speech and conservatism had a voice on their campuses. On January 23, 2020, YAF held the Freedom Chapter Training Seminar, where a record number of YAF activists defended life at this year’s March for Life. The Freedom Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, followed the Freedom Chapter Training Seminar, and in February, the Reagan Ranch in Santa Barbara, California, hosted the first of several 2020 high school conferences.





1655 North Fort Myer Drive, Suite 360 • Arlington, VA 22209
Phone: 703-243-1655 • Fax: 703-740-0314 • info@spn.org

SPN.org

 /StatePolicy

 @StatePolicy

 /company/state-policy-network