



State Solutions. National Impact.

WINTER 2019



Uniting the Freedom Movement

SPN celebrates the success of the 50-state Network at the 27th Annual Meeting.

Tracie

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OUR VISION

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

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

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

OUR STRATEGY

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

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

Dear Friends,

Welcome to a new year, a new decade, and a new election cycle.

I can't help but look back on the impact that your generous support has had and will continue to have in strengthening the 50-state freedom movement. Your partnership ensures that, no matter who wins an election, there are strong organizations on the ground fighting for principled, free-market reforms and holding politicians accountable to the people they represent.

Coming on the heels of State Policy Network's 27th Annual Meeting (our biggest one yet!), I am inspired by the tremendous breakthroughs driven by Network leaders, in partnership with dedicated supporters like you, to bring greater freedom and opportunity to all Americans.

For example, in 2019, state think tanks secured big wins for more choice in K-12 education—like those we saw in Tennessee, Florida, and West Virginia. Other groups successfully fought back tax increases—like those we saw in Minnesota, Colorado, and North Carolina. Others broke down regulatory barriers that prevent people from getting jobs or owning their own business—like the historic regulatory reform that took place in Arkansas and Idaho.

And together, a group of state think tanks led the charge to end the unjust practice of “dues skimming,” in which states automatically deduct union dues from in-home caregivers' Medicaid support checks without their consent. Thanks to the coalition's relentless, multiyear effort, a federal rule passed in 2019 that ended the scheme and allows caregivers to keep more money in their pockets and provide better care to their loved ones.

Your support enabled SPN to bring together the best talent to collaborate and share strategies for success in over a dozen areas of specialization. The breadth and depth of our programs, critical trainings, connections, and support for the Network are growing thanks to you. This year, we even spearheaded a new project that brings together private sector entrepreneurs with leaders across the Network to help launch their next big idea. You'll learn more about the LaunchPad program in this issue.

It doesn't end there. Your partnership ensures that, together, we are creating an infrastructure that's built to last and ready for the policy battles ahead—both at the state and national levels.

As we resolutely move forward into a new decade, we thank you for all that you do to support freedom.

Tracie Sharp

President & CEO





Stronger Together

State Policy Network's 27th Annual Meeting convened Network leaders to celebrate victories and sharpen strategies for 2020.

Over the past 27 years, one fundamental truth has remained clear: When local leaders who care about improving lives in their communities get together and partner with dedicated philanthropists, big things can happen. When we come together as a movement, we are better, faster, and stronger than we were before.

Policy leaders are busy in the trenches fighting for freedom in their home states, and it can be difficult for them to remember that they are not alone. For one week each year, SPN's Annual Meeting allows them to experience the strength and support of a community fighting for individual freedom, liberty, and prosperity across the country. Thanks to the generosity of supporters like you, Annual Meeting continues to be the premier gathering of the free-market movement. Ideas are formed, strategies are sharpened, and connections are made to advance groundbreaking state reforms with national impact.

This was a special year in Annual Meeting's history. When SPN was established in 1992, 19 pioneering state leaders gathered for the inaugural SPN Annual Meeting in a small hotel by the Colorado Springs airport. Fast forward to 2019—over 1,300 attendees gathered at Colorado Springs' beautiful Broadmoor resort to be inspired, develop new strategies, and celebrate the growth and accomplishments of the Network. Leaders from all 50 states and nearly 500 organizations braved unexpected snowstorms and harsh travel conditions to get here, driven by the event's importance to their organization's success and their own professional development.

Over the last decade, SPN's Annual Meeting has grown by over 128 percent. Because of your partnership, momentum is increasing and we are seeing greater results every year.



TOP: Over 1,300 attendees from all 50 states gathered to celebrate victories across the Network and hear from inspirational speakers.

ABOVE, COLUMN TWO: Kim Dennis, president and CEO of the Searle Freedom Trust, received the 2019 Roe Award.

SPN hosts Annual Meeting to strengthen the Network by:

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

Annual Meeting Highlights

The Philanthropist's Experience: This year, we had the pleasure of hosting over 200 SPN supporters and sponsors who made the journey to Colorado Springs to celebrate with us. They had the opportunity to meet leaders in the Network, attend private events and receptions, and hear first-hand how their investment is creating positive change for millions of Americans. The events included a panel on the opportunity the *Janus* Supreme Court decision has provided to not only advance labor reform, but also pave the way for robust education reform in the states; a private interview with select LaunchPad participants on how the program has accelerated game-changing policy breakthroughs; and a panel of Network CEOs who are working to return power to the states and ensure that states have a voice in national policy.

Inspiring Keynotes: Robyn Benincasa, founder of World Class Teams, adventure racing world champion, and CNN Hero, discussed how to overcome challenges and adversity with a team mentality. Attendees left empowered and motivated to create stronger teams of their own to advance meaningful policy reforms from state to state. *New York Times* bestselling

Annual Meeting by the Numbers

- **1,355** total attendees
- **481** organizations representing all 50 states, including **58** state think tank affiliates and **73** national associates
- **509** state think tank affiliate staff
- **389** associate staff
- **457** general attendees from like-minded organizations
- **60** Generation Liberty Fellows
- **17** graduates of the Development Apprentice Program

author and CEO of StoryBrand, Donald Miller, explained how clarifying a brand message strengthens an organization's influence and its ability to reach audiences. Bestselling author Jay Papasan challenged attendees to identify and relentlessly pursue their ONE thing, and he shared a framework for achieving extraordinary results by focusing on what's most important instead of attempting everything. This is especially relevant as organizations face the daunting task of choosing which problems to solve and which issues to take up in their communities.

Policy Main Stage: This platform highlighted some of the biggest policy challenges leading into 2020 and the leaders in the Network facing them head on. Popular sessions included a panel on innovative ways to cut red tape in the states to improve economic growth and well-being, as well as a panel with Mark Janus to discuss the state of labor reform after the historic Supreme Court ruling. Other sessions considered education reform in the states and how to lead boldly in energy and environment policy.



SPN Executive Vice President Tony Woodlief addresses the crowd at the Roe Award Dinner held each year at Annual Meeting to honor those whose work has significantly advanced free-market philosophy and policy solutions.



What attendees are saying about SPN's Annual Meeting

"As usual, SPN is the best place to connect to other policy folks around the country on state issues. I always learn something new—whether it's about policy or best practices. Most importantly, it's always fun!"

— Eric Peterson, Pelican Institute for Public Policy

"Annual Meeting is the most valuable conference I attend each year. From the networking opportunities to the professional development and policy seminars, SPN Annual Meeting maximizes our investment of time and effort. It's not to be missed by anyone who wants to advance freedom more effectively in their home state."

— Kathryn Hickok, Cascade Policy Institute

"State Policy Network enabled me to take back new ideas, strategies, processes, and contacts to my state think tank that will help maximize our effectiveness. Thank you for providing such a valuable week that will shape my early career and beyond."

— Meredith Stanley, Alabama Policy Institute and 2019 Generation Liberty Fellow

"This is the one event I try to attend every year. It's a great opportunity to learn, network, and meet new friends in the fight for freedom."

— John Kramer, Institute for Justice

"As someone who works remotely for the Network, the Generation Liberty Fellowship (GLF) and Annual Meeting provide a phenomenal opportunity to not only speak with like-minded people about important issues, but also develop my own professional skills and form connections I don't get to make on a day-to-day basis. Coming to GLF and Annual Meeting is a reminder of how large and welcoming our Network is—a good reminder that I've found my tribe. Many thanks to the donors who made this experience possible for me and all the amazing people I've met. I definitely won't forget my first Annual Meeting!"

— Corinne Winters, The Policy Circle and 2019 Generation Liberty Fellow

Professional Development Sessions: Annual Meeting continued to be a primary resource for state think tank staff to further their own professional growth. SPN's skill-building sessions shared ideas and strategies across key nonprofit capabilities, including fundraising, communications, government affairs, operations, and more. Attendees walked away with practical tools they could apply to their work as soon as they returned to the office.

Roundtables: Annual Meeting also featured several panel discussions on timely policy issues affecting everyday Americans—among them pension and healthcare reform, school choice, workplace freedom, and removing barriers to jobs. Experts shared strategies and best practices, and attendees left with new insights to apply to their organization's campaigns.

Peer Leadership Meetings: SPN's peer networks, including CEOs, executive vice presidents, and board directors, met and re-connected at Annual Meeting.

Generation Liberty Fellowship: SPN's Annual Meeting not only connected current state-based leaders, but it also brought together the next generation of Network leaders. SPN's Generation Liberty Fellowship provides young professionals interested in pursuing a Network career the opportunity to attend Annual Meeting. This year's program included 60 fellows representing 26 states. Fellows learned about career opportunities within the free-market Network, as well as SPN's ongoing resources for professional development and connections to organizations within the Network.

Celebrating the Biggest Wins of the Year

2019 ROE AWARD: The prestigious Roe Award was created in honor of SPN's founder, Thomas A. Roe, the leading visionary who built a 50-state Network of think tanks to champion freedom. This year's award went to **Kim Dennis**, president and CEO of the Searle Freedom Trust, a grantmaking foundation that supports public policy research. In addition to her work with foundations, Kim co-created DonorsTrust with dear friend and late SPN Board member Whitney Ball.

2019 NETWORK AWARD: Often, the biggest wins for freedom come when members of the Network work together. The Network Award was presented to the group of think tanks that ended the dues skim—a practice in which state governments allowed unions to automatically take dues from home health-care providers without their consent. The Center of the Amer-



TOP TO BOTTOM: Think tank CEOs share stories about the impact of their work on the main stage. Recipients of the 2019 Network Award. Experts discuss the future of education reform on the main stage. The 2019 Generation Liberty Fellows.

ican Experiment, Freedom Foundation, Illinois Policy Institute, Mackinac Center for Public Policy, and National Right to Work Legal Foundation helped put an end to this unfair practice. Under the new federal rule, state governments can no longer take money out of Medicaid support checks and give it to unions. This victory enables home caregivers to keep more money in their pockets and provide better care to their patients.

BOB WILLIAMS AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING POLICY ACHIEVEMENT

Named after the Network's most iconic policy expert and friend to many, Bob Williams, these awards celebrate state think tanks' work to promote free-market solutions that have national impact. They cover four categories: Most Influential Research, Best Issue Campaign, Biggest Home State Win, and Biggest Win.

MOST INFLUENTIAL RESEARCH: This award was presented to the Center of the American Experiment for its work to save Minnesotans from a costly electricity mandate. After Minnesota lawmakers proposed a 100 percent renewable electricity mandate, the Center was the only opposing voice. Its research, "Doubling Down on Failure," detailed the massive costs of the mandate and the lack of any measurable environmental benefit. Thanks to CAE's outreach efforts, the mandate failed on a bipartisan basis in the Minnesota Senate.

BEST ISSUE CAMPAIGN: Foundation for Government Accountability received this award for its "Waivers Gone Wild" campaign, which helped Americans move from welfare to work by reining in work requirement waivers in state welfare programs. FGA's campaign raised national awareness of loopholes that trapped able-bodied adults in a cycle of government dependency. The campaign emphasized the need to rein in waiver abuse so that the food stamp program can adequately serve the truly needy and empower able-bodied adults to move from welfare to work. As a result, the Trump administration proposed a rule to curb abuse of the work requirement loopholes.

BIGGEST HOME STATE WIN: The Commonwealth Foundation for Public Policy Alternatives won this award for its work to expand school choice to 15,000 more Pennsylvania students. Thanks to CF's persistent outreach over several years, tax credit scholarships have shifted from an obscure topic to a consistent point of discussion among Pennsylvania parents, educators, lawmakers, and media.

BIGGEST WIN: This award was presented to the Libertas Institute, whose work helped pass the nation's first digital privacy



SPN supporters from across the country joined us at Annual Meeting to hear from state leaders and learn about exciting new projects in the Network.

law. The US Supreme Court has long held that individuals don't have an expectation of privacy in information they surrender to a third party. Based on this precedent, law enforcement entities were able to access all citizens' digital information without a warrant. Thanks to Libertas' two-year campaign, law enforcement in Utah are now required to obtain a warrant before accessing a person's data.

The State Moment

State-based change gives us hope for the future

If Annual Meeting reinforces one thing, it's this: There are game-changing reforms happening in the states. Philanthropists who support State Policy Network tell us they do so because they believe that the best policies and solutions to problems we face in our daily lives come from the bottom up, not the top down. The answers lie with states and communities, not an expansive federal government. To give you an idea of how much government spending has grown: In 1948, per capita federal spending was \$2,259 adjusted for inflation. Today, the government spends nearly \$12,000 per capita, with a national debt of more than \$60,000 per person.



CEO of Georgia Center for Opportunity Randy Hicks discussed innovative ideas to help more Americans move from government dependency into meaningful employment.

Today, policymakers have learned the value of state voices in federal policy, and the Network has created demand for state voices in the national debate. Members of the Network are often called on to provide expertise and insight to help federal policymakers make smart decisions about policies that affect hardworking Americans.

At an exclusive Annual Meeting session, a few of the Network's extraordinary leaders discussed how they are responding to the needs of their communities and finding ways to ensure state solutions have national impact.

Federal Grantmaking Reform

There are \$800 billion federal dollars flowing into the states, much of which creates problems for states that are trying to create responsible budgets. In Wisconsin, a third of the state

budget is comprised of federal money, which means the budget is volatile and the federal government has substantial say in how its funds are spent.

The Badger Institute released a new book, *Federal Grantstanding*, that dives deeper into the distortions created by federal grants and how they deprive Americans of their money, liberty, and trust in government. For example, Milwaukee built a streetcar that cost \$128 million just so the city wouldn't lose the federal money. The streetcar was rarely used and ended at a vacant transit center, earning its nickname "tracks to nowhere."

With the recommendations in *Federal Grantstanding*, the Badger Institute shines a light on the complexities associated with states accepting federal funds, and interests state-level policymakers in commonsense reforms.

Welfare Reform

Welfare programs are designed to help the most vulnerable in society. But in many cases, those very programs trap those they intend to help in a broken system. Our country's welfare program is funded by federal dollars and states have little control over the laws.

The Georgia Center for Opportunity is dedicated to creating opportunities for quality education, fulfilling work, and healthy family life for all Georgians. For years, GCO has studied the problems with the welfare system, offering solutions that incentivize work to ensure the system is sustainable for those who truly need it.

Through innovative data solutions, collaboration with other Network leaders, and engagement with lawmakers, GCO is building a state framework for welfare reform that would simplify the process, smooth out welfare "cliffs" that punish work, and eliminate fraud and abuse. The framework, while designed and tested in Georgia, can be applied to multiple states and welfare reform at the national level.

Ending the Dues Skim

Five organizations received the Network Award at annual Meeting: the Center of the American Experiment, Freedom Foundation, Illinois Policy Institute, Mackinac Center for Public Policy, and National Right to Work Legal Foundation. Their efforts freed hundreds of thousands of home healthcare providers from having to pay forced union dues from their Medicaid support checks. A mother in Illinois, Pam Harris, paved the way for this victory



CEO of Texas Public Policy Foundation Kevin Roberts discusses TPPF's work revolutionizing America's criminal justice system.

with her bravery to stand up to the status quo and her dedication to her son, who she was taking care of full-time as a home healthcare provider. Harris partnered with the National Right to Work Foundation and took her case all the way to the Supreme Court, where she won in *Harris v. Quinn*, freeing home healthcare providers in Illinois.

From there, a movement started across the country to stop this injustice in other states. Organizations identified workers hurt by this unfair practice and highlighted their stories. Some produced research highlighting the cost of the problem and offered solutions. Others launched massive campaigns to raise awareness of the issue, including media placements in *The Wall Street Journal* and *Fox News*. SPN worked with state leaders to bring this issue to Washington, DC—front and center of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Without on-the-ground relationships, detailed policy knowledge, cross-country organization, and partnership with dedicated supporters, ending the dues skim would not have happened. Workers now have a voice and a choice about union membership, and they are able to keep more of their money to support their loved ones who need it most.

Criminal Justice Reform

In December 2018, President Trump signed into law the most sweeping criminal justice reform package in the last 30 years. Although this issue gained popularity in recent years from celebrities like Kim Kardashian, it actually started in Texas over 10 years ago thanks to the work of the Texas Public Policy Foundation.

This issue affects Americans who are incarcerated for minor crimes. After they are released from jail, several laws prevent their ability to earn a living, raise a family, and pursue the

American Dream. It's one of those rare issues that conservatives, liberals, and everyone in between can agree on. It's also another example of the federal government taking action following state reforms.

In the early 2000s, the Texas prison population had ballooned to more than 150,000 prisoners, and demand was growing for more prisons. In 2005, partly as a response to the incarceration crisis in Texas, TPPF launched Right on Crime, a national campaign focused on reducing crime, reforming offenders, and lowering taxpayer costs. The program shifted the criminal justice reform debate from "how can we best lock prisoners up?" to "how can we ensure justice is served and offenders are safely and effectively integrated back into society?"

This year, Texas-inspired criminal justice reform passed in more than a dozen states, and more states are taking up the issue in 2020.

Healthcare Reform

For almost a decade, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has been the law of the land, having a profound impact on our healthcare system. Since its enactment, policymakers at the federal level have faced challenges passing market-based alternatives given the size and scope of the law.

During the Obama Administration, State Policy Network brought Network leaders together to form a working group with a simple belief: States can and should be passing healthcare reform. Much of this was what we call "supply-side reforms" that make healthcare more affordable and accessible for Americans. We knew it was also critical—since most healthcare decisions still rest with the federal government—to work closely with policymakers to ensure states had a seat at the national table and could ignite innovative thinking in healthcare policy.

To this day, the Healthcare Working Group has been the federal government's go-to source for market-based alternatives to the ACA status-quo. The Working Group created a playbook to help states create better healthcare markets, giving people greater access to healthcare options and lowering costs. To date, the Working Group has helped 10 states submit Medicaid waivers for work requirements based on recommendations from the Working Group's Toolkit. The Working Group also helped pave the way for the passage of direct primary care in 26 states and its inclusion in the president's federal budget.

Solutions Accelerated

SPN creates a new program, LaunchPad, designed to jumpstart game-changing policy breakthroughs.



There is no shortage of bold ideas among State Policy Network's bench of exceptional think tank leaders. Anyone who has led a company or started a business will tell you that the hardest part about launching the next big thing—the idea that will fundamentally change society and improve lives—isn't the idea itself, but rather, turning that idea into something more.

That's where you come in. Through your support, you are helping turn *innovative ideas* into *actionable plans*—ensuring state leaders have the resources they need to implement market-based solutions that will make a difference in people's lives.

In the spirit of spurring solutions, SPN created LaunchPad in 2019, an incubation and acceleration lab where think tank leaders put their ideas to the test and leave with partners to help them solve seemingly impossible policy challenges. The

goal is to end with viable solutions that are vetted and ready to execute at the highest levels.

"LaunchPad is about taking an idea that can be implemented to solve a problem, and making it a reality," said Carrie Conko, SPN's vice president of communications. "It's not the type of event that theorizes about what's possible only to have people return to their desks and change nothing. People walk out energized with something to do."

LaunchPad's format is meant to put think tank leaders and their ideas through the wringer. For two days, selected project leaders immersed themselves with entrepreneurs, philanthropists, like-minded innovators, and specialists (or what we called the "Brain Trust") who challenged and improved their proposals. More than just pitching, project owners engaged with the Brain Trust to refine ideas until they became measurable, actionable strategies.



Five projects were selected for the first LaunchPad event in September 2019:

- **American Public Servants Association**, a national organization starting in New York in 2020, is a dependable, affordable alternative for the support and benefits currently only offered through government unions. It provides a choice for public employees who have been ill-served, or simply want out of the heavy-handed monopoly of government unions.
- **Foundation for Government Accountability's** project, "A Public Policy and Business Solution to Healthcare," is taking on the complex and costly problems associated with today's healthcare system, especially for small businesses. Currently, less than a third of small businesses offer healthcare coverage, which means they have trouble growing and retaining talent. FGA is exploring solutions that will give small businesses access to quality, affordable healthcare.
- **Libertas Institute's** project, "A New Legal Structure for Permissionless Innovation," seeks to break down antiquated regulatory barriers that keep disruptive entrepreneurs from creating businesses and opportunities in Utah. Using examples of "regulatory sandboxes" from countries like Japan and the United Kingdom, Libertas aims to create a new regulatory model that allows new services to incubate and thrive without the threat of being shut down.
- **Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs' "Save our States"** project is beating back the inequities of representation that would occur by eliminating the Electoral College, showing that if removed, many communities would be left without a voice. Progressives are pushing to get rid of the Electoral College, and have gained some traction in states.
- **Commonwealth Foundation's "American Mettle"** project connects struggling southern Pennsylvania business owners with the values that built once-thriving businesses. It engag-



YOU GET A WHOLE LOT OF HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTING COMPRESSED IN A SHORT TIME FRAME FOR PEOPLE WHO DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO THAT KIND OF ADVICE AND GUIDANCE. I SAW PROJECTS THAT WERE RADICALLY ALTERED IN A GOOD DIRECTION BECAUSE OF THE ADVICE OF THE BRAIN TRUST.

Tony Woodlief,
Executive Vice President, State Policy Network.

es them with lawmakers to achieve the tax and regulatory reforms needed for them to regain good health and restore a thriving business climate.

"I would describe it as 'wonderfully brutal,'" said Tarren Bragdon, CEO of the Foundation for Government Accountability.

"I felt like I'd been rock climbing for two days straight, except



using my brain instead of my arms. But in the end, it made me and our project stronger,” said Trent England, executive vice president at the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs.

“LaunchPad is one of the most highly leveraged things I’ve ever done with SPN,” said Tim Hoefer, executive director of the Empire Center and CEO of American Public Servants Association.

Members of the Brain Trust have built multi-million-dollar businesses, started their own companies, offer unmatched expertise in their respective fields, and have solved problems in their communities.

“Who solves problems fast? Entrepreneurs,” said Lynn Harsh, SPN’s vice president of strategy and creator of LaunchPad. “Why wouldn’t we bring talent like this to the policy space if we are trying to get innovative policy solutions?”

LaunchPad uses a co-creation and problem-solving format developed by the Universidad Francisco Marroquín’s Antigua Forum. Its guidelines are based on the principles of self-organization, and the work session is designed to unleash the vast knowledge, experience, commitment, and involvement that each participant brings to the table. The process unfolds over a couple of days, culminating in testable, concrete action plans.

“You get a whole lot of high-level consulting compressed in a short time frame for people who don’t have access to that kind of advice and guidance. I saw projects that were radically altered in a good direction because of the advice of the Brain Trust,” said Tony Woodlief, executive vice president of SPN.

“We got so much feedback on the first day that we actually pivoted our entire approach,” said Connor Boyack, president of the Libertas Institute. “We came away with radical specificity and clarity.”

SPN’s work at LaunchPad doesn’t end when the event is over.

At SPN’s inaugural LaunchPad event, five projects were evaluated by a collection of Brain Trust experts. Project leaders will continue working with SPN and Brain Trust members to iterate and strengthen their projects so they have the best chance of getting off the ground successfully.

As we do in all things, we invest in state think tanks for the long term. In 2020, thanks to your continued partnership, we will work alongside these innovators to address challenges, provide coaching and training when necessary, and identify opportunities to bring their ideas to life.

Due to popular demand and overwhelmingly positive feedback from participants, SPN will scale up the LaunchPad program in 2020, accepting up to 10 potential projects and expanding the Brain Trust.

With your support of Launchpad, you enable us to fill our role as the leading accelerator, connector, and incubator of free-market ideas in the states.

“This is part of who SPN is. Once you think you’re at the top of the mountain, SPN challenges you to go higher,” said Bragdon. “LaunchPad is an extension of that. I thought we were climbing the nonprofit think tank mountain, but then they introduced us to an even higher summit.”

LAUNCHPAD 2020

SPN is now accepting short-form project proposals for our next LaunchPad event on June 4-6, 2020. Learn more at spn.org/launchpad.





ALABAMA

ALABAMA POLICY INSTITUTE • alabamapolicy.org

The **Alabama Policy Institute** is raising awareness of the 2020 census and its importance for Alabama. Although each census is consequential to all 50 states, API understands the 2020 census to be especially significant to the state of Alabama. API detailed how a low turn-out could result not only in lower funding rates from the federal government but a loss of one, perhaps even two, congressional seats and, with them, votes in the Electoral College. API published an editorial detailing the importance of full participation in the census. Media outlets across the state—ranging from Alabama’s largest newspaper to small-town papers and online news sources—ran the editorial. In addition to API’s written work, API staff discussed the issue on local and statewide radio shows, explaining why the census should count every resident regardless of legal status. API’s public awareness effort also included speaking about census participation at various events around the state.

ALASKA

ALASKA POLICY FORUM • alaskapolicyforum.org

The state of Alaska continues to move forward with efforts to implement the *Janus* decision and restore the First Amendment rights of state employees. Most recently, the Governor issued an administrative order that moves the dues deduction authorization process out of union control and under state management. A new system is expected to be operational in early December 2019, and since it will nullify pre-existing dues deduction authorizations, all state employees who want to pay union dues will need to use the new form to opt in. With this new system, state employees will no longer be constrained to a 10-day annual window to make changes to their union dues authorization. The **Alaska Policy Forum** continues its partnership with the Mackinac Center for Public Policy on an educational campaign to inform government workers that they have the right to choose whether to pay money to a union. Since the *Janus* decision, nearly 10 percent of Alaska’s state employees have opted out.

ARIZONA

GOLDWATER INSTITUTE • goldwaterinstitute.org

New Jersey taxpayers in one of the state’s largest school districts will no longer be forced to pay for private union activities, thanks to a recent **Goldwater Institute** legal victory in *Rozenblit v. Jersey City School District*. This decision from the New Jersey Court of Appeals puts an end to an egregious form of government cronyism and helps ensure that private unions will no longer benefit from public dollars. Goldwater filed the case on behalf of taxpayers to challenge release time, a practice that pays government employees to work exclusively for government unions while still receiving their taxpayer-funded salaries and benefits. The case challenged the collective bargaining agreement between the Jersey City School District and the Jersey City Education Association, which required the district to pay the salaries of two full-time teachers who spent their time performing full-time union work rather than educating Hudson County children. This requirement cost taxpayers \$1.1 million.



ARKANSAS

ARKANSAS POLICY FOUNDATION • arkansaspolicyfoundation.org

Arkansas Policy Foundation noted how Arkansas is following in Arizona's footsteps by approving a measure that requires authorities to accept licenses, certificates, and permits that active duty service members, returning military veterans, and their spouses bring with them when relocating to Arkansas. In 2019, Arizona set a model for other states when it became the first to adopt universal recognition of occupational licenses. The measure's sponsor Senator Missy Irvin tweeted, "It is an incredible honor to pass legislation to help our Arkansas military and their families." Lieutenant Governor Tim Griffin said, "Our service members and their families are often required to move many times in the course of their military service, but employment and education opportunities for their spouses and children should not be limited by government red tape."



CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA POLICY CENTER • californiapolicycenter.org

California Policy Center is driving a digital marketing campaign to inform union members of their right to choose whether or not they want to join a union and pay dues. Working with multiple teams, CPC, in partnership with Mackinac Center for Public Policy, has identified and assisted thousands of public employees who want to exercise their right to opt out of the union. CPC also continues its work to promote school choice reforms across California. Thanks to the outreach of CPC's executive director of education and community relations, the Parent Union will open chapters in San Bernardino County and Kern County. The Parent Union unites parents with community members to ensure that all students receive an outstanding public education regardless of their zip code. These new chapters will provide parents with access to leadership training, allow parents to build stronger relationships with school officials, and teach parents to be better advocates for their children.



FREEDOM FOUNDATION OF CALIFORNIA • freedomfoundation.com

During September and October, **Freedom Foundation** sent tens of thousands of emails and mail to members of the California Teachers Association and the California School Employees Association and visited with more than 10,000 public employees at their government offices. Since the *Janus* decision, the Foundation has helped 20,000 Californians leave their union. The Foundation currently has eight active legal cases on behalf of public employees who are barred from having union dues deductions stopped. California attorneys for the Freedom Foundation recently settled two cases out of court with two different Service Employees International Union (SEIU) locals. In both cases, public employees were prevented from resigning union membership and cutting off their dues payments until the Foundation attorneys stepped in. Since the *Janus v. AFSCME* decision in June 2018, the Foundation has directly helped more than 60,000 people on the West Coast leave their union.



A recent **Pacific Research Institute** study found that capping the State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction brought broad-based tax relief to millions of Americans. The cap also saved taxpayers in low-tax states like Indiana from having to subsidize higher taxes and spending in states like California. Dr. Wayne Winegarden, PRI senior fellow in business and economics and author of “Making it Rain in California,” said, “Congress didn’t increase California’s tax burden—Sacramento politicians did. The State and Local Tax deduction encourages California to tax and spend more, subsidized by low-tax states. When Congress capped this special-interest tax break, millions received tax relief. Now Californians know how much Sacramento’s overspending really costs them.” The 2017 federal Tax Cut and Jobs Act reformed federal personal and corporate tax codes, including capping the State and Local Tax deduction at \$10,000.

COLORADO

The **Independence Institute** co-hosted the first annual Microgrid Conference on November 8, 2019. A microgrid is a small network of electricity users with a local source of supply that is usually attached to a centralized national grid but able to function independently. The Independence Institute, along with some environmentalists, believe microgrids are the wave of the future. For the Independence Institute, microgrids have the potential to revolutionize the energy sector, destroying the monopoly scheme and introducing a peer-to-peer business model. Neighbors will be able to “trade” energy with one another, and people will be free to choose their power generation source—whether that be natural gas, wind, solar, or small hydro. Pushing for the adoption of microgrids is something free marketeers and environmentalists can agree on.

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut is often called “the land of steady habits,” and one of those habits is certainly taxation. After a 2019 session filled with proposed tax expansion, **Yankee Institute for Public Policy** is spreading the word about how expansive taxation in Connecticut is. The online “CT Wheel of Taxes” features a virtual spinning wheel with over a dozen new or proposed taxes. With a robust ad campaign through the *Hartford Courant* and two physical tax wheels, Yankee Institute begs the question of Connecticut residents: “Are you tired of spinning?”



DELAWARE

CAESAR RODNEY INSTITUTE • caesarrodney.org

The **Caesar Rodney Institute** released new research on certificate-of-need (CON) laws in Delaware. CON laws require healthcare providers that want to expand or open a healthcare facility to first prove to federal or state regulatory agencies that the community needs the planned services. Associate Researcher Justin Chan examined the effect CON laws have on the healthcare market, and in particular what the certificate-of-need public review process looks like in Delaware. Chan outlined the arguments against and for the repeal of certificate-of-need laws. He found CON laws to be anti-competitive, inefficient, and costly—and made the case for the repeal of CON laws in Delaware.



FLORIDA

FOUNDATION FOR GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY • fga.org

The **Foundation for Government Accountability** released two new videos in its “Executive Excellence and Ideas in Action” series, featuring Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant and Arkansas State Representative Austin McCollum, respectively. In both videos, the state leaders shared innovative ways that they are working to increase opportunity and widen the path to the American Dream. FGA is also proud to announce the addition of Stephen Pryor to the organization’s board of directors. Pryor retired from his role as president of ExxonMobil Chemical Company in 2015 and brings a wealth of business and philanthropic experience to FGA’s board, as well as a shared dedication to increasing access to the American dream.



THE JAMES MADISON INSTITUTE • jamesmadison.org

Sal Nuzzo, vice president of policy at **The James Madison Institute**, was appointed by the Florida Governor to serve on Florida’s Government Efficiency Task Force. The Florida Constitution created the task force to develop recommendations for improving governmental operations and reducing costs. The task force is composed of 15 members and includes members of the Florida Legislature and representatives from the private and public sectors. Five members are appointed by the president of the Senate, five members are appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives, and five members are appointed by the Governor.



GEORGIA

GEORGIA CENTER FOR OPPORTUNITY • georgiaopportunity.org

Georgia Center for Opportunity’s 2019 Breakthrough Conference brought together nearly 200 local community organizations, business leaders, and philanthropists to explore solutions for addressing poverty through community connections. GCO focuses on expanding access to quality education, promoting gainful employment, and supporting strong family formation. By addressing these key areas, GCO believes it can expand access to the opportunities that all Americans should have. During the conference, organizations and leaders shared how they are using private-sector solutions to address community needs and reduce dependence on welfare systems while encouraging a higher sense of personal dignity. As a result of its work, graduation rates are rising, foster care families are receiving support, and job opportunities are growing in low-income areas. Through the event, GCO inspired attendees by showing the change that is possible when community organizations respond to local needs.





GEORGIA PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION • georgiapolicy.org

The **Georgia Public Policy Foundation** shared free-market solutions across Georgia through several unique events in the latter half of 2019: a “barnstorming” tour of South Georgia rural towns with partner organizations to promote education choice, an event in coastal Georgia on occupational licensing reform, and the one-day 2019 Georgia Legislative Policy Forum involving five think tanks and five policy issues. Both the Forum and the occupational licensing event highlighted Governor Brian Kemp’s Georgians First Commission, which reports that nearly half a million Georgians are required to have licenses to perform their jobs. The commission is seeking ways to reform licensing requirements. The Foundation’s Forum in November engaged legislators in market-oriented, limited-government approaches to issues important to Georgians, including education, healthcare, transportation, regulation and opportunity. Policy experts from the Mercatus Center and American Enterprise Institute, among others, shared their ideas at the event.

HAWAII



GRASSROOT INSTITUTE OF HAWAII • grassrootinstitute.org

Grassroot Institute of Hawaii shared homeowners’ concerns on a controversial anti-home-sharing law. But the Honolulu City Council passed the ordinance, throwing the status of vacation rentals on the island into chaos. As Grassroot warned, the new law raises significant questions about property ownership and constitutionality, and it is already being challenged in court. The outcome could affect similar legislation across the country. The debate over a \$15 minimum wage remains a major issue in Hawaii, and Grassroot is at the center of the discussion, highlighting the ways in which a wage hike will hurt local businesses and fail the people it is supposed to help. Grassroot’s stand-out online series, “Why We Left Hawaii,” has put a human face on the economic issues involved and illustrates why the policy focus should be on lowering the cost of living, not raising the minimum wage.

IDAHO



IDAHO FREEDOM FOUNDATION • idahofreedom.org

The **Idaho Freedom Foundation** published a report—“Are you kidding me, Boise?”—revealing that Boise City Hall wasted more than \$144 million in the last two fiscal years. The report inspired two conservative candidates to enter this year’s race for mayor. Prior to their entry, two candidates were on the ballot: the incumbent and a progressive city council member, each of whom promised more spending, more regulations, and ever-bigger government. IFF’s research changed the mayoral race dynamic to give voters a more robust and whole discussion about Boise’s future. Download the report at SMARTBoise.org. IFF’s advocacy and grassroots efforts have also put Common Core standards on the ropes in Idaho. Thanks to some legislative tomfoolery, all of Idaho’s regulatory codes expired on June 30, 2019. The following day, the governor re-authorized most regulations, but Common Core was not among them. Because Idaho education standards are written into state regulations, this created an opportunity for IFF supporters to demand Common Core repeal hearings.

ILLINOIS

ILLINOIS POLICY INSTITUTE • illinoispolicy.org

While state lawmakers were away on summer break, **Illinois Policy Institute's** 10,500-member taxpayer activist network, the Lincoln Lobby, was hard at work. In August, the Lincoln Lobby hosted a packed government watchdog bootcamp event with a leading Chicago-area watchdog reporter. And more than 1,800 members are now the proud owners of exclusive "Pain in the Gas" car magnets, a nod to Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker's recent doubling of the state's gas tax. Meanwhile, Illinois Policy's website experienced record traffic throughout the summer months without any paid advertising. More than 2.2 million unique users consumed the organization's policy content between June and August.



IOWA

TAX EDUCATION FOUNDATION OF IOWA • tefiowa.org

Tax Education Foundation of Iowa's policy director, John Hendrickson, partnered with Laura Ebke, Platte Institute's senior fellow for job licensing reform, to write an op-ed about the benefits of reducing barriers for workers. The Institute for Justice identifies Iowa as one of the states that both licenses a large number of occupations and imposes more burdensome requirements than most other states. Hendrickson and Ebke propose that Iowa consider the occupational licensure reforms that Nebraska recently implemented. Their op-ed was published by the three largest newspapers in Iowa. In an op-ed for *The Gazette*, TEF Iowa's Deputy Director, Walt Rogers, considered the pending implementation of the Affordable Care Act's Cadillac tax. The Cadillac tax imposes a 40 percent excise tax on all employer-sponsored health insurance plans, as well as workplace-provided healthcare and wellness programs. With more than 55 percent of all Iowans receiving health insurance coverage through an employer, the tax will hit Iowans especially hard, says Rogers.



KANSAS

KANSAS POLICY INSTITUTE • kansaspolicy.org

In a victory for free speech, Kansans can now advertise raw milk outside their property. The Kansas Justice Institute, the legal arm of the **Kansas Policy Institute**, won a lawsuit on behalf of Mark and Coraleen Bunner, dairy farmers who were banned from advertising their raw milk away from their farm. A state judge signed an order striking down this speech ban on First Amendment grounds. In September, KPI wrapped up its Candidate Policy Briefings, which engaged candidates running for public office, as well as the general public, in conversations about solutions to strengthen the state's economy and increase the success of Kansas' K-12 students. KPI also created The Sentinel as a remedy to keep media accountable. The Sentinel is a news source where Kansans can find important stories they wouldn't have access to otherwise. It prints weekly stories, garnering thousands of social media hits, on issues ranging from lack of transparency in local development projects to Medicaid expansion in Kansas and its hinderance of federal efforts to improve healthcare.





KENTUCKY

BLUEGRASS INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY SOLUTIONS • bipps.org

Former presidential candidate and diplomat Dr. Alan Keyes joined **Bluegrass Institute** president and CEO Jim Waters at the third annual Champions of Liberty event in Northern Kentucky. Hundreds of patriots from around the commonwealth attended the event, which included its first-ever policy breakout sessions on topics such as public pension reform and school choice. Bluegrass Institute Visiting Fellow Dr. Vicki Alger joined the Institute's education analyst, Richard Innes, to share with attendees the need for tax-credit scholarships, as well as a funding apparatus for charter schools in Kentucky. Waters also attended President Trump's address this summer in the East Room of the White House which laid out the administration's record on improving the environment. Trump noted that every country that signed the Paris Climate Accord has higher levels of carbon emissions than the United States. Waters was invited for a follow-up meeting in September with Trump's senior policy staff to discuss the president's policy agenda.

LOUISIANA

PELICAN INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • pelicaninstitute.org

Debate continues to swirl about the need for a limited constitutional convention in Louisiana. Why is a convention needed? How should it be structured? What would it accomplish? And how can constitutional reform play a powerful role in bringing jobs and opportunity to Louisiana? To help answer these questions and others, the **Pelican Institute for Public Policy** brought together national and state constitutional experts to take a hard look at the principles and ideas that animate a great state constitution. The constitutional convention forum was broken down by the three branches of state government, and the day was capped off with a robust discussion on the practical steps necessary to create a limited constitutional convention. In the coming months, Pelican will issue a report on the principles of effective state constitutions and host a webinar to further opportunities to share best practices and lessons learned across the Network.



MAINE

MAINE HERITAGE POLICY CENTER • mainepolicy.org

Maine Heritage Policy Center released new research in August analyzing the claims made by supporters of ranked-choice voting (RCV), a new voting system that Maine adopted as the result of a 2016 ballot initiative. The system is touted as an improvement to plurality voting because it produces majority winners. However, MHPC's analysis of 96 RCV races held throughout the country found that RCV produces a fake majority 61 percent of the time, which is the result of 11 percent of ballots becoming exhausted in the average RCV election. In conjunction with new MHPC research, the organization launched an online petition and received more than 600 signatures urging Governor Janet Mills to veto a bill that would expand RCV to presidential elections. The Legislature passed the bill during a special session in which lawmakers convened to consider a number of bonds proposed by Governor Mills. MHPC sent the petition and a letter to Governor Mills, who is letting the bill go into law without her signature. The Legislature has opportunity to make changes to it in the first three days of session when lawmakers return in January, but if they do not, the bill will become law.



MARYLAND

MARYLAND PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE • mdpolicy.org

The **Maryland Public Policy Institute** earned prominent media coverage for its analysis of Baltimore's spiraling violent crime crisis, as well as its examination of the teachers union's attempts to raise taxes to pay for \$3 billion in new education spending. In an op-ed featured in the *Baltimore Sun*, Institute Visiting Fellow Sean Kennedy considered how to curb violent crime. Kennedy was also invited to appear on several radio shows to discuss his idea for keeping violent offenders off Baltimore's streets. The Institute's Marta Mossburg was featured on Fox Baltimore and in the *Daily Record* outlining why dramatically increasing education spending will do little to improve student performance. In her latest post, the Institute's Carol Park shined a light on the state pension system's repeated failure to meet its investment benchmark, costing pension beneficiaries hundreds of millions of dollars.



MASSACHUSETTS

PIONEER INSTITUTE • pioneerinstitute.org

Pioneer Institute honored the winner and finalists of its Better Government Competition at an awards gala with National Transportation Safety Board Vice Chair Bruce Landsberg and Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker. The 2019 topic was transportation reform, and the winner was a career pathway program connected with the Los Angeles Metro public transit system. In education, Pioneer continues to fight Blaine amendments that block school choice in nearly 40 states. With the Supreme Court hearing the *Espinoza v. Montana Dept. of Revenue* case, there is renewed hope for a favorable decision that could end these legal obstacles. Pioneer discussed this topic on its new weekly education policy podcast, "Learning Curve," launched this fall in partnership with ChoiceMedia. Pioneer secured two victories for children enrolled in religious schools when its research served as the basis for the state legislature to restore full funding for parochial school nurses. This research also spurred the US Department of Education to order the state to restore funding for five years of federal special needs support that Massachusetts has been blocking for Bay State parochial schools.



MICHIGAN

MACKINAC CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • mackinac.org

On the basis of the 2018 *Janus* decision, the Mackinac Center Legal Foundation, a branch of the **Mackinac Center for Public Policy** launched a case against the State Bar of Michigan. The state requires any practicing attorneys to pay an annual bar association fee and maintain membership in the State Bar of Michigan. Much like unions, the State Bar can spend money on political speech and can support policy positions that its members may not be aligned with. Mackinac is arguing that forcing attorneys to become members of an organization that speaks with one voice is unnecessary and unconstitutional. The Mackinac Center Legal Foundation also launched a lawsuit against the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs. The department neglected to produce documents that were requested under the Freedom of Information Act. Shortly after the suit was filed, the documents were released. Access to public records is a fundamental element of making government transparent to the people, and Mackinac will continue to hold government accountable.





MINNESOTA

CENTER OF THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT • americanexperiment.org

Center of the American Experiment's Educated Teachers MN project helps Minnesota's educators evaluate their relationship with the teachers union and make informed decisions about union membership. Through radio, videos, billboards, direct mail pieces, and targeted social media campaigns, teachers learn they have the constitutional right to opt out of their workplace union and that there are alternatives to union membership. American Experiment conducted several focus groups with teachers to develop the project's messages, then tailored them to speak directly to individual teachers. American Experiment's efforts resulted in the union expanding teachers' annual opt-out period from seven days to 30 days. The campaign has helped free numerous teachers from financially supporting a union that does not speak for children, or even teachers, but instead pursues a heavily politicized agenda to which many of its members do not subscribe.

FREEDOM FOUNDATION OF MINNESOTA • freedomfoundation.publishpath.com

At the **Freedom Foundation of Minnesota's** annual Fall Capitol Club Happy Hour, FFM members were thrilled to hear political prognostications from one of the most prominent conservative writers in America: Ramesh Ponnuru. Ramesh, who writes for National Review and Bloomberg, is also a visiting fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and is widely recognized for his policy work, which proposes market-based solutions to some of the most vexing problems facing our country. Freedom Foundation Capitol Club members and their guests were not only treated to a fun evening, but they also learned firsthand what issues are likely to be at the forefront of the 2020 presidential race. In addition, Freedom Foundation of Minnesota CEO Annette Meeks announced at the event that FFM would host former United Nations Ambassador and South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley as the keynote speaker for its Annual Dinner, which took place on December 6, 2019.

MISSISSIPPI

EMPOWER MISSISSIPPI • empowerms.org

This fall, every child on the Education Scholarship Account (ESA) waitlist received a scholarship because of increased funding for the program. These children celebrated going back to school, and to mark the occasion, **Empower Mississippi** shared photos of these students headed into their classroom of choice, thanks to their Special Needs ESA. The fight to bring school choice to all Mississippi kids continues, and Empower President Grant Callen has carried that message across the state. Choice in Mississippi is growing—evidenced by the opening of Jackson's newest charter school. With the 2019 application cycle well underway, Empower hopes to see more education options in the state soon. Empower also remains committed to identifying solutions that break the cycle of incarceration by implementing best practices and removing barriers to work.

MISSISSIPPI CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • mspolicy.org

The Mississippi Justice Institute, the legal arm of the **Mississippi Center for Public Policy**, has filed a lawsuit against the Mississippi Board of Cosmetology on behalf of Dipa Bhat-tarai, an eyebrow threader who had her business shut down by the state. Mississippi law requires eyebrow threaders to obtain an esthetician's license to practice. But before they can do that, they must complete 600 hours of instructions over a minimum of 15 weeks and pass two exams. Not one hour of the classes covers eyebrow threading. "Our client is just trying to pursue the American Dream, by putting her own skills and work ethic to use in a safe and worthwhile trade," said Aaron Rice, the director of the Mississippi Justice Institute. "Unnecessary laws and regulations are preventing her from doing that. We want to help people like her fight back against this kind of job-killing red tape."



MISSISSIPPI CENTER FOR
PUBLIC POLICY

MISSOURI

SHOW-ME INSTITUTE • showmeinstitute.org

Over the past two years, the **Show-Me Institute** has filed hundreds of sunshine law requests across Missouri to provide the public with an inside look at how their government operates. Now, in response to fresh obstruction by the state, the Institute is taking legal action with the assistance of the Freedom Center of Missouri. For years, Missouri's Office of Administration has provided state employee contact information to the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), giving the union better access to potential members. When the Show-Me Institute learned about this arrangement, Director of Government Accountability Patrick Ishmael filed requests for copies of the information that had been provided to AFSCME. Ishmael received the documents—but with 90 percent of the material redacted. Missourians deserve a government that is open and accountable to everyone. With its transparency push and this litigation, the Institute is working to ensure that happens.



NEBRASKA

PLATTE INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC RESEARCH • platteinstitute.org

Time may be running out for the Nebraska Legislature to enact major reforms to the state's property tax. In absence of legislative action on the country's seventh-highest property taxes, activists are now gathering signatures for a ballot measure that would put the state on the hook for rebating 35 percent of local property taxes. While the proposal sounds good on the surface, it wouldn't cut the state's high tax rates and could unintentionally cause major tax increases. That's why, with only a short 60-day legislative session standing between the Legislature and the possibility of voters heading to the polls on the issue, the **Platte Institute** is working to give policymakers every option for offering a better plan. To help gather input from Nebraskans, Platte spent the summer holding a series of Property Tax Reform Town Halls across the state. State senators, including Revenue Committee Chair Sen. Lou Ann Linehan, served as panelists at the public events.





NEVADA

NEVADA POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE • npri.org

The **Nevada Policy Research Institute** released its new Legislative Report Card in September 2019. In addition to scoring lawmakers on their overall voting record, the report card also ranked lawmakers in individual policy areas, giving Nevadans a more in-depth look at whether lawmakers—regardless of their overall score—truly fought for taxpayer interests. These rankings went beyond how lawmakers voted and included the actions they took behind the scenes to promote or oppose legislation. The result was a truly non-partisan analysis of lawmakers' actions. Two Democrats earned top marks in two separate categories (transparency and criminal justice), while Republican leadership earned high marks for their actions on tax-related issues, education, and worker freedom policies. The new approach to the report card gives taxpayers a unique look at the legislative session in an otherwise partisan and noisy political climate. The report can be found at NevadaPolicy.org.



NEW HAMPSHIRE

JOSIAH BARTLETT CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • jbartlett.org

In an op-ed for the *New Hampshire Union Leader*, Andrew Cline, president of the **Josiah Bartlett Center for Public Policy**, considered how New Hampshire legislators are misleading the public about their budget. Contrary to the assertions of legislative leaders, Cline points out that the budget does, in fact, raise business tax rates. Instead of being up-front with this fact, policymakers are trying to hide it. Cline also called out another inaccurate claim by legislative leaders: The New Hampshire Governor vetoed the budget to give further tax cuts that “would mainly benefit out-of-state corporations.” Cline exposed the flaws in this statement by highlighting the fact that all businesses in New Hampshire pay the same tax rates. Instead of making the case for why their spending priorities are worth the higher taxes, New Hampshire legislative leaders are claiming the state can have \$500,000 in new spending without raising taxes, and it can’t, says Cline.



NEW JERSEY

GARDEN STATE INITIATIVE • gardenstateinitiative.org

Garden State Initiative President Regina M. Egea authored an op-ed, which appeared on NJ.com and in the *Star-Ledger*, the state’s largest news website and newspaper, rebutting an op-ed from Governor Phil Murphy that praised the state of the economy under his stewardship. The response used public data to address New Jersey’s stagnant economic growth and hostile business climate, and Egea’s counter op-ed has resulted in multiple additional media opportunities to raise the profile of GSI and further a frank and public questioning of the Murphy administration’s policies, as well as the overall direction of New Jersey as a place to live and do business.

NEW MEXICO

RIO GRANDE FOUNDATION • riograndefoundation.org

Thanks to legislation passed into law earlier this year, New Mexico is set to massively expand its film subsidy programs. The state will spend an estimated \$750 million over the next five years on film subsidies. To bring attention to this terrible policy, the **Rio Grande Foundation** produced a short film (unsubsidized) and distributed it around the state, receiving hundreds of views. In addition to fighting Hollywood handouts, the Foundation took a leadership role in a debate over Bernalillo County's proposed mandatory paid time off ordinance. The Foundation put together an "open letter" to the Bernalillo County Commission (and the public) detailing the numerous major issues with the proposal aside from the fact that it is simply not the county's job to regulate how many days off employees receive. The Foundation also filed a lawsuit (still pending) against the county for failure to release basic public records relating to the Commission's communications on the mandatory paid leave issue.



NEW YORK

EMPIRE CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY • empirecenter.org

After a 10-year legal battle, a state Supreme Court justice in Manhattan ruled that New York City must release the names of city police officers receiving public pensions to the **Empire Center for Public Policy**. Empire had filed a series of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests with the city's Police Pension Fund, requesting retiree names and benefit amounts be posted at SeeThroughNY.net. The police pension fund would only provide a list of pension amounts with retiree names withheld, claiming disclosure could expose former officers to threats against their personal safety. In the decision, Justice Melissa A. Crane said: "Public employees do not enjoy the same privacy rights as private sector employees. Disclosure of police officer [retiree] names would lead to a higher level of accountability, and would also discourage occurrence of pension 'double dipping.'" It's a great win for transparency, reaffirming taxpayers' right to know how their money is being spent.



NORTH CAROLINA

CIVITAS INSTITUTE • nccivitas.org

Dr. Andy Jackson, **Civitas Institute's** elections policy analyst, dug beneath the surface of the absentee ballot, uncovering issues that triggered a special election in North Carolina's Ninth Congressional District. His investigative work offered the context and coverage necessary to ensure North Carolina's elections are secure and fair. Fighting Medicaid expansion continues to be the chief policy battle in the state, and in an effort to inform the public and decision makers on this issue, Civitas President Donald Bryson teamed up with Pelican Institute CEO Daniel Erspamer. In their op-ed published in the *Greensboro News-Record*, Erspamer and Bryson make the case that Medicaid expansion is not a healthy policy response to what ails healthcare in North Carolina. Civitas' latest statewide public opinion poll asked likely voters about their support for socialism, and responses indicated a slight decline in support since February 2019.





JOHN LOCKE FOUNDATION • johnlocke.org

North Carolina's criminal code is complex and spread out all over the place. Crimes exist in more than 140 chapters of North Carolina's General Statutes. Agencies, boards, and commissions have created other crimes by rule and scattered them across the Administrative Code. Countless additional crimes can be found in county, city, and town ordinances. Many of these laws are outdated, duplicative, and even unconstitutional. Thanks to the **John Locke Foundation's** work to elevate the issue with state and local policymakers, reforms to make the criminal code effective and fair are advancing in North Carolina. The Foundation recently partnered with the Cato Institute to hold an event featuring lawmakers, the legal community, and law enforcement on how to fix the criminal code. A few legislative victories recently passed, including a requirement that any new agency rule carrying criminal penalties be subjected to automatic legislative review.

OHIO



THE BUCKEYE INSTITUTE • buckeyeinstitute.org

The story is the same nationwide—an entrenched and powerful special interest uses the government to protect it against competition. The result is also the same: economic harm. When it comes to occupational licensing, the greatest economic harm is to individual workers. A neighbor can't afford to begin a new career because the license costs too much money. Or hardworking employees deserve promotions but are rejected because they don't have government licenses. **The Buckeye Institute** is pushing back against this crony capitalism that benefits the well-connected, while needlessly making it harder for people to start new jobs. And Buckeye is winning! Following the adoption of Buckeye-created reforms—which gave policymakers tools to review and ensure job licenses were truly needed—Buckeye is reviewing Ohio's licenses to identify which can be eliminated (is an auctioneer license really necessary?), which should have the number of training hours reduced (why does Ohio require more training hours than New York for cosmetologists?), and which need to be maintained to safeguard public health and safety.

OKLAHOMA



OKLAHOMA COUNCIL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS • ocpathink.org

The **Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs** continues to lead the charge to protect and preserve the Electoral College through its Save Our States project. OCPA Executive Vice President Trent England directs the project, and a new associated website—saveourstates.com—launched in early September 2019. The project pushes back against efforts to indirectly repeal the Electoral College through the National Popular Vote interstate compact. England has been called on to testify before lawmakers and address officials across the nation, demonstrating how the Electoral College is a check-and-balance against regionalism and factionalism in national politics. In recent months, England's arguments have run in publications such as *USA Today* and Hillsdale's *Imprimis* speech digest, and England has appeared on Fox & Friends to discuss the importance of preserving the Electoral College.

OREGON

CASCADE POLICY INSTITUTE • cascadepolicy.org

Cascade Policy Institute maintains an array of programs designed to educate the public about the value of freedom and fiscally responsible, market-based policy reforms. The Institute's portfolio of regular events includes monthly roundtable discussions held at its headquarters, lunch/dinner events, receptions featuring expert guest speakers and authors, and benefactor socials. As Cascade's staff, board, and regular event attendees have increased in number, previous office space was no longer adequate. In Fall 2019, Cascade expanded the size of its office by roughly 40 percent by leasing adjacent space in its current building. The new suite was converted into a multipurpose conference space capable of hosting events that were previously planned offsite or offered only to smaller numbers of people. Acquiring and adapting this additional suite will dramatically increase Cascade's ability to expand its regular educational and outreach programs. Cascade's headquarters expansion now houses educational presentations with seating for up to 50 people and portable work space for group research projects and Cascade's internship program.



FREEDOM FOUNDATION OF OREGON • freedomfoundation.com

During the summer months, **Freedom Foundation of Oregon** executed a successful outreach campaign to teachers through billboards, emails, direct mail, and door-to-door visits. Freedom Foundation has now directly helped nearly 60,000 government employees leave their unions and stop paying dues; nearly 18,000 of those are from Oregon. In August, the Freedom Foundation of Oregon announced it had hired a new state director, Mike Nearman. Nearman serves as a state representative in the Oregon Legislature and is a long-time ally of the Freedom Foundation. "The two positions complement one another perfectly," Nearman said of his roles as lawmaker and Freedom Foundation's Oregon director. "When I'm wearing my politician hat, my job is to safeguard the rights and advance the best interests of my constituents. As Oregon director for the Freedom Foundation, I'll be doing the same thing for the whole state."



PENNSYLVANIA

COMMONWEALTH FOUNDATION • commonwealthfoundation.org

After the *Janus v. AFSCME* decision, government union leaders are striking back at the state level by pushing legislation benefiting their special interests at workers' expense. A new report from **Commonwealth Foundation** examines the *Janus* decision's impact and grades each state A-F for its public sector labor laws. In many states, government union leaders and their allies are undermining *Janus*; in a few other states, workers' constitutional rights are being enforced and related reforms are advancing. In 2019 alone, over 100 *Janus*-related bills were introduced in the states. California (graded "F") and Rhode Island (graded "D") have seen new laws that allow union leaders to sidestep or weaken the ruling and codify other union privileges. Twenty-one other states earned "D" or "F" grades. Meanwhile, individual workers are standing up to the union machine. In the year since *Janus*, public workers filed over 70 lawsuits seeking to recover union fees, challenge exclusive representation, or break through membership resignation restrictions.





RHODE ISLAND

RHODE ISLAND CENTER FOR FREEDOM & PROSPERITY • rifreedom.org

The **Rhode Island Center for Freedom & Prosperity** released the Freedom Index in September 2019. The index examines legislators' voting records in terms of their likely effect on the free market, the size and scope of government, the balance of residents' interests against those of public employees and beneficiaries, and the constitutional structure of a divided government with limited power over the people it represents. Rhode Island ranks at the very bottom of many economic prosperity lists, and the state is losing families and friends to states that have more freedom. The citizens of Rhode Island deserve to know why this is happening, and the Center's index has the best data demonstrating the state's broken political system. See the Freedom Index page at rifreedom.org/freedomindex.

SOUTH CAROLINA

PALMETTO PROMISE INSTITUTE • palmettopromise.org

A recent poll conducted by the South Carolina Chamber of Commerce shows that 71 percent of registered voters support a simpler state tax code. Since 2017, **Palmetto Promise Institute** has been doing the research to show how South Carolina's unfair, unstable, and uncompetitive tax system is killing the little guy. The good news: States like North Carolina have created a reform roadmap that shows the way to create fairness for hardworking South Carolina citizens, fund the state's promises and essential government services, and create the jobs and opportunities of tomorrow. Simple. Fair. Low. Palmetto Promise is glad to know that voters are getting the message. Now it's time for lawmakers to act.



TENNESSEE

BEACON CENTER OF TENNESSEE • beacontn.org

Thousands of people across the United States are moving to Tennessee each year. While their reasons may vary, many choose to live in Tennessee because of state-level policies such as right-to-work, no state income tax, low taxes, and low levels of debt. These policies are well-known and their benefits well-documented. While the state you live in certainly has a large impact on your life, so does the city you live in. The **Beacon Center of Tennessee** has found few resources on the best places to live *within* Tennessee, given local-level policies. The Beacon Center is releasing—for the first time—a "City Freedom Index." This report will evaluate and rank Tennessee's 30 most populous cities in the categories of individual liberty, private property, free enterprise, and tax burden. For a more detailed breakdown of the categories, please visit beacontn.org/introducing-the-city-freedom-index.



TEXAS

TEXAS PUBLIC POLICY FOUNDATION • texaspolicy.com

The **Texas Public Policy Foundation** published a new policy perspective, “The Conservative Texas Budget: A Review of the First Three Biennia,” by the Honorable Talmadge Heflin and Bill Peacock. The paper considers the trend in Texas state government spending since the introduction of the Conservative Texas Budget (CTB) in 2015. The CTB sets growth limits on state appropriations and spending to no more than population growth plus inflation. This ceiling provides Texas policymakers and the public with an upper limit on how much the state should spend. “Our research shows that the spending of state funds has grown more slowly since the introduction of the Conservative Texas Budget than it had in the previous decade,” said author Talmadge Heflin. TPPF is also excited to announce Brian Blase has joined the organization as a senior fellow for Right on Healthcare. Blase was previously a special assistant on the President’s White House Economic Council for economic policy.



UTAH

LIBERTAS INSTITUTE • libertasutah.org

The Utah Legislature will soon hold a special session to make improvements to the Utah Medical Cannabis Act, based on the input and work of **Libertas Institute**. For months, the policy team has been meeting with regulators and stakeholders to identify opportunities to reduce bureaucracy and improve patient access in order to make the program more free-market-friendly. Drug decriminalization remains a top focus for Libertas Institute because reforming the criminal justice system will not be successful without addressing one of the biggest reasons why people enter the system in the first place. Also critical to success: finding solutions that divert people away from a system that often perpetrates more injustice than justice.



SUTHERLAND INSTITUTE • sutherlandinstitute.org

Doris Kearns Goodwin—the world-renowned presidential historian, public speaker, and *New York Times* best-selling author—keynoted the **Sutherland Institute**’s 25th anniversary gala on November 9, 2019. Goodwin won the Pulitzer Prize in history for her book *No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt: The Home Front in World War II*. Her book *Team of Rivals* was the basis for Steven Spielberg’s hit film *Lincoln*. Grammy-nominated recording artist Jenny Oaks Baker also performed at the November gala. Baker is an acclaimed violinist and former member of the National Symphony Orchestra. For 25 years, Sutherland has proudly provided independent research and principled policy perspective to Utah’s Legislature and local communities—on issues that affect the entire state. More information on the gala can be found at sutherlandinstitute.org/gala.





VERMONT

ETHAN ALLEN INSTITUTE • ethanallen.org

A survey conducted by Vermont's Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce found that 40 percent of young professionals between the ages of 22 and 34 plan on leaving the state. In a new column, **Ethan Allen Institute** President Rob Roper considered why these young professionals might be moving away. Roper tells the story of two young professionals, both life-long Vermonters, who are leaving the Green Mountain State for Wisconsin and North Carolina, and he explains why Wisconsin and North Carolina's recent enactment of conservative policies might be a factor in these young professionals' decisions. Unlike Vermont, Wisconsin and North Carolina have embraced policies such as lower taxes and limited government—policies that have spurred economic growth while reducing unemployment. Roper argues that Vermont's high minimum wage, universal pre-K program, and green energy policies are not keeping these young people around, and the absence of these policies in North Carolina and Wisconsin was not a deterrent to these young people moving in.

VIRGINIA



THOMAS JEFFERSON INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • thomasjeffersoninst.org

Faced with the likelihood of a November General Assembly election that will fill the legislature with elected officials antagonistic to policies promoting economic growth, the **Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy** launched a "Protecting Prosperity" series to educate Virginians about the dangers to its foundations of economic prosperity. The first issue focuses on approval of a Virginia version of the "Green New Deal"—participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) designed to reduce carbon emissions from electric plants. Not only are carbon reductions already being achieved, but participation would cost consumers up to \$6 billion that state leaders would propose to spend in other areas. The measure was blocked by a one-vote General Assembly this year, but it could be reversed by a new legislature next year. A new General Assembly could bring other threats, such as massive increases in the state minimum wage and a repeal of Virginia's 72-year-old right-to-work law. As it addresses these issues, the Institute plans to expand communication efforts to include short videos and social media advertising.



VIRGINIA INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY • virginiainstitute.org

Tuesday Morning Group (TMG) coalition's Local Initiative, a project of the **Virginia Institute for Public Policy**, has been gaining steam since its inception in May 2019. In July, American Majority joined the TMG coalition to discuss how advocacy groups and individual activists can facilitate successes in government relations. This discussion included training on how to drive the conversation with legislators and their staff, how to appropriately and civilly communicate with a hostile legislator, and the real significance of saying "thank you" in the context of public policy. After the meeting, TMG members were excited to immediately use these lessons as the Virginia Legislature came into special session to consider gun control at the behest of Governor Northam. This session was adjourned almost immediately, but not before the TMG coalition had an opportunity to deploy its new tools in relationship-building and management.

WASHINGTON

FREEDOM FOUNDATION OF WASHINGTON • freedomfoundation.com

Freedom Foundation has directly helped nearly 60,000 government employees leave their union and stop paying dues—20,000 of those in Washington State alone. In August, the Foundation filed six complaints with the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) against three cities and three unions for violating campaign finance laws. The Freedom Foundation contended that these cities and unions tried to prevent local activists from placing measures on their respective 2014 ballots that would make government union dues optional and require transparency in collective bargaining negotiations. Washington State Attorney General Bob Ferguson filed suit against the Foundation in 2015 for failing to disclose pro bono legal services to the previously mentioned citizen activists after union leaders complained this legal advice amounted to a campaign violation. State courts were divided about the merits of the attorney general's suit, but the state Supreme Court ultimately ruled in favor of the unions and against the Foundation. The complaints filed this August by the Freedom Foundation will reveal whether what's good for the goose actually is good for the gander.

WASHINGTON POLICY CENTER • washingtonpolicy.org

Days before the \$400-million class-action lawsuit against the largest transit agency in Washington state was to begin oral arguments before the state Supreme Court, **Washington Policy Center's** Mariya Frost found that Sound Transit was not using the vehicle depreciation schedule it had informed the court, lawmakers, and the public that it was required to follow. WPC shared this finding with Joel Ard, the attorney representing taxpayers in the case. Twenty-four hours prior to the hearing, Joel informed Sound Transit of its error, and the next day—just one hour before the hearing—the state Attorney General's office said it would not present at oral arguments. It admitted that it had been inaccurate in its brief defending Sound Transit's collection of the tax. WPC research threw a major wrench in the case, validating the frustration taxpayers have felt for years. WPC will continue to track the case, which should be decided before the end of 2019.

WEST VIRGINIA

CARDINAL INSTITUTE FOR WEST VIRGINIA POLICY • cardinalinstitute.com

In partnership with the Kneer Center for the Study of Occupational Regulation at Saint Francis University, the **Cardinal Institute for West Virginia Policy** released the final portion of research from a survey of the respective occupational licensing regimes in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. The study found West Virginia has higher renewal fees and more licensing boards than its two neighbors. Lead researcher Dr. Ed Timmons commented, "It was surprising to find how much higher licensing fees in West Virginia were relative to Pennsylvania and Ohio. West Virginia has a median income that is more than \$10,000 lower than Pennsylvania and Ohio, yet many occupations in West Virginia have initial and renewal licensing fees that are more than \$100 more annually than both states. It is hard to justify this difference in fees."





WISCONSIN

BADGER INSTITUTE • badgerinstitute.org

In early September, the **Badger Institute** released a video telling the story of The Hop, a \$128 million Milwaukee streetcar boondoggle, to explain how federal grants distort local decision-making, drive up costs, and blur the lines of federalism. The Institute produced the video, “Taxpayers Taken for a Ride,” in conjunction with the Interstate Policy Alliance. The story details a decades-long trail of federal grants that squandered taxpayer money and incentivized a series of bad decisions that ultimately led to the streetcar. The video contrasts the expensive and inflexible streetcar, which travels a 2.1-mile downtown loop, with the Joseph Project, a Milwaukee transportation enterprise that rejects government funding and helps central city residents secure well-paying manufacturing jobs in neighboring counties.

MACIVER INSTITUTE • maciverinstitute.com

The **MacIver Institute**, with the help of its friends at the Liberty Justice Center, took the Wisconsin Governor to federal court over the exclusion of MacIver journalists from public press briefings and Governor Evers’ refusal to provide MacIver with press material that is shared with other news outlets. Since Governor Evers took office in January 2019, his administration has refused to include MacIver News Service reporters on invitations to press events, which makes it harder for the news outlet’s reporters to stay up-to-speed on the governor’s activities. The Evers administration also blocked MacIver journalists from participating in a budget press briefing that was open to other journalists. The Evers administration’s actions violate the journalists’ constitutional right to free speech, freedom of the press, and equal access. While no press outlet has a constitutional right to an exclusive interview or off-the-record tidbit, government officials may not target certain journalists that they disfavor for discriminatory treatment.

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

A new study from the **Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty** found that states with better healthcare price transparency have lower healthcare costs. Using four years of data from the Centers for Disease Control and state rankings of price transparency from Catalyst for Payment Reform, WILL performed statistical analysis to isolate the effect of price transparency on healthcare costs. The result was states with better transparency laws had about seven percent fewer survey respondents reporting that they could not afford care. The finding is critical and lends support to state and federal efforts to foster price transparency in healthcare as a way to lower costs and increase consumer choice. To foster greater price transparency, WILL suggests making databases more useful to consumers as well as a bi-partisan bill in Congress that requires price disclosure.

WYOMING

WYOMING LIBERTY GROUP • wyliberty.org

The **Wyoming Liberty Group** provided testimony to help defeat loopholes that have allowed state officials to withhold public records, preserving transparency laws passed last year. Wyoming Liberty is also working to modernize outdated “neglect” statutes to promote parental rights—an issue on the horizon this session. Wyoming Liberty is working to ensure that Medicaid coverage continues to reach the people for whom the program was originally intended. Wyoming is one of only 13 remaining states that have not expanded Medicaid. Wyoming Liberty is anticipating a ballot initiative that will seek to expand Medicaid in Wyoming next year. In education policy, Wyoming Liberty is working with legislators to champion Education Savings Account legislation, specifically Child Safety Accounts (CSAs), to better serve at-risk youth in the state of Wyoming.



MEMBER TESTIMONY:

Ed Robinson & Carole Wade

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

- ED ROBINSON



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

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

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

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

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

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



1851 CENTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL LAW • ohioconstitution.org

The **1851 Center for Constitutional Law** successfully enjoined a state statute forbidding “serving in the election campaign organization of a candidate for the purpose of reporting information.” This clears the way for citizen journalists to “go undercover” and unearth corruption, hidden intentions, hypocrisy, and other dishonesty that could not otherwise be exposed. In *White v. Cincinnati*, the Center is challenging exactions that require homeowners with a security alarm to pay a fee for the “privilege” of telephoning the police. In *Stevens v. Columbus*, the Center is challenging regulations prohibiting gardens in historic districts.

1889 INSTITUTE

1889 INSTITUTE • 1889institute.org

1889 Institute’s constant drumbeat opposing occupational licensing appears to be paying off in some ways. *The Oklahoman* editorial board recently cited 1889’s work, specifically in response to 1889’s “Oklahoma Licensing Directory” entry critical of massage therapy and abstracting licensing. The editorial ended with “The 1889 Institute should keep its recommendations coming.” In addition, one Oklahoma legislator is sponsoring a study to look into barber licensing. With considerable pressure on Oklahoma’s Legislature to join most other states in expanding Medicaid, 1889 published a plain-language review of research from Colorado showing how hospitals responded with higher prices and more bloat. After Oklahoma sued opioid manufacturers on the dubious legal basis of “public nuisance,” 1889 Institute is publishing a paper showing how the state’s Supreme Court overstepped its bounds. It calls for changing the state’s constitution so that justices are not effectively chosen by the trial bar.

ACTON
INSTITUTE

ACTON INSTITUTE • acton.org

The **Acton Institute** reached an international audience of influencers when *The Wall Street Journal* published a profile of Acton, which included an extended look at the ministry of co-founder Rev. Robert Sirico. “When the Market Meets Morality” by William McGurn introduced a critical group of thought leaders to Acton’s work of promoting a free and virtuous society and uniting markets with morality. MacGurn writes that, like Lord Acton, “Father Sirico and his merry band argue that political liberty and economic liberty are the guarantors of religious liberty.” The message from the article is clear: The Acton Institute embodies the lessons society has learned over the last half-century. Namely, culture, not command, will transform the public square. McGurn concludes by encapsulating Acton’s message in two pithy sentences: “‘The answer isn’t to head to the hills,’ Father Sirico says. ‘The answer is a simultaneous liberality in our economy and vigor in our moral stances.’”



AMERICAN CONSUMER INSTITUTE • theamericanconsumer.org

In July 2019, the **American Consumer Institute** launched its new webinar series, with the first focusing on tech policy related issues, including privacy, robocalls, and the future of 5G. Special guests included: Roslyn Layton, visiting scholar from AEI; Zenji Nakazawa, legal advisor to the Federal Communications Commission Chairman; and Tom Struble, technology policy manager and counsel for the R Street Institute. ACI also released a ConsumerGram focusing on the unintended consequences of net metering, a billing scheme in which customers who generate their own power are compensated monetarily. While the concept of promoting rooftop solar energy via subsidies might seem like a good idea on paper, ACI’s ConsumerGram shows that net metering can lead to higher costs for all consumers.

AMERICAN COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES AND ALUMNI • goacta.org

The **American Council of Trustees and Alumni** filed an amicus brief for the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. Independent Women's Forum joined ACTA in submitting the brief, which supports Speech First in its legal battle with the University of Texas-Austin. ACTA and IWF believe that UT-Austin's campus climate response teams and speech restrictions have fostered an environment that silences debate and discourse on its campus. The amicus brief reveals the motives and procedures UT-Austin has for limitations of student speech. "The academy's mission is to prepare students to be informed and engaged citizens, but this cannot happen when ideas are sidelined, ignored, or even banned based upon political bias," stated Michael Poliakoff, president of ACTA. "These strategically vague speech policies are instruments to deter viewpoint diversity and diminish the free exchange of ideals."



AMERICAN ENTERPRISE INSTITUTE • aei.org

The **American Enterprise Institute** has welcomed a new research division, a new publication, and new scholars during 2019. In June, Dr. Yuval Levin, founding editor of *National Affairs*, joined AEI as a resident scholar and the director of the newly established Social, Cultural, and Constitutional Studies division. The new department will study the foundations of self-government and the future of law, regulation, and constitutionalism. It will also explore the state of American social, political, and civic life, focusing on the preconditions necessary for family, community, and country to flourish. Levin will continue to act as editor-in-chief of *National Affairs*, which is now permanently housed at AEI. In August, AEI announced that several new scholars will join the division. Two scholars will reside full-time at AEI, with five additional scholars joining as part-time visitors to pursue scholarly projects. The scholars are Adam J. White, Matthew Continetti, Diana Schaub, Greg Weiner, J.D. Vance, Michael Brendan Dougherty, and Ross Douthat. AEI looks forward to the phenomenal research they will produce.



AMERICA'S FUTURE FOUNDATION • americasfuture.org

In fall 2014, **America's Future Foundation** kicked off the first session of the Writing Fellows Program with seven aspiring young writers in Washington, DC. In the five years since, the program has grown exponentially and now boasts 235 alumni from across the country who are important voices in media, policy, and beyond. With the mainstream media in the United States flooded with liberal writers and editors, the freedom movement needs talented writers who believe in free markets and individual liberty. This six-week program trains liberty-minded young professionals in writing for policy, journalism, and more, and teaches them how to get published. After three years of strong in-person cohorts, the program expanded to offer a separate virtual-only fellowship. Alumni of the Writing Fellows Program have gone on to work as reporters and opinion writers at prominent media outlets, as staffers in the White House and on Capitol Hill, and as senior fellows at think tanks.



ATLAS NETWORK • atlasnetwork.org

The **Atlas Network's** 2019 Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner took place in New York City from November 6–7, 2019. The event brought together more than 800 liberty-minded individuals from all over the world to exchange ideas and share strategies, in addition to recognizing think tanks for exemplary performance with the prestigious \$100,000 Templeton Freedom Award, the global Think Tank Shark Tank Competition, the John Blundell Elevator Pitch Competition, and the Lights, Camera, Liberty Film Festival.





BENJAMIN RUSH INSTITUTE • benjaminrushinstitute.org

The **Benjamin Rush Institute** welcomed back-to-school medical students in 17 states and three countries this fall. BRI's chapter leaders were busy this summer planning exciting events, starting with school-wide organization fairs. BRI chapters organized debates on single-payer healthcare, participated in podcasts on climate change curriculum in medical schools, and planned meet-and-greets with prominent physicians and book club meetings. Thanks to free-market partners and donors, BRI celebrated its 10th year in 2019. BRI students hold hundreds of events every year, educating thousands of students on positive, proven free-market healthcare policies that preserve and protect the most fundamental of medical relationships—that of doctor-patient. To help continue growth in every state, to every medical school, and into resident programs and dentistry schools, visit BRI's website to make a donation.



CAPITAL RESEARCH CENTER • capitalresearch.org

The Wall Street Journal's Kimberly Strassel featured **Capital Research Center** investigations in her "Potomac Watch" column. Despite launching on-going attacks on so-called "dark money" organizations like the National Rifle Association and various Koch-affiliated nonprofits, CRC's research shows that the Left outspends the Right on politically active nonprofits and nominally nonpartisan voter registration efforts in swing states. Some of the Left's deepest and darkest pockets are hidden behind the for-profit corporate veil of Arabella Advisors, the subject of another CRC investigation. But CRC's latest investigation into the Proteus Fund shows that there is more "dark money" in the Left's political playbook. CRC's Hayden Ludwig demonstrates how Proteus fiscally sponsors "projects" focused on liberal social issues, campaign finance, and foreign policy. At the state level, look for more fiscally sponsored voter registration groups with little or no disclosure and groups volunteering to help with the 2020 census count.



CITIZENS' COUNCIL FOR HEALTH FREEDOM • cchfreedom.org

The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Quality Summit selected **Citizens' Council for Health Freedom** President and Co-Founder Twila Brase to serve with a small, prestigious group of experts who will explore solutions to the delivery of healthcare in the United States. HHS Deputy Secretary Eric D. Hargan and Peter Pronovost, a renowned expert of healthcare quality and patient safety, co-chaired the summit. Brase was chosen from a group of more than 300 highly qualified nominees. This summit follows an executive order from President Donald Trump in June 2019, directing federal agencies to develop a Health Quality Roadmap to "align and improve government administration of quality in healthcare delivery."



DONORSTRUST • donorstrust.org

Have you considered the legacy you'd like to leave? Wondered how a charitable remainder trust works? What wording do donors need to include in their will to continue supporting the groups they give to today? How can a donor-advised fund protect a donor's wishes? With the massive generational wealth transfer already underway, you need to understand these answers. To help, **DonorsTrust** has launched a new planned giving website with calculators, tools, and resources to help organizations and donors develop strategies for complex gifts

and estate plans. This resource adds to the in-person presentations that DonorsTrust has done in partnership with Texas Public Policy Foundation, Kansas Policy Institute, Goldwater Institute, Atlas Network, and others. How can DonorsTrust help you with planned giving? Visit donorstrust.org or contact Stephanie Lips (slips@donorstrust.org) to learn more.

FIRST LIBERTY INSTITUTE • firstliberty.org

First Liberty Institute awarded Jones Day Partner Christopher DiPompeo with its prestigious Philip B. Onderdonk, Jr. Religious Liberty Award in August 2019. Named after The American Legion's long-time National Judge Advocate, this annual award honors a hero who, like its namesake, has proven to be a champion of religious liberty. The Institute presented this year's award at The American Legion 101st Annual National Convention in Indianapolis. Kelly Shackelford, president, CEO, and chief counsel to First Liberty Institute, said: "Our *American Legion* victory at the US Supreme Court earlier this year was a tremendous win for religious liberty in this country. It is only fitting that we honor our co-lead counsel for this great victory, Chris DiPompeo, with this year's Onderdonk Award. Freedom-loving people everywhere, and especially our military veterans, owe Chris a great debt for his unwavering dedication to this case and the unyielding excellence of his work. Well done!"



FORGE LEADERSHIP NETWORK • forgeleadership.org

Just as Major League Baseball cultivates talent through its minor leagues, **Forge Leadership Network** is a farm system for the conservative movement in the states. Forge mentors, trains, and connects young conservatives ages 18-25, equipping them to lead in politics, business, and culture. At the end of July 2019, 80 students were trained at the 2019 Forge Leadership Summit. The Forge Summit is the gateway to the rest of Forge programming. Stand out students are accepted into Forge's year-long Mentorship Academy. This year's edition of the annual Leadership Summit was significant for two important milestones: It marked the fifth anniversary of Forge, and this year, Forge surpassed 300 students and young professionals trained. Through professional media training, mock political campaigns, participation in the Forge Legislature, and intentional networking coaching, the Forge Summit equips young conservatives to become the leaders of tomorrow.



FRASER INSTITUTE • fraserinstitute.org

The **Fraser Institute** released a study that ranks the labor-market performance of US states and Canadian provinces from 2016-2018, with Colorado earning the top spot. Joining Colorado in the top 10 are Minnesota, Utah, Idaho, Nebraska, Massachusetts, North Dakota, Iowa, South Dakota, and Indiana. West Virginia is the lowest-ranked US jurisdiction. Notably, all Canadian provinces are ranked in the bottom half of the 60 jurisdictions measured. To assess labor market performance, the study uses eight equally weighted indicators, including the average annual total employment growth, average annual private-sector employment growth, average total employment rate, average private-sector employment rate, average unemployment rate, average long-term unemployment, average share of involuntary part-time workers, and average output per worker.





FREE STATE FOUNDATION • freestatefoundation.org

Free State Foundation President Randolph May published a “Perspectives from FSF Scholars” urging the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to reform the Internet Protocol Captioned Telephone Service (IP CTS) program to promote its efficiency and sustainability. The IP CTS program is an important telecommunications relay service that allows hearing impaired individuals to both read captions and use their residual hearing to understand a telephone conversation. To modernize and reform this program, FSF urged the FCC to adopt a uniform compensation rate for all IP CTS providers and to implement either a price cap regime or use a reverse auction to drive the compensation rate as close as possible to that which would prevail in a free market.



FREEDOM CENTER OF MISSOURI • mofreedom.org

The Freedom Center of Missouri teamed up with Pacific Legal Foundation on a free speech case representing Peggy Fontenot, a nationally-acclaimed American Indian artist whom Missouri law prohibits from advertising her work as “American Indian-made.” While the commonwealth of Virginia formally recognizes the Patawomeck Indian Tribe, of which Fontenot is a member, the federal government does not. As a result, Fontenot is not free to describe her work the same way in Missouri. The Freedom Center has also launched a new government transparency lawsuit in collaboration with the Show-Me Institute. For years the state’s Office of Administration has provided AFSCME, a public sector labor union, with information about public employees who might become union members. Show-Me asked the government to provide them exactly the same information the government has already provided AFSCME, but the Office redacted 90 percent of that information. Missouri law does not allow the government to pick and choose who gets access to public information, which is why the Freedom Center filed suit to vindicate the principle of equality in transparency.



INDEPENDENT WOMEN'S FORUM • iwf.org

This year, Colorado’s Legislature almost passed a new paid leave entitlement program via the FAMLI Act. **Independent Women’s Forum** policy director and Denver, Colorado, resident Hadley Manning testified before various committees of the Colorado General Assembly, describing how the legislation would limit opportunity and flexibility for citizens, particularly women. Legislators amended the bill to create a task force that investigates the implementation of a paid leave program. Manning was appointed to serve on this state task force on paid family leave (and will be one of the four minority appointments of the 13 total). In November, the state task force offered its recommendations to the Legislature. In the next session, lawmakers will debate the issue again. IWF is ready to launch state-level campaigns to educate the public about the problems with one-size-fits-all paid leave programs.



INDEPENDENT INSTITUTE • independent.org

The **Independent Institute** announced that education policy scholar Williamson M. Evers, Ph.D., has joined its staff as director of Independent’s Center on Educational Excellence. Dr. Evers joins the Independent Institute after more than two decades as a research fellow at Stanford University’s Hoover Institution. A nationally respected specialist in curriculum and educational opportunity, he also conducts research on teaching, testing, accountabil-

ity, and school finance. During his Hoover years, he authored and edited multiple books, held key federal advisory roles, and served on Hoover's influential Koret Task Force on K-12 education. At the Independent Institute, Evers is senior fellow and director of the Center on Educational Excellence, heading a team of affiliated scholars who examine the educational crisis facing Americans and charting a course for the achievement of educational excellence for all.

INSTITUTE FOR FREE SPEECH • ifs.org

Since the 2016 election, opponents of free speech have seized on concerns about foreign interference in campaigns to launch new attacks on the First Amendment. Among the most troubling is a law regulating online speech that the Maryland General Assembly passed last year. Rather than targeting foreign meddlers, the law makes it harder for Americans to use the Internet to speak about government, call out corruption, and organize with their fellow citizens. Now before the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, the case, *The Washington Post v. McManus*, could be a crucial landmark for the First Amendment's protections of a free press and free speech online. The **Institute for Free Speech** filed an amicus brief urging the Fourth Circuit to declare the law unconstitutional. IFS notes Maryland's law is among the most outrageous in the nation, and the case against it will be crucial to affirming First Amendment protections for online publishers. A victory for *The Washington Post* would deliver a powerful warning to other states about the cost of violating First Amendment rights.



INSTITUTE FOR JUSTICE • ij.org

The **Institute for Justice** filed a case against Granite City, Illinois, on behalf of clients Jessica Barron and Kenny Wylie. The city's "crime-free housing" ordinance requires a landlord to evict a tenant if any member of the tenant's household commits a crime—anywhere in the city and, in some instances, anywhere at all. In fact, the city can fine landlords and revoke their rental licenses if they fail to evict the tenant. Under this ordinance, Jessica and Kenny are on the hook for a long-gone house guest's burglary, even though no one believes they had anything to do with it or even knew about it. IJ also released the third episode of its "License to Work" video series. Hosted by IJ's Director of Strategic Research Dick Carpenter, the episode details alternatives to requiring licenses that create expensive barriers to meaningful work in a handful of professions.



INSTITUTE FOR POLICY INNOVATION • ipi.org

The revived effort to legalize prescription drug importation has bipartisan support, but the practice remains just as dangerous as ever, since the lawmakers who hope to benefit from the scheme's political expediency simply cannot guarantee the safety of imported drugs. In "Drug Importation Is About Politics, Not Safety," the **Institute for Policy Innovation's** Dr. Merrill Matthews says policymakers like Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar and Florida Governor Ron DeSantis are willing to assure US consumers that prescription drugs imported from Canada are safe, effective, and less expensive. But they are not informing patients about the serious potential risks of counterfeit and mishandled drugs allegedly coming from Canada, nor the consequences from a strain on the Canadian drug supply. IPI has released numerous publications that warn the risks of such a scheme cannot be overstated.



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

“Free Speech at UNC 2019,” the **James G. Martin Center for Academic Renewal**’s second annual report on the state of free speech and institutional neutrality in the UNC system, reveals substantial gains in freedom of speech since 2018. But more universities have taken official stances on political issues, which may bring them into non-compliance with state law. Since the publication of last year’s report, three universities—North Carolina State University, UNC Pembroke, and Western Carolina University—achieved a green-light designation from the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, meaning that there are no institutional barriers to freedom of speech. These universities join seven other schools in the UNC system with a green-light rating. However, several UNC-system institutions maintain some policies that hinder free speech and violate institutional neutrality. “Over the past five years, North Carolina has made significant progress on First Amendment protections for students and faculty. But as this report shows, it’s important to continue monitoring campus speech,” said Martin Center President Jenna A. Robinson.

JESSE HELMS CENTER • jessehelscenter.org

The **Jesse Helms Center**’s board of directors named Brian Rogers as its next president. Brian has been with the Center for 15 years, serving as chief operating officer. On October 23, 2019, the Jesse Helms Center hosted an Admiral James W. Nance Foreign Policy Lecture in Raleigh, North Carolina, with special guest Walter Lohman. Lohman is director of the Asian Studies Center at The Heritage Foundation and briefly worked as a professional staff member on the Foreign Relations Committee under Senator Jesse Helms when Helms served as chairman. He delivered a special talk on the United States’ ongoing relations with China, including trade policies. The Center also announced locations for the Free Enterprise Leadership Challenge for 2020. Once again, this program will be on the campuses of Houston Baptist University, Wingate University, Palm Beach Atlantic University, Campbell University, and Midlands Technical College. Dates for each summer session will be announced in late December 2019.

JUDICIAL WATCH • judicialwatch.org

US District Court Judge Royce C. Lambert granted significant discovery on the Clinton email scandal, urging **Judicial Watch** to “shake this tree” while criticizing the State Department’s handling of the emails. Judicial Watch also won a suit challenging California’s Presidential Tax Transparency and Accountability Act, which requires presidential candidates to disclose their tax returns from the past five years. Judicial Watch argued the law violates the US Constitution’s Presidential Qualifications Clause, as well as the First and Fourteenth Amendments. Additionally, Judicial Watch won a groundbreaking lawsuit in cleaning up nearly 2 million inactive voter registration lists in several key states.

LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE • leadershipinstitute.org

The **Leadership Institute** turns 40 this year! Since 1979, Leadership Institute has trained more than 215,000 conservative activists, leaders, and students. A few friends said great things about LI’s work over the last 40 years. “No one has done more to inspire and train young conservatives than Morton Blackwell and the Leadership Institute,” said Vice President Mike Pence. Grover Norquist noted: “Without effective activists on the ground, policy reform faces tremendous uphill challenge. By far, the easiest way to change government

is from the grassroots, and in order to drive that kind of change, conservatives must be effective in the trenches. The Leadership Institute makes that possible.” Michelle Malkin said: “There’s no other group like the Leadership Institute—the training ground for a new generation of conservative leaders.”

MERCATUS CENTER AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY • [MERCATUS.ORG](https://mercatus.org)



The **Mercatus Center at George Mason University**’s Senior Research Fellow Salim Furth and Ph.D. candidate Olivia Gonzalez developed an index that ranks 249 California cities on regulatory stringency—finding that more regulation is associated with slower housing growth. In another study, Scott Sumner explained that monetary policy is about influencing the supply of and demand for money. Mercatus also released snapshots of Rhode Island, Nevada, North Dakota, and South Dakota regulations in 2019. Additionally, one year after Distinguished Research Fellow Charles Blahous published a study that ignited a fierce debate on the cost of “Medicare for All (M4A),” Dr. Blahous has substantial additional evidence that M4A would further increase, not reduce, national health spending. Finally, Senior Research Fellow Eileen Norcross testified before Pennsylvania’s York County Legislative Delegation on the state’s deteriorating fiscal condition.

NATIONAL RIGHT TO WORK FOUNDATION • nrtw.org



The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) Division of Advice and General Counsel has taken action to protect workers’ rights to opt out of funding union politics and other nonchargeable activities. NLRB advises regional directors to issue complaints against unions when union officials fail to inform employees about reduced union fees—by allowing employees to reject union membership—per the *Communication Workers of America v. Beck* US Supreme Court decision. **National Right to Work Foundation** staff attorneys won this case, which mandated that workers who refrain from formal union membership only be charged fees directly germane to bargaining. The memos, including one prompted by an unfair labor practice charge filed by a California worker with free legal aid from Foundation staff attorneys, instruct NLRB regional directors to more stringently enforce *Beck* rights.

PACIFIC LEGAL FOUNDATION • pacificlegal.org



In partnership with the Freedom Center of Missouri, **Pacific Legal Foundation** continued its fight for justice in the case of Peggy Fontenot, a member of the Virginia-recognized Patawomeck Indian tribe. Fontenot is an award-winning artist who has shown and sold her art in museums and galleries across the United States; however, Missouri state law prohibits her from marketing her art as “American Indian-made.” In March 2019, Fontenot successfully overturned an identical law in Oklahoma. With the Pacific Legal Foundation and Freedom Center of Missouri, Fontenot is seeking similar justice in the Show-Me State. PLF also teamed up with Liberty Justice Center to challenge a California gag rule preventing public employees from speaking to their employers about their rights under *Janus. Jackson v. Napolitano*, filed on July 30, 2019, seeks justice for UC San Diego employees Mike Jackson and Tory Smith—who tried to exercise their rights under *Janus* by resigning their Teamsters membership.



PROPERTY AND ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH CENTER • perc.org

The Endangered Species Act has successfully prevented extinction but has proven less effective in recovering endangered species. In August 2019, the Department of the Interior announced reforms, in part supported by **Property and Environment Research Center** research, that will improve how the Endangered Species Act is administered to better promote species recovery. For decades, the Endangered Species Act essentially treated all listed species the same, whether classified as endangered or threatened. These reforms would restore the Act's original two-tiered approach, which maintains the strongest protections for endangered species while increasing flexibility and providing a degree of regulatory relief when it comes to threatened species. Lifting automatic and often unnecessarily burdensome regulations for threatened species will encourage states and landowners to recover them before they reach endangered status. It will also provide additional motivation to help recover endangered species and move them to the improved threatened status.



R STREET INSTITUTE • rstreet.org

The **R Street Institute** is based in Washington, DC, but one of its unique strengths is its team of state directors who work to advance the think tank's policy objectives in state capitols. These policy areas include tech matters, criminal justice reform, tobacco harm reduction, and occupational-licensing reform. Real progress has occurred on some important issues, including in California. For instance, the state has been on the national forefront of criminal justice reform. Governor Gavin Newsom recently signed a bill that tightens the standard when police officers may use deadly force. After 12 years of trying, civil libertarians passed a law that opens police records and disciplinary proceedings to public review. The coalitions promoting these reforms included R Street. R Street's state-based approach gives the organization a different take from many think tanks. Its willingness to work with people from various political perspectives has helped it contribute to real successes, even in liberal states such as California.



SCHOOL CHOICE WISCONSIN • schoolchoicewi.org

School Choice Wisconsin has invested a great deal of time and resources towards growing the number of high-quality school choice options available in the state. To date, Wisconsin's four school choice programs serve over 40,000 students at 341 private schools. School Choice Wisconsin remains committed to traveling across the state and working with school and community leaders to educate and advance school choice opportunities. Earlier this year, Wisconsin's new governor proposed a budget that included anti-school choice provisions that focused on hindering Wisconsin's long-standing, thriving school choice programs. School Choice Wisconsin worked tirelessly behind the scenes with legislators and school leaders to make sure that parents remain in control of their child's education. Not only did Wisconsin's school choice programs prevail with options remaining intact, but participating private schools will now see an increase in per pupil funding.

SPEECH FIRST • speechfirst.org

Part of the mission at **Speech First** is to change the toxic, anti-free speech culture in higher education, and one step is to raise awareness and demonstrate how far America has strayed from its First Amendment freedoms. As college students headed back to school this fall, Speech First urged them to take pictures of the best and worst examples of speech trends on campus and post them publicly on Instagram—using the hashtag #FreeSpeechMatters. These images revealed disrupted speakers and events, vandalized flyers and information tables, and enforced “free speech zones.” Conversely, Speech First also wanted to see positive examples of the First Amendment in action—such as a peaceful protest or a roundtable event featuring opposing viewpoints. Speech First featured the most impactful images—and the stories behind them—on its website and in partnering publications.



THINK FREELY MEDIA • thinkfreelymedia.org

Traditionally, libertarians and conservatives are not the most effective communicators when it comes to advocating the benefits of free markets and limited government to the center-left and center-right. That’s why **Think Freely Media** created the Great Communicators Tournament. The tournament’s goal is to raise awareness on how to persuasively discuss and defend free-market policies, especially with individuals in the ideological center. Contestants are urged to use emotionally compelling stories to engage center-left and center-right audiences on important policy issues. Finalists competed for over \$17,000 in prize money at the final tournament during the Atlas Network’s Liberty Forum on November 6, 2019. Trace Mitchell of the Mercatus Center took the \$10,000 prize, with finalists Hunter Estes at Mississippi Center for Public Policy and Melodie Bowler of Alaska Policy Forum tying for the \$5,000 second place prize.



THE COLLEGE FIX • thecollegefix.com

The College Fix, the daily news website focused on higher education and published by the Student Free Press Association, often reports on how state advocacy groups and other like-minded organizations have positive and lasting impact regionally and nationally. For example, College Fix covered how the *Janus* ruling continues to free academics from onerous union dues and biased, mandatory politics. It reported on how the ruling is weakening faculty labor unions. More recently, over the summer, College Fix articles touted court victories thanks to Janus, including a group of professors in California who won their union dues back. College Fix also exposed how some faculty unions are now hiding the fact that, in the wake of the ruling, their membership numbers are plunging.

THE COLLEGE FIX

YOUNG AMERICA'S FOUNDATION • yaf.org


Young America's Foundation is excited to announce that the 45th Governor of Wisconsin, Scott Walker, has been elected by YAF's board of directors as president of YAF, effective February 1, 2021. With hard-earned conservative credentials, Governor Walker's fearlessness to do the right thing mirrors the commitment to freedom's principles seen in bold YAF activists nationwide. Governor Walker will oversee the management of the Foundation's 500+ YAF campus chapters; President Reagan's Rancho del Cielo and YAF's Reagan Ranch Center; YAF's Center for Entrepreneurship & Free Enterprise; the National Journalism Center; America's largest campus lecture program; and an aggressive legal strategy to protect students' First Amendment rights.





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