



IN MEMORIAM

Robert M. Weekley

Page 4

Multi-State Collaboration Ignites Policy Reforms

“Strength in numbers.” This was the Golden State Warriors’ motto in the NBA playoffs, leading them to this year’s championship. The power of strength in numbers rings true in the fight for freedom, as our network champions policy reforms.

As the 50-state network has grown, the states have discovered a valuable asset for policy change: each other. Not only are they working together to develop innovative policy solutions, but states are also sharing ideas and strategies as they look to improve the quality of life for their citizens and ensure a prosperous future for the country. Thanks to this collaboration, policy solutions are sweeping across state lines, with each state customizing reforms to better serve their constituents.

While this network-wide trend has succeeded in multiple policy areas, two policy solutions exemplify the enormous progress multi-state collaboration can achieve: Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) and Financial Ready legislation. In 2015 alone, the joint efforts of several state think tanks have removed educational barriers for families and convinced state governments to embrace greater transparency and planning in their budgets.

EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

ESAs had what Jonathan Butcher of the Goldwater Institute described as “pretty modest beginnings.” Arizona was the first state to implement ESAs in 2011, and it was for children with special needs. In its first year, around 75 families signed up.

But the impact has been much more than modest.

To date, ESAs have allowed nearly 3,000 children in both Arizona and Florida (which passed ESAs soon after

Arizona) to receive the education they need. Half-a-dozen additional states are looking at implementing ESAs next year, and 26 state think tanks have said they want to pursue ESAs in their state.

The Goldwater Institute and the Friedman Foundation now team up every year to bring in lawmakers and think tank staff from other states to visit schools in Arizona where parents are using ESAs. This allows them to hear from parents, students, and school administrators about the program’s benefits.

Two states that visited Arizona schools and then passed ESA legislation include Mississippi and Tennessee.

“We’ve been following its evolution since it first passed in Arizona. At the same time we had a member of the House who had a daughter who has special needs and had seen firsthand how public schools treat children with special needs and their parents; she was very passionate about the concept,” Forest Thigpen of the Mississippi Center for Public Policy said. Mississippi ESA legislation takes effect for students with special needs this fall.

A similar solution, called Individualized Education Accounts, was passed in Tennessee.

“We believe that children and families in Tennessee deserve greater options and opportunities at their disposal—especially students with special needs whose needs aren’t being met by the current system,” said Lindsay Boyd of the Beacon Center.

Other states have benefited from SPN’s Spreadsheet to Story program, which brings together several groups with a shared policy solution to work with Kevan Kjar of Arrowhead³ and Spark Freedom on developing effective messaging and strategy. This collaboration has yielded

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“We are fortunate to have a network of groups that are likeminded and can collectively collaborate and put our resources together.”

Jonathon Butcher,
Goldwater Institute



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SPN NEWS^{STATE POLICY NETWORK}

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SPN News reports on issues of importance to state-focused, market-oriented, nonprofit public policy research organizations. Drawing from current updates and events from within the industry, the publication provides timely information on the most pressing issues facing public policy state think tank executives. State Policy Network publishes SPN News six times a year. Individual copies can be ordered from the State Policy Network offices at 703-243-1655. All images used in this issue are owned by their respective copyright holders. All rights reserved.

MISSION STATEMENT

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2014 Great Communicators Tournament Winner, Chantal Lovell



Strengthen Your Event Strategy

PART 1

By Katie Vernuccio

In the nonprofit sector, managing events transcends traditional departments as all staff play some role in both strategy and execution. Whether an impromptu news conference scheduled next week or a large gala months away, below are a few fundamentals in constructing an effective strategy for consistently successful events to establish your brand and further your organization's mission. Each of these items are scalable and can be tailored to the timing, size, and format of your event.

Set SMART Goals. Before you hit the ground running, discuss and establish specific and measurable goals with team members. Many organizations host events out of habit rather than re-evaluating if programs are really meeting key objectives every year. Avoid vague goals such as "raise \$50K," "break even," or "200 attendees," which are not tied directly to your overarching strategy or how it will help advance your mission. *How is this event going to help your organization achieve X?* Focus on no more than 3-5 primary goals; all others are secondary.

Know Your Target Audience. If you reach 200 attendees but it's the wrong audience, was your event successful or did you waste valuable time and resources? Identifying your target audience and creating a marketing plan to recruit and engage them from the beginning will put you on the right path to achieving the goals above.

Build a Structured Budget. Write down all necessary expenses in each category to *meet* your objectives, and include a 10-15 percent margin for any contingencies. Add a separate column for scaling up the event in any category. It is much easier to increase the size and scope of your event than the other way around once you've secured a venue or vendors. Continually revisit your budget to ensure you're on track and make adjustments as needed.

Check Calendars. Organizations create an uphill battle from the start when they solidify a date without doing a little research into other scheduled programs. Does this conflict with events in the same industry or location? Is there a popular event in town or does it fall around a holiday that will affect turnout and traffic? Sometimes overlap is unavoidable due to legislative or organizational priorities and in the D.C. area where there are multiple smaller events daily. However, plan ahead if you're launching a big project or hosting your largest fundraiser of the year, and ask key partners to save the date.

Assign Roles and Expectations. As soon as you establish goals with your team, delegate responsibilities and clarify expectations for each person. Break down items to be completed, and assign appropriate timelines for each task. All staff and volunteers are representatives of the organization and its brand, and they should be trained and ready to assist leading up to and during the event.

Develop a Marketing Plan. Why would someone want to attend your event? What will they walk away with that they didn't have or know before? Don't list all of your event features. Create a marketing plan that focuses on benefits, and carefully craft language to use across traditional and social media platforms that demonstrates the value your target



Katie Vernuccio, owner of Vernuccio Strategies, LLC, provides project management, special event, and external relations services for nonprofit organizations. Reach her at kevernuccio@gmail.com.

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IN MEMORIAM

Robert M. Weekley

1943–2015

Robert M. Weekley was known to many as a kind soul, a friendly face, an encouraging voice, a good man—in every definition of the word—and part of a great family. As a successful businessman, he showed us how to think like an entrepreneur and drive toward success. As a successful philanthropist, he made many dreams possible. For State Policy Network and many of our friends and partners across the liberty movement, his contributions—both in advice and financial resources—fueled efforts to promote the benefits of freedom to human flourishing. He will be deeply missed.

Even as his illness began to take his life, Bob was thoughtful about others and especially the legacy of freedom he would leave for future generations. We at SPN are deeply grateful for Bob's generosity in life and after his passing, as well. But, his bequest is so much more than financial support. He also left those who knew him with a wealth of counsel that guides us today.

To honor his memory and celebrate all that he accomplished, we reprint here wisdom from Bob that was originally published in the May/June 2010 issue of SPN News. We also offer special thanks to the Weekley family for their graciousness and support in allowing us to celebrate Bob in this way.

Thank you, Bob. We'll miss you.

*Reprinted from SPN News May/June 2010 issue
By Robert M. Weekley*

If someone else is willing to do all the work, I should be willing to write the check.

If the people who have benefited from this marvelous economic machine and legal system won't contribute to help save it, who will?

There are four things you can do with your money when you have been fortunate enough to create a large amount: 1) spend it, 2) give it to your children, 3) give it to the government, or 4) invest it in a good cause. Of the four, the last is the most important and long lasting.

When we accumulate wealth earlier in our career, we usually continue to work to make even more. Later in our career, we would be wise to invest some of it to make a better country.

At the end of the day, which of the things we've done in our life will have the most lasting positive impact? One of the most important is to help preserve and enhance the legal and economic system that has been the cause of our nation's health and prosperity, and which prior generations have provided for us.

Giving money today allows several benefits: personally seeing the money used

effectively, feeling satisfaction, and gaining some recognition. Giving money tomorrow, after we're gone, allows none of these.

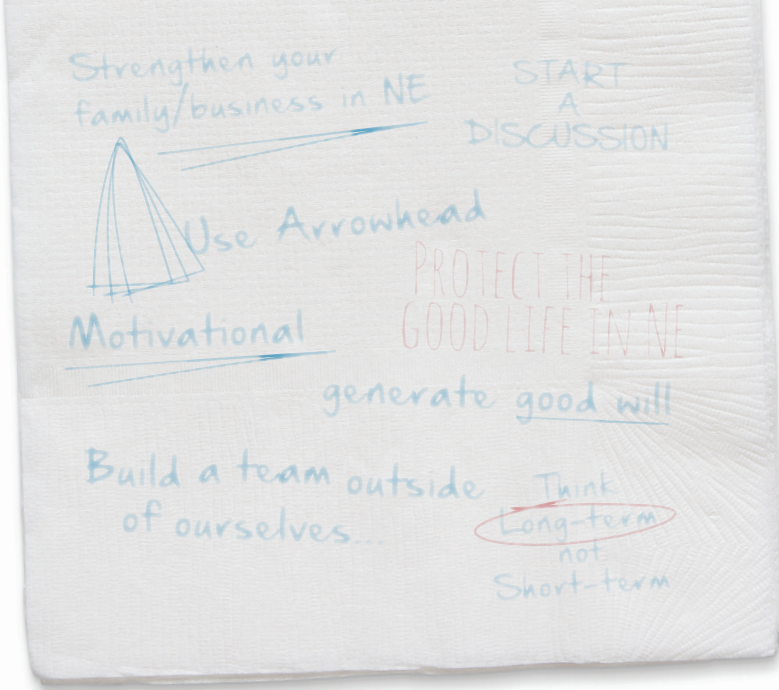
Wouldn't you rather decide today where, when, and how to most effectively spend your money for a better society, rather than have someone do it after you're gone, and without your insights, values, and judgment?

If we're investing to provide our children with the education they need to prosper in the future, we best also invest to insure a future that allows them to reap the benefits. It also sets a good example for them to follow.

Of the options of time, talent, and money, I should at least give some money.

I personally give to a variety of good causes—religion, education, health, the arts, politics and philanthropy, but I think my giving to free-market groups is the most important because it preserves the very foundation upon which all wealth is created, which in turn enables all the other philanthropies to continue to exist.

—Bob Weekley



Four Steps for Developing a Tax Reform Marketing Plan

By Adam Weinberg

Nebraska has the highest state and local tax burden in the Great Plains region, and Nebraskans know it.

With the country's 15th highest top income tax rate and the 13th highest per person collections in property taxes, taxpayers in the Cornhusker State often joke that Nebraska's true nickname is "The Tax-Me State."

We knew that changing these long-standing policies would require a dramatic shift in the discussion about taxes in our state. As a proud state rooted in tradition, Nebraska can be slow to change, even toward fiscally conservative policies.

We designed a sensible, long-term plan to free Nebraska from its harmful high-tax reputation, but we also needed a message that could reach average Nebraskans and motivate them to demand action from policymakers.

We set out to give these taxpayers a voice through a petition drive and statewide marketing effort for our tax reform plan.

Through a powerful and collaborative Arrowhead process facilitated by Kevin Kjar and SparkFreedom, we developed Strong Roots Nebraska: a campaign for lower taxes in Nebraska.

Here are some of the steps we took to build a grassroots network for taxpayers:

1 Advance a workable policy you can be proud of

We thought carefully about the landscape in our state and opposition our proposal to cut taxes would face. Opponents would want to make the

controversial budget deficit in neighboring Kansas an ever-present part of the debate. Having a policy that was tailored to our state's situation helped us distinguish ourselves and move beyond that objection.

But targeting supporters was just as important as fending off our critics. How were we going to get a grandmother in the rural Nebraska Panhandle as excited about tax relief as special interests are about tax hikes?

Whatever your state's tax situation, your policy should build good will and trust with average taxpayers. We found that most taxpayers don't have unrealistic expectations for tax relief. Mostly, they want to be sure that your plan doesn't have a catch and that it speaks to their concerns without equivocation.

2 Remember the policy isn't your message

A five percent top income tax rate may be a feature of a tax plan, but it is not the true benefit. What most people care about is the *why* behind your effort for lower taxes.

We have always strived to communicate that the goal of Strong Roots Nebraska tax relief is to help Nebraskans provide more for their families and businesses, protect the "Good Life" Nebraskans are proud of, and grow opportunity for the state's future.

That's important in Nebraska where, despite having the lowest unemployment rate in the country, the state continues to struggle with retaining and attracting residents.

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Adam Weinberg is the communications director at Platte Institute in Omaha, Nebraska. Write him at aweinberg@platteinstitute.org.

STATE POLICY NETWORK UPDATES

ALABAMA



With the release of two new research papers, the first of three annual dinners of 2015, and a huge increase in media



API president and CEO Caleb Crosby addressed guests at the Annual Mobile Dinner on April 9, 2015.

presence, this spring was one of the most promising in **Alabama Policy Institute** history. API hosted its annual dinner in Mobile, Ala., giving API an opportunity to share its work, values, and mission with supporters across the state. In addition, API is pleased to announce that its president and CEO Caleb Crosby has been named to the *Yellowhammer* Power & Influence 50. Upon being named to the list, Crosby remarked, "This is clear evidence of the hard work of our phenomenal team, API's rich history, and the results that we have seen from working closely with conservative lawmakers on the ground in Montgomery. I am honored to be named among Alabama's most influential." alabamapolicy.org

ALASKA



Oil tax revenue funds 90 percent of Alaska's operating budget. As a result of a precipitous fall in oil prices, Alaska's 2016 operating budget has a \$4 billion shortfall in a \$6 billion total budget. **Alaska Policy Forum** has provided information to the

legislature on education overspending. Alaska spends more than \$22,000/student and is dead last in low-income 4th grade reading (NAEP). The legislature is still wrestling with Medicaid expansion, but elected officials have listened to the Forum about the adverse impact on Medicare seniors and TRICARE recipients. The Policy Forum has been "honored" by the AFL-CIO-AK as "the face of Medicaid opposition in Alaska." They even produced a YouTube video of APF "bullying" rally attendees. APF listed the 160 organizations that support the governor's Medicaid expansion, noting those which received more than \$69 million in state grants. APF is currently working on push back against the Federal government, using interposition to assert Alaska's rights in managing its lands. Because private individuals own only one percent of Alaska, resource development—the lifeblood of Alaska—is extremely difficult. alaskapolicyforum.org

ARKANSAS



The end of the legislative session marked several victories for the **Advance Arkansas Institute**. Measures which guaranteed the people's right to photograph public events (Act 1063), the right to have access to state criminal records (Act 1185), and the right of legal counsel to students appealing higher-education disciplinary proceedings (Act 1194) are now law. The Institute helped to originate, draft, and publicize these policies: they were included in AAI's Action Plan for Arkansas, which was distributed to legislators at the beginning of the session. The Institute also provided drafting or testimonial assistance to many other successful advances for freedom, including measures to delay the establishment of a federal exchange (Act 398), to establish terminally ill patients' "right to try" new medical drugs and devices (Act 374), to require affirmative legislative action to continue Medicaid expansion (Act 46), and

to roll back some occupational licensure rules (Act 409). advancearkansas.org



"Arkansas's recent enactment of a school choice voucher law is highly symbolic," noted Greg Kaza, executive director of the **Arkansas Policy Foundation**, in *National Review Online*. "As the 25th state to adopt school choice, Arkansas became the tipping point in the national debate about the idea." The development has significance for Hillary Clinton, one-time chair of the Arkansas Educational Standards Committee. "Does Hillary Clinton support school choice for at-risk students in Little Rock, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Washington, and other urban districts?" Kaza asked. Another Kaza op-ed in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* challenged liberals to support school choice for students attending failing schools in the Little Rock School District, which the state took over in early 2015. The Right has embraced "the disadvantaged and powerless," Kaza noted, with 10 of 12 southeast states enacting school choice while "liberals mounted unsuccessful legal challenges." arkansaspolicyfoundation.org

CALIFORNIA



In April 2015, the **California Policy Center** welcomed former San Diego city councilman and lifelong entrepreneur Carl DeMaio as senior fellow for fiscal policy. DeMaio is now tackling statewide



Carl DeMaio joined California Policy Center as senior fellow for fiscal policy.

fiscal reform policy. While on the San Diego City Council, DeMaio led the effort to cut red tape on small businesses,

reform the city's contracting processes to expedite infrastructure projects, and enact some of the toughest sunshine law open government requirements in the nation. In 2012, DeMaio crafted and led a citizens campaign to qualify and pass the Comprehensive Pension Reform Initiative—the first-of-its-kind measure to switch San Diego from a defined benefit pension plan to a 401(k) retirement program.

californiapolicycenter.org



Pacific Research Institute hosted numerous luncheons and book signings last spring, including David Boaz from the Cato Institute, Peter Wallison from AEI, and Charles C.W. Cooke, a writer with *National Review*. In May, PRI welcomed Tonya Barr Treble as director of major gifts. Tonya brings policy experience from SPN, Tax Foundation, Manhattan Institute, as well as development expertise gained through her leadership of successful fundraising campaigns at other nonprofits. In June, PRI hosted a luncheon in Bakersfield with Victor Davis Hanson and Calif. Rep. Shannon Grove (CA-34) for 250+ attendees. The event focused on California's drought, its effects on the agricultural industry, and how poor policy decisions made it even worse. PRI is pleased to announce Ayaan Hirsi Ali will be this year's featured speaker and award recipient at their annual Sir Antony Fisher Gala on Wednesday, October 21, 2015, at the Ritz-Carlton San Francisco.

pacificresearch.org

COLORADO



Independence Institute helped make the case to deregulate Colorado's cab cartel in the 2015 legislative session. A bipartisan bill eliminated the power of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to consider whether there is "public need"

for a new taxi company. All the PUC can do now is determine if an applicant is operationally and financially fit. If so, an operating certificate must be issued—a victory for cab drivers wanting to start their own businesses. Also, following two key votes, Thompson stands to become the second sizable Colorado school district after Douglas County to cut teachers union ties. The Institute has empowered reform-minded board members with expert policy guidance and critical reporting on union activities ignored by mainstream media. While union leaders and sympathizers have attacked reformers, the Institute's support has given students the edge over organized labor. i2i.org

CONNECTICUT



The **Yankee Institute** has been busy pushing back against the Connecticut legislature's proposal to break the state spending cap and raise taxes by \$2.4 billion dollars. President Carol Platt Liebau testified at a hearing intended to highlight the depth of the opposition to the tax increase, and Yankee has run robocalls to educate Connecticut voters in swing legislative districts about the plan. Finally, Yankee also commissioned a poll to gauge citizen reaction. The poll revealed 69.8 percent of voters would be less likely to support a legislator who voted to raise taxes and 73 percent would be less likely to support a legislator who voted to break the state spending cap. In addition, the Yankee Institute was one of only three entities invited by state Comptroller Kevin Lembo to testify about the importance of instituting a "rainy day" fund as a precaution against fluctuating tax revenues.

yankeeinstitute.org

DELAWARE



Caesar Rodney Institute's Seventh Annual Dinner was a fundraising success!



Eleanor Craig received Caesar Rodney Institute's inaugural President's Award for her outstanding economic work and insight.

The event set records for the number of attendees, total amount raised at the dinner, and total number of new dinner attendees. The Institute is pleased to announce the recipient of the first-ever President's Award, Eleanor Craig, economics professor at the University of Delaware and former chair of Delaware Economic and Financial Advisory Council. Her smart economic advice in the 1980s has prevented Delaware's government from spending itself into oblivion. The Institute is ending the legislative session pushing for both a Right to Work bill and an Education Savings Account bill. While there are many obstacles to making both bills law, the Institute has, for the first time, put opponents on the defensive as they try to explain why workers and parents shouldn't have freedom in their workplace or in their children's education. caesarrodneymadison.org

FLORIDA



Nearly 300 guests gathered for "The Florida Story: A Lasting Legacy," the 2015 **James Madison Institute** Annual Dinner on March 24 in Tallahassee. The evening line-up



JMI president Dr. Bob McClure interviewed featured speaker Stephen Hayes of The Weekly Standard and Fox News at JMI's Annual Dinner.

featured Stephen Hayes, senior editor of *The Weekly Standard* and a Fox News contributor, Florida chief financial officer Jeff Atwater, and commissioner of agriculture Adam Putnam. JMI ended the night with a special announcement about the launch of the Institute's newest policy center, the J. Stanley Marshall Center for Educational Options. Named in honor of JMI's late founder, the Marshall Center will place special emphasis on ideas such as course choice and personal learning accounts with the goal of seeing all Florida students obtain a customized education tailored to their unique needs, interests, abilities, and learning style. Watch the highlight video of the 2015 JMI Annual Dinner and view event photos at <http://bit.ly/JMIDinner2015>. jamesmadison.org



The Foundation for Government Accountability continually provides state legislators with the tools and knowledge to improve the lives of millions of Americans by limiting the welfare state. In their commitment to strong families and communities, the FGA is spearheading a nationwide effort to give families in crisis critical short-term assistance. In partnership with state leaders, the FGA is creating legal protections for families who work with volunteers to keep children out of the foster care system. The FGA is also helping states save taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars by auditing their welfare rolls and helping people on assistance return to meaningful work. thefga.org

GEORGIA



The **Georgia Public Policy Foundation's** sixth annual Georgia Legislative Policy

Forum is scheduled for Thursday, October 15, in Atlanta, with the theme of "Wisdom, Justice and Opportunity" (based on the state motto, "Wisdom, Justice, and Moderation"). The goal is to highlight paths of economic opportunity, promote a welfare-work ethic, and move beyond activist demands in reducing income inequality. The Foundation takes its celebration of Milton Friedman's birthday on the road again this year with an education Policy Briefing Luncheon scheduled for July. The Governor's Education Reform Commission is meeting through August to consider education updates, including the funding formula, and the Foundation continues to promote Education Savings Accounts and other ways to enable the money to follow the child in Georgia. georgiapolicy.org



In conjunction with efforts to pass an Education Savings Account bill, **Georgia Center for Opportunity** held several screenings of a new Special Needs Scholarship documentary along with panel discussions in June. These screenings highlighted the need for more educational choice in Georgia and helped grow the coalition focused on passing an ESA bill next year. Building on an April event with Jennifer Marshall from the Heritage Foundation, GCO continues to explore how to move individuals from dependency to self-sufficiency and promote state and local solutions to poverty and family fragmentation. georgiaopportunity.org

HAWAII



Following the close of the state's legislative session, the **Grassroot Institute of Hawaii** turned its attention to government transparency. A lawsuit filed against the Native Hawaiian Roll Commission to compel disclosure of their enrollment list brought more attention to the agency's practices. As a result, Grassroot found itself with new allies against the state effort to

create a Native Hawaiian tribal government. Newly-proposed rules from the Department of the Interior regarding the Department of Hawaiian Homelands made it clear the Administration was seeking a different way to bypass Congress in recognizing a Native Hawaiian tribe. Grassroot worked with a broad coalition of groups in Hawaii and Washington, D.C., to help educate others on the problematic elements of the proposed rule, raising the issue of federal encroachment on an unsettled state issue. grassrootinstitute.org

IDAHO



When the federal government demanded that Idaho lawmakers change the state's child support enforcement system, the **Idaho Freedom Foundation** questioned the heavy-handed tactics, leading lawmakers to reject the proposal. The rejection prompted the governor to call lawmakers into a special session to consider a bill intended to address some of the concerns. In May, IFF raised money for families who homeschool or send their kids to private school. The campaign highlighted the plight of families who exercise non-public school options but still pay taxes to support those schools. Matt Keenan, an IFF communications and media specialist, informed voters about the high costs of school levies—data that levy opponents used to block tax increases. IFF also led the charge against Progressives seeking minimum wage increases. IFF's IdahoReporter.com exposed the fact that Occupy Boise members were behind the efforts. idahofreedom.org

ILLINOIS



The **Illinois Policy Institute's** work educating the media, public, and lawmakers paved the way for the passage of three bills that will go far to unleash opportunity for Illinoisans. Criminal justice reform



In partnership with the Charles Koch Institute, the Illinois Policy Institute pulled together an unlikely coalition for a panel discussing the need for criminal justice reform in Illinois.

moved forward with a bill restoring local control to schools that choose to move individuals with criminal records through the hiring process, promoting the right incentives for ex-offenders to demonstrate rehabilitation. Lawmakers also passed a business-friendly bill that allows investors to pool resources to finance entrepreneurship, fostering an innovative investment strategy that will stimulate much-needed economic growth across the state. Legislators sent a third bill to the governor's desk giving terminally ill patients the "Right to Try" investigational drugs and treatment options and empowering patients and doctors with more control over health care decisions. The Institute believes policy changes lives and will continue championing policies centered on taxpayers and entrepreneurs. illinoispolicy.org

INDIANA



The Indiana Policy Review Foundation adopted a media strategy focusing on outstate mid-sized daily editorial pages with high readability and believability ratings. Their clipping service informed them the result was an audience of 6.2 million between February and April for a paid-media equivalent of \$610,500. The summer journal features John Kerr of the Institute for Justice writing on the failed attempt by the city of Charleston, Ind., to demolish a working-class neighborhood that

city planners found unsightly. Dr. Maryann O. Keating's cost-benefit analysis of the 12 percent of the Indiana education budget coming from federal aid will be the subject of a summer legislative study commission. inpolicy.org

IOWA



Did you know that recent and proposed actions by the federal government are making Eastern Iowa part of the greater-Chicago area? The distance from Chicago to Dubuque, Iowa is around 200 miles, yet the expanding federal nanny state has decided that Iowa's river towns should focus on recruiting low-income people from outside the state to live in Iowa. Many of those towns already struggle to provide good jobs and decent housing for low-income people who live there. The process is starting with the low-income housing program of Dubuque, which is being required to alter their Section 8 low-income housing standards even before the adoption of HUD's proposed Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing regulation. Read more about this issue in **Public Interest Institute's** policy study, *The Nanny State is Expanding—And Private-Property Rights Are Decreasing*, by research analyst Deborah Thornton at www.LimitedGovernment.org/publications.html. limitedgovernment.org

KANSAS



ObamaCare's impact on state budgets and the concept of federalism dominates much of the policy discussion, but another area is too often forgotten: federal maintenance of effort (MOE) mandates. In June, **Kansas Policy Institute** published an examination of MOE impact by Steve Anderson, the former budget director of two different states. Unfortunately, even the most dedicated state legislators aren't familiar enough with MOEs. In addition to outlining the budgetary impact, Anderson writes of commonsense solutions that states can undertake to limit MOE "surprises." For instance, states can prevent agencies from signing onto federal grants without explicit legislative authority, and they can clarify and dominate the understandings and interpretations by which any agreement with the Feds is made. These relatively simple steps can limit the hidden costs of taking "free money" from D.C. kansaspolicy.org

KENTUCKY



More than 600,000 Kentuckians now enjoy the freedom and protections afforded by county Right to Work laws.



Jim Waters, president of the Bluegrass Institute, explained local Right to Work ordinances at the National Corvette Museum in Bowling Green, Ky.

Bluegrass Institute president Jim Waters updated conservative leaders at the recent Heritage Foundation Resource Bank meeting in Bellevue, Wash., on the impact of the Institute's Right to Work campaign. Americans for Tax Reform's Center for Worker Freedom joined the Institute's effort and is supporting forums in local communities across Kentucky. Since Warren County became America's first county to pass a local Right to Work ordinance, 50 new companies representing 5,000 jobs and \$890 million in capital investment have expressed interest in expanding or relocating there. bipps.org



The **Pelican Institute** has been leading a coalition of organizations seeking to address Louisiana's nation-leading incarceration rate. The Smart on Crime Louisiana coalition recently launched its new website, www.SmartonCrimeLA.com, which features an animated video highlighting the nature of the problem and some proposed solutions. The video has been viewed over 10,000 times on YouTube and over 50,000 times on Facebook. Several criminal justice bills supported by the Institute were successfully navigated through the legislative process, increasing the likelihood that Louisiana policymakers will commit to reforms that will save taxpayer dollars and improve public safety. Institute president Kevin Kane had an op-ed on criminal justice reform published in the *Advocate* and an op-ed on the EPA's flawed Clean Power Plan in the *Times Picayune*. pelicaninstitute.org

MAINE



The **Maine Heritage Policy Center** is experiencing exciting new growth and success in its pursuit of reducing the size

and scope of Maine's state government. MHPC is pleased to welcome Mike Quatrano, director of civic engagement. Quatrano brings years of experience and knowledge in encouraging public discourse on free-market reforms. As Maine's premier conservative research and educational organization, MHPC was again able to play an integral role in Maine's legislative budget process, working closely with legislators and policymakers to limit waste and excess in state government by encouraging a reduction in overall government spending. MHPC also released a comprehensive report comparing the revenues and expenditures of Maine and New Hampshire. The report detailed the differences, including federal spending, and similarities between the two states and provided policy recommendations to eliminate Maine's income tax and spur economic growth. mainepolicy.org

MARYLAND



With Maryland state government spending outpacing personal income, a new policy report calls for a broad spending freeze as a first step toward reorganizing government to better reflect Maryland's priorities. The spending freeze is one of several reforms the **Maryland Public Policy Institute** recommends in *Fixes for the Long Haul*, a new policy report designed to help policymakers achieve sensible savings in Maryland's state budget. Authored by the Institute's visiting fellow John Walters and Stephen Slivinski, senior research fellow at the Center for the Study of Economic Liberty at Arizona State University, *Fixes for the Long Haul* is a roadmap to fiscal transformation centered on sound budgeting, more responsive government agencies, and dynamic economic growth. The Institute's recommendations include a spending freeze, reorganization authority, adopting outcome budgeting, stop issuing new debt, tying debt limit to property values, and adopting a spending cap formula. mdpolicy.org

MASSACHUSETTS



Pioneer Institute released a new book, *Agenda for Leadership 2015*, with 100 state reforms to reshape education, health care, transportation, government transparency, and economics. The winner of Pioneer's 24th annual Better Government Competition is Five Keys Charter School, which partners with the San Francisco Sheriff's Department to educate adult inmates and reduce recidivism. Pioneer earned national media coverage of its report exposing how state officials misled the federal government about major health exchange problems, costing nearly \$1 billion. The Governor and legislature acted on Pioneer's proposals to reform workfare and the state's transit system, and the Governor blocked a planned \$1 billion expansion of Boston's convention center after Pioneer revealed its unrealistic revenue projections. This spring, Pioneer held events on World War II and the Cold War with Edmund Morris, Rick Atkinson, David Kennedy, Anne Appelbaum, and others. pioneerinstitute.org

MICHIGAN



On May 5, Michigan voters turned down a \$2 billion tax increase by an 80–20 margin. The funding would have gone to past infrastructure debt, future road projects, local governments, public schools, mass transportation, and other areas as pointed out by assistant fiscal policy director James Hohman in a study. Also in May, the **Mackinac Center** hosted a civil asset forfeiture event featuring a democrat state representative, a lawyer with the ACLU of Michigan, and an attorney with the Institute for Justice. IJ's Lee McGrath called the forum "[T]he ultimate kumbaya property rights moment." Mackinac Center labor policy director F. Vincent Vernuccio authored a study titled *Worker's Choice*:

Freeing Unions and Workers from Forced Representation. The report shows the benefits of unions being able to represent only those who pay them and workers being able to represent themselves. mackinac.org

MINNESOTA



Center of the American Experiment released its first State of Prosperity poll that shows Minnesotans appear to be surprisingly unified on issues related to the budget, transportation, health care, and public pensions. The survey found Minnesotans staunchly oppose using the \$1.9 billion surplus to fund new programs or expand old ones. A whopping 94 percent favor modernizing and expanding aging roads and overwhelmingly favor using existing sales tax revenue (65 percent) over raising the gas tax (29 percent). When asked how best to contain rising health care costs, Minnesotans favor increased competition in health insurance (59 percent) over single-payer health care. A clear majority (64 percent) think public employees should transition to a 401(k)-style retirement system. While 61 percent thought the state economy was improving, only 20 percent believe their personal financial situation has gotten better; 16 percent believe it has gotten worse. americanexperiment.org



Dirk Bak was elected chairman of the board of directors of the **Freedom Foundation of Minnesota**. Bak, president of SDQ, Ltd. and SDQ Janitorial, employs over 700 individuals throughout the Midwest where the company services over 375 corporate campuses and headquarters. He has an extensive list of awards and



Dirk Bak, chairman of the board at the Freedom Foundation of Minnesota.

accomplishments, including distinction as the youngest recipient of the “Forty under 40” annual business award. “We are thrilled to have Dirk at the helm of the Freedom Foundation” said Annette Meeks, CEO of the organization. “His extensive experience in marketing and business development will be key elements as we continue to expand the impact and influence of the Foundation.” Bak is a graduate of the University of Minnesota, as well as Concord Law School. He has completed graduate studies at Harvard Business School. He and his wife Evonne are the devoted parents of three young children. freedomfoundationofminnesota.com

MISSISSIPPI



Two of the hardest-fought policy victories for **Mississippi Center for Public Policy** and Mississippi children and parents over the past two years will begin to show results this fall. Students will be able to utilize two new school choice programs when the school year begins in August. The state’s first two charter schools will open in Jackson, and students with special needs in any part of the state will be able to access an Education Savings Account to meet their needs outside the public school setting. In traditional public schools, this will be the first year of implementing the “third grade gate,” which requires schools to hold back children if they are not reading on grade level by the end of the third grade. mspolicy.org

MISSOURI



In June, the **Show-Me Institute** unveiled its new website. The goal of Missouri’s only free-market think tank was two-fold: to be highly visual and user-friendly. Check it out at www.showmeinstitute.org! In addition to Show-Me’s new look, Institute

analysts continue to push against two ill-advised plans: one in St. Louis involves building a new stadium for an NFL team; the other in Kansas City pushes for a new convention hotel. Both would involve heavy public subsidies. showmeinstitute.org

NEBRASKA



The revolving door of recidivism makes Nebraskan streets less safe and burdens taxpayers. As Nebraska struggles with prison overcrowding, **Platte Institute** policy research continues to provide



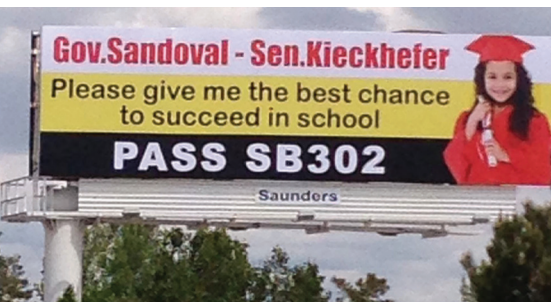
The Platte Institute’s study, Securing Nebraska, inspired several criminal justice reforms in the state that will create alternatives to incarceration.

commonsense criminal justice reforms that control costs and protect public safety. Last year, the Nebraska Legislature passed Legislative Bill 907, which enhanced treatment and reentry programs in Nebraska’s prison system. In February, the Platte Institute published *Securing Nebraska*, a policy study outlining proven alternatives to incarceration, including probation and sanctions-oriented drug courts for low-level, nonviolent offenders. In May, a justice reform bill including many of the study’s recommendations passed unanimously in the Nebraska Legislature. Thank you to Marc Levin and Derek Cohen from the Center for Effective Justice at the Texas Public Policy Foundation for their research and for setting a valuable example in Texas for reform across the country. platteinstitute.org

NEVADA



The **Nevada Policy Research Institute** led the fight against the largest tax increase in Nevada history. Despite Republicans controlling both houses and the governor's mansion, Gov. Brian Sandoval put tax increases at the top of the agenda. With NPRI's research, testimony, and even an online ad that received over 47,000 views, NPRI showed how the tax would



NPRI's billboard, which is on the freeway lawmakers take to the airport, urged the passage of the best school choice program in the country.

hurt families and the economy. NPRI also worked with lawmakers to promote a plan for universal Education Savings Accounts, which would be the best school choice program in the country. Their efforts included a billboard urging key elected officials to move the bill forward. NPRI research also turned into bills for significant reforms to labor laws and PERS. In June, over 200 supporters attended NPRI's Spring Celebration in Reno where Yuri Maltsev, a former economic adviser to Mikhail Gorbachev, was the keynote speaker. npri.org

NEW MEXICO



The **Rio Grande Foundation** has hired D. Dowd Muska, formerly of the Yankee Institute and Nevada Policy Research Institute, as research director. Since coming aboard, Dowd has been integral

to the Foundation's efforts on Right to Work, transportation/infrastructure policy, and education reform. In the wake of New Mexico's legislative session, the Foundation made the case for free-market infrastructure policies, including the elimination of the



The Rio Grande Foundation welcomes Dowd Muska as its new research director.

state's prevailing-wage law and reform of the capital-outlay process to prioritize needed projects. Repeal of the prevailing-wage law would allow taxpayers to get at least 10 percent more infrastructure for their money. As a sign of its effectiveness, the Foundation was on the receiving end of an attack by liberal Senate Majority Leader Michael Sanchez, who claimed the Foundation was attempting to "foist a right-wing agenda onto New Mexico."

riograndefoundation.org

NEW YORK

EMPIRE CENTER

The **Empire Center** examined the effectiveness of New York's 2011 property tax cap law (based on Empire Center proposals) and found that taxes would have been \$7.6 billion higher if the pre-cap growth trend had continued. The report made front pages across the state, and the findings were cited by editorial boards, Governor Andrew Cuomo, and others advocating to make the cap permanent.



New York State Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan appeared at an Empire Center press conference and praised the Center for its work in support of New York's property tax cap.

Just one year after winning a landmark transparency case, the Center won a subsequent court case after a public pension fund tried to bypass the ruling. And the Center took the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) to court after the authority routinely ignored parts of the Freedom of Information Law. The Center also critiqued a proposal to mandate the use of biodiesel in home heating oil, finding it would drive up costs, require more frequent delivery, and increase air pollution. empirecenter.org

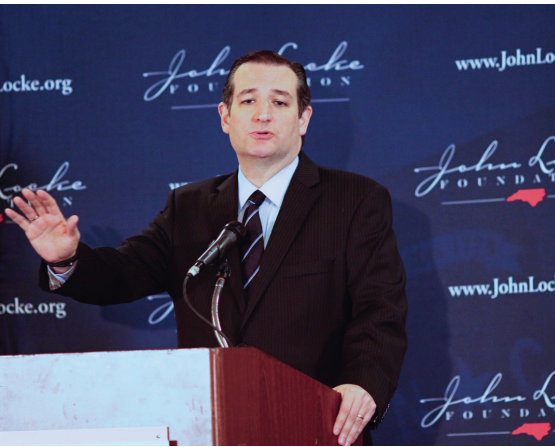
NORTH CAROLINA



The **Civitas Institute** recently investigated the way insiders are furthering the agenda of "Big Solar"—the highly-subsidized solar power industry. Civitas articles showed how liberal groups push renewable energy mandates and use Republican consultants and lawmakers to help the effort. Civitas noted this agenda increases electric bills while hampering the state's economy. Also, now you can learn about free-market economics right in the palm of your hand: The Civitas Austrian Economics app is available for free download in Google Play and the iTunes store. Civitas also helped educate Tar Heel voters by sponsoring a lunch with Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, a rising star on the political scene. Their latest poll celebrated 10 years of surveying public opinion by comparing questions and answers from their first poll in May 2005 with their latest, conducted in May of this year. nccivitas.org



The first conservative to announce plans to run for the Republican presidential nomination, U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, also delivered the first in an expected series of policy speeches by presidential contenders for **John Locke Foundation** audiences. JLF also welcomed nationally recognized pollster Kellyanne Conway for a lecture analyzing the 2016 race. N.C. legislators



U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz offered policy prescriptions involving health care, foreign relations, and more during an April policy briefing for the John Locke Foundation. Photo by Don Carrington.

learned about successful Medicaid reform efforts in other states during a JLF panel discussion. Kari Travis joined JLF as social media specialist and *Carolina Journal* associate editor. The *Carolina Journal* exposed a Charlotte-area tax fraud scheme and highlighted a property dispute involving state government, a private island, and political connections. Recent JLF research has urged state lawmakers to end all state targeted corporate tax incentives, weighed pros and cons of creating two new state cabinet-level departments, and recommended replacing most state occupational licensing requirements with voluntary certification. johnlocke.org

OHIO



The **Buckeye Institute's** president and CEO Robert Alt wrote an op-ed that was published in the Wall Street Journal: "Ohio Needs a Second Dose of Labor Reform: If Gov. John Kasich wants to compete for the presidency in 2016, he ought to stand up for employees right now." Access it online at <http://www.wsj.com/articles/ohio-needs-a-second-dose-of-labor-reform-1429913774>. The op-ed articulates the necessity of reforming labor laws in Ohio for the state to compete with its neighbors who have

already adopted Right To Work. Buckeye's statehouse liaison and policy analyst Greg Lawson has already testified six times before Ohio's General Assembly this year, and he is busy keeping its members apprised of sound free-market policy solutions to the problems ailing the Buckeye state. buckeyeinstitute.org

OKLAHOMA



Throughout the 2015 legislative session, the **Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs** worked to make Oklahoma the freest state in the nation. Several policies included in its 2015 Freedom Agenda, and in subsequent publications and public forums, were enacted during the 2015 session. Among them were paycheck protection, state employee health care reform, protection of doctor/patient relationships, Medicaid reform, reforms that will stop local regulatory abuse, uniform regulation for ridesharing, and corrections reform. A school choice bill, which bumps a state income tax credit for scholarship-granting organizations from 50 percent to 75 percent, is in the pipeline for signing at the time of this publishing. ocpathink.org

OREGON



Cascade Institute hosted a variety of events in the spring, kicking off with Adrian Moore, vice president of the Reason Foundation, who spoke to a group of supporters on "Innovation in Transportation." He discussed driverless vehicles, toll roads, and the sharing economy. Bill Conerly, Cascade board chairman, led a Policy Picnic in May, debunking the common myths surrounding income inequality. In June, Cascade hosted a debate on "The Right to Donor Privacy," featuring local attorney and former U.S. Senate candidate Jim Huffman and the head of the Independent Party

of Oregon Dan Meek. Nigel Jaquiss, an investigative reporter and 2005 Pulitzer Prize winner, moderated. Many thanks to the Rupe Foundation for sponsoring the debate. Analyst Steve Buckstein also successfully advocated for the passage of a Right to Try bill in the Oregon legislature. cascadepolicy.org

PENNSYLVANIA



A series of policy and legislative victories in the last two months illustrates how **Commonwealth Foundation** not only effectively "humanizes" important policies but also gets results. The state Senate passed real pension reform that would "stop the bleeding" and start addressing Pennsylvania's massive public pension liabilities. The Senate also passed labor transparency bills that would shine light on collective bargaining negotiations between unions and state government and give taxpayers an idea of what's being negotiated and spent in their name. Lastly, the state House passed massive, historic expansions of school choice tax scholarship programs that give Pennsylvania's most destitute and disadvantaged kids a literal lifeline and a shot at breaking the cycle of poverty through quality education. commonwealthfoundation.org

SOUTH CAROLINA



South Carolinians keep a wary eye on the Atlantic between late May and November, the period of time known as hurricane season. But preparing for these storms is a year-round reality; everyone knows if you wait to plan until the storm is bearing down on the coast, you're too late. It's no different for state finances: as baby boomers age, a perfect storm is brewing in federal and state budgets. This looming fiscal hurricane

is why **Palmetto Promise Institute** was so pleased to see Financial Ready pass the S.C. House of Representatives this May. Championed by Representative Alan Clemmons and supported by Palmetto Promise research, this bill requires state agencies to account for every federal dime in their budget and develop contingency plans to protect essential services should those funds be cut. Palmetto Promise Institute will continue to track this commonsense planning exercise. palmettopromise.org



Buried in a weak and deliberately confusing ethics bill in the South Carolina legislature was a provision that would classify some nonpolitical groups like the **South Carolina Policy Council** as “electioneering”—a clear attempt to force them to expose their supporters. SCPC published a detailed analysis for other 501(c)(3) groups. President Ashley Landess published an op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* on how this and similar provisions are intended to insulate politicians from criticism, and in May SCPC hosted a public debate on the issue. The provision was finally killed (for this year anyway) in June. Meanwhile, the House passed a bill making it a criminal offense to file a “groundless” complaint against a judge—yet another attempt to discourage citizens from challenging public officials. The *Nerve* reported it first, mainstream media reported it next, and nine days later the provision was deleted. scpolicycouncil.org

TENNESSEE



The **Beacon Center of Tennessee** had an eventful end to the 2015 legislative session. Two of Beacon’s major policy initiatives, Right to Try and an Education Savings Account (ESA) bill for special needs children, were both signed into law. In a rare feat, the Right to Try bill, which

will give Tennessee’s terminally ill a lifeline, passed the legislature unanimously. The bill was named after a terminally ill patient, Amand Wilcox, whose story Beacon featured prominently. Beacon also helped to pass Tennessee’s first-ever school choice program in the form of ESAs for special needs children. Beacon unveiled its brand new, state-of-the-art website. The website is far easier to navigate and looks sharper than ever before, giving both legislators and taxpayers a fresh new look at the important work Beacon is doing. beacontn.org

TEXAS



The **Texas Public Policy Foundation** launched the Fueling Freedom Project, led by former Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources Doug Domenech, to build a coalition to combat the EPA’s proposed Clean Power Plan. The Foundation also launched the Center for the American Future to advance Tenth Amendment principles through opposition to federal abuse and overreach. Former Assistant Attorney General Robert Henneke leads the litigation center. TPPF released a poll that shows Texans overwhelmingly trust Texas state government to do a better job than Washington, D.C., in protecting the environment. At the end of the regular legislative session, the Foundation held a series of four traveling primers in Dallas, Houston, Austin, and Midland. The series featured TPPF’s top experts discussing the outcomes of Session and how to keep Texas on the leading edge of freedom and prosperity. texaspolicy.com

UTAH



Sutherland Institute formally launched World Congress of Families IX during a press conference in mid-May. The event will be Oct. 27–30, 2015, at the beautiful five-diamond Grand America Hotel in Salt Lake City. WCF IX is the world’s largest



Sutherland Interim President Stan Swim and WCF IX Executive Director Janice Crouse answered questions from the media during the WCF IX launch event.

gathering of pro-family scholars, religious leaders, parliamentarians, and advocates. The conferences are a time for sharing research, exploring family issues and solutions, networking, and celebrating the foundational role family plays in successful communities and nations. Presentations and panels will cover a wide variety of topics, including human trafficking, abortion, divorce, addictions, and solutions to strengthen the family for future generations. At WCF IX, attendees will be entertained by YouTube stars The Piano Guys and the world-renowned Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Attendees will also be inspired by speakers such as Australia’s Nick Vujicic, who lives a full, rich life even though he was born without any limbs. Sutherland Institute invites you to attend the conference. Head to www.wcf9.org for more information. sutherlandinstitute.org

VERMONT



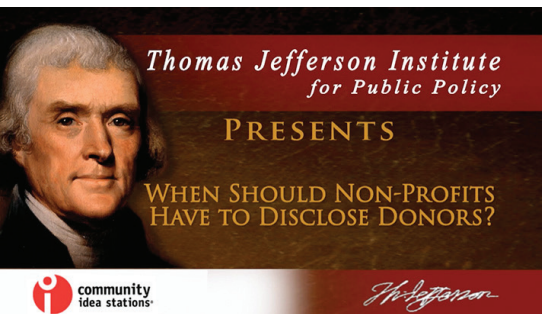
With the legislative session done for the year, the **Ethan Allen Institute** will prepare and publish Roll Call Profiles for all 180 Vermont representatives and senators, detailing how each voted on key issues in 2015. Over the summer months, they will explore two major issues. The first is Vermont’s renewable energy policy and how newly enacted mandates in regard to expanding in-state renewable energy

production and use will impact Vermont's landscape and economy. Second, they will examine the roots of an acute and growing doctor shortage in the state and recommend policy options for turning the trend around. ethanallen.org

VIRGINIA



The **Thomas Jefferson Institute's** third Federal Policy Dinner of the year featured former Congressman Tom Davis and drew a record audience of more than 50 donors and supporters. The Institute has been asked to plan and execute a *Leadership Roundtable on Energy & Environment* at



The Jefferson Institute's televised debate series was broadcast over WCVE public television, with more than 40,000 viewers, and aired on its affiliates.

the Council of State Government's 69th Southern Legislative Conference in July in Savannah, Ga. Also in July, a similar roundtable will be held for Virginia's leadership about off-shore energy development, a western gas pipeline in Virginia, and the EPA's new carbon regulations that will have a devastating effect on Virginia's job development. Institute president Mike Thompson has been asked to moderate a panel discussion before the prestigious Committee of 100 on the subject of "Jobs! Jobs! Jobs! The Next 5-10 Years." thomasjeffersoninst.org



The **Virginia Institute for Public Policy** sent daily updates to activists across

Virginia to educate citizens on bills before the General Assembly. The Institute opposed several efforts to initiate a process calling for a balanced budget amendment being added to the U.S. Constitution. Because there are ways to balance the federal budget that would be devastating to the American taxpayer, the Institute's position is that the priority should be on a federal spending cap, not a balanced budget. All initiatives were defeated. Freedom & Prosperity Radio, the Institute's syndicated radio program, continues to attract top guests. Recent guests have included Peter Schweizer discussing his latest book, *Clinton Cash*, and Eamonn Butler, director of the Adam Smith Institute in London, who addressed the recent elections in the U.K. and the implications for Britain and the European Union. virginiainstitute.org

WASHINGTON



Washington Policy Center hosted its 2015 statewide college campus debate series at Gonzaga University, Washington State University, and the University of Washington. Over 600 students, community leaders, and young professionals heard from experts on the "Debate on Climate & the Environment: What is the best way to tackle environmental issues, the government or the free market?" and "Is the increased minimum wage an opportunity creator or job killer?" WPC also streamed the live debate online. In April, voters in Spokane, Washington's second largest city, defeated Proposition 1, which included a \$72 million electric trolley proposal



Hundreds packed out UW's Kane Hall to hear experts address the debate on climate and the environment.

analyzed by WPC. WPC produced extensive research with alternative recommendations that were less expensive. In June, WPC hosted another Young Professionals event, sponsored by Starbucks and held at their corporate headquarters in Seattle. "Sips & Solutions" featured Starbucks executives and key policymakers. washingtonpolicy.org

WISCONSIN



The **MacIver Institute** was again catapulted into the national spotlight after pushing Wisconsin to be a leading example for government reform. Four years after MacIver played a critical role in overhauling the state's collective bargaining privileges for government workers, it was a leading voice during Wisconsin's battle to become the 25th Right to Work state in the country. MacIver's work landed a glowing national profile from *The Daily Beast* titled "Inside Scott Walker's Brain Trust." The article highlighted MacIver's work pushing free-market reforms in the state and said, "...these days behind every great man is a great think tank. And Scott Walker is no exception." The Wisconsin think tank continues to look for ways to save taxpayers' money, including eliminating wasteful spending in every corner of government and a possible repeal of the prevailing wage law. maciverinstitute.com

WYOMING



Wyoming legislators are busy figuring out ways to fund their favorite boondoggles. **Wyoming Liberty Group's** Maureen Bader has explained that while the state Capitol building needs repair, proponents of the \$300 million budget say it will take more than a \$200,000 public relations contract to spin the facts to save the project itself. Maureen has also spoken against the governor's desire to dun

taxpayers to underwrite alternative energy company risk that no private investor will touch. Amy Edmonds backed the students and parents who are walking away from failing schools as Progressives—in Cody, Wyoming!—call parents “bigots” and “racist,” in part over differences about sixth-grade Common Core reading that calls upon students to “worship green.” Over 200 Cody citizens attended a meeting that went on until 1:00 a.m. Also, Charlie Katebi discussed the likelihood—or not—of the federal government continuing to fund its share of Medicaid. wyliberty.org

ASSOCIATES



Incumbent Ohio legislators are likely to place the issue to loosen term limits on the ballot within the next 12 months. **The 1851 Center for Constitutional Law** is partnering with U.S. Term Limits to defend Ohio's constitution amendment and repel this attack. If limits are loosened or eliminated in Ohio, they are likely to fall elsewhere in the future. Meanwhile, The 1851 Center obtained a judgment in federal court against the Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted, finding him personally liable for violating Ohioans' free speech and freedom to contract with petition circulators. ohioconstitution.org

ACTON INSTITUTE

Acton Institute recently named Assistant Professor of Economics at Ave Maria University, Catherine Ruth Pakaluk, the 2015 Novak Award Winner. Named after Michael Novak, this award recognizes outstanding scholarly research examining the relationship between religion, economic freedom, and the free and virtuous society. Pakaluk was chosen for this honor based on her work on matters

of culture, religion, gender, the social science of the family, and the vocation of women. Recipients of the Novak award make a formal presentation at an annual public forum called the Calihan Lecture. acton.org



With a focus on the benefits of market solutions, competition, and lower taxes, **The American Consumer Institute Center for Citizen Research** wrote on a wide variety of topics, including FCC's proposal to tax and subsidize broadband services (*Forbes*); insurance regulation in Florida (*Gainesville Sun*) and North Carolina; postal competition (*Breitbart*); wireless service tax increases in Ohio, Florida, and Maryland (*Gazette*); and flood and catastrophe policy (*The Hill*). ACI also released a ConsumerGram on the benefits of biosimilar competition and another on the harms from net neutrality. The FCC Chairman reappointed ACI president, Steve Pociask, to its Consumer Advisory Committee. theamericanconsumer.org



American Council of Trustees and Alumni celebrated the launch of a web series for trustees on athletics in higher education. Hosted by University of Maryland Regent and Olympian Tom McMillen and University System of Maryland Chancellor Brit Kirwan, “Best Practices in Athletic Oversight” examines athletic scandals around the country. The video serves as a resource for trustees and policymakers nationwide on ways to safeguard their institutions against scandal. ACTA also received the Heritage Foundation's Salvatori Prize, presented for dedication to the principles of the American Founding. In June, ACTA moved into a new office to fit its expanding role in higher education reform. goacta.org



American Legislative Exchange Council

American Legislative Exchange Council is a leading voice on criminal justice reform. Read the report series on recidivism reduction policies at www.alec.org. The complete 2015 *Rich States, Poor States: ALEC-Laffer State Economic Competitiveness Index* analysis is available at www.alec.org/rsps. Watch for the 2015 edition of *Report Card on American Education*, which is coming soon. Join the American Legislative Exchange Council in Scottsdale, Ariz., on December 2–4, 2015. Registration opens soon. Check www.alec.org for more details. alec.org



American Enterprise Institute president Arthur Brooks is following up the success of his 2012 New York Times bestseller *The Road to Freedom* with *The Conservative Heart*, to be released by HarperCollins's Broadside Books on July 14, 2015. The book lays out a new vision for a humanistic, purpose-driven conservative movement that can reunite the country. Arthur provides a revitalized philosophy for American conservatism, a new policy agenda to make that vision a reality, and practical tips and tactics for turning a protest movement into a social movement. If you're interested in learning more about *The Conservative Heart* or in receiving a copy, email Janine at janine.nichols@AEI.org. aei.org



America's Future Foundation identifies and develops liberty-minded young professionals nationwide. Summer kicked off with the 20th Anniversary Gala and Conference and professional development lunches about becoming a policy expert and a top development professional. Summer sessions are

ongoing for the members-only mentor program and the Writing Fellowship, which trains young professionals on writing, pitching, and getting published. AFF thanks the Arthur N. Rupe Foundation with whom they are hosting debates around the country on hot topics. To learn about these and other great AFF programs in D.C., and 15 cities, please visit their website.

americasfuture.org



Atlas Network is pleased to welcome Charles Murray as its next Templeton Leadership Fellow. In this capacity, Murray will serve as keynote speaker at Atlas Network's 2015 Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner, Nov. 11–12, in New York City. Also at Liberty Forum & Freedom Dinner, Randy Barnett will present the third annual Liggio Lecture, Atlas Leadership Academy will put on the \$25,000 Think Tank Shark Tank Competition, and the \$100,000 Templeton Freedom Award will be presented. To learn more about the worldwide freedom movement's most inspirational event of the year, or to RSVP, visit: atlasnetwork.org/libertyforum. atlasnetwork.org



It's hard to believe **The Bastiat Society** has hosted nearly 70 events around the world already this year—and there is a good chance their network will top 150 events in 2015! Beyond their events, chapters are actively bridging the gap between the academic community and the business community. The Bastiat Society was well received at the Association of Private Enterprise Educators conference in Cancun and at the *Moral Foundations of Capitalism* conference in Clemson. It is also helping organize the second annual *Classical Liberals of the Carolinas* conference.

Follow its ongoing success at its website. bastiatociety.org



March 2015 marked **Benjamin Rush Institute's** third and largest national *Leadership Conference* in Washington, D.C., with 45 students attending. The Heritage Foundation hosted BRI's "Health Policy Day," featuring distinguished health care policy experts from The Heritage Foundation and Docs4PatientCare Foundation. BRI-Georgetown produced a four-person debate on mandates vs. markets in medicine. Many chapters held lectures, debates, and social events to preserve the doctor-patient relationship and promote commonsense, liberty-based health care solutions. BRI ended this academic year with 22 chapters and affiliates sponsoring 50 events with attendance as high as 150. benjaminrushinstitute.org



Could your state achieve Right to Work fighting city by city, county by county? **Capital Research Center's** May *Labor Watch* provides an in-depth report on efforts in Kentucky and other states to bypass a statewide decision on Right to Work and instead seek local laws that guarantee workers their freedom to decide for themselves whether to join a union or pay dues. The report also explains the complicated, unsettled legal and political questions that surround this innovative approach to labor reform. capitalresearch.org



Please save the date for **Cato Institute's** 10th Annual State Health Policy Summit. This special conference for state think tanks will occur January 7–9th, 2016, with the location to be announced soon. Previous speakers include Congressman

Paul Ryan, Avik Roy of the Manhattan Institute, and Joseph Rago of the *Wall Street Journal*. Are you attending FreedomFest, ALEC, or SPN's Annual Meeting? Be sure to stop by Cato's booth! Or, planning a trip to D.C.? We'd love to show you around Cato and hear about any upcoming projects you may have. Please email Heather Curry (hcurry@cato.org) to schedule a meeting. cato.org



Center for Competitive Politics is preparing a petition for a writ of certiorari to the U.S. Supreme Court in *CCP v. Harris*. It is in response to a Ninth Circuit decision forcing the disclosure of the Center's private donor list—an opinion with exceptionally harmful ramifications for other 501(c)(3) organizations. The Center worked to expose the dangers to donor privacy in proposed legislation under consideration in Maine, Missouri, Texas, and Washington. The *Wall Street Journal* editorialized on a new CCP report examining the impact of campaign finance regulations on lengthening presidential campaigns. CCP President David Keating was profiled in *Time*. campaignfreedom.org



Citizens' Council for Health Freedom has been busy at the state and federal level. It achieved a solo/cash-based provider exemption to the costly and intrusive MN-only electronic health record (EHR) mandate, protected parents' right to be informed of government storage/use of their babies' DNA, fought the "Doc Fix" bill in Congress, and now HR 6. Secs. 1124/3001 of the "21st Century Cures Act," which gives corporate and government outsiders new access to private medical records for unspecified research. *Science* magazine also covered the Council's parent consent law recently enacted by Congress. For

more news, sign up for the weekly CCHF Health Freedom eNews at their website.
cchfreedom.org



How much is federal regulation costing the economy? **Competitive Enterprise Institute's** annual *Ten Thousand Commandments* report by Wayne Crews (@wayne-crews) estimates \$1.88 trillion in 2014 in lost economic productivity and higher prices. Visit www.cei.org/10kc2015. Franchise businesses in every state could be devastated by a forthcoming National Labor Relations Board ruling making franchisors and franchisees "joint employers" for labor law purposes. See a report by Aloysius Hogan (@HoganCEI) warning that minority and women businesses could be hard hit, and the impact could extend to temp, contract, and outsourced work. This summer, share a dram with friends and check out the trailer for <http://iwhiskeymovie.org>
cei.org



The Claremont Institute is happy to announce the 2015 class of Publius Fellows. This year's impressive group includes writers and young professionals from *National Review Online*, American Enterprise Institute, *Public Discourse*, *National Affairs*, and other major think tanks and related organizations. They have distinguished themselves with work on Russian intervention in Ukraine, conservative budgetary policies, education reform, national security threats, and environmental policy. This outstanding group will participate in two weeks of seminars in the principles of the American Founding to help equip them to continue their work to recover constitutional government. To learn more, go to: www.claremont.org/publius. claremont.org



This June, the **David Horowitz Freedom Center** launched a revamped design for *FrontPage Magazine* (www.frontpagemag.com), its daily online publication and flagship website with 1.2 million unique visitors a month (65 million hits). It features some of America's most thoughtful and provocative writers reporting and commenting on "the war at home and the war abroad." Their work brings clarity to the muddled turbulence of the daily news and provides a conservative, commonsense perspective on the crucial events affecting the nation and the world. The magazine's Shillman Journalism Fellows, supported by Dr. Robert J. Shillman, expose the Left's takeover of U.S. politics, media, and culture and the depredations of radical Islamists through daily articles and the blog, *The Point*, written by Shillman Fellow Daniel Greenfield. horowitzfreedomcenter.org



Many thanks to the 30 development professionals from across the liberty movement who took part in a special dinner in Seattle during Resource Bank in May. The dinner, co-hosted by **DonorsTrust** and State Policy Network, sparked a range of discussions. Over delicious food and wine, folks shared frustrations, successes, and ideas with their fundraising peers. DonorsTrust looks forward to additional opportunities to connect and engage with fundraisers at the SPN Annual Meeting in Grand Rapids in September. The more we all work together, the more we can grow this movement. donorstrust.org



The Fairness Center has amped up its mission of vindicating the rights of people wronged by government unions. In April, it filed suit against Pa. Gov. Tom Wolf and his Department of Human Services on

behalf of Dave Smith, a quadriplegic man with muscular dystrophy, and his caretaker, Don Lambrecht, who are affected by Gov. Wolf's stealth effort to unionize home care workers. A judge granted an emergency injunction, stopping this union effort in its tracks for now. And in May, Fairness Center attorneys filed a labor charge with the state Labor Relations Board on behalf of an associate professor whose union dues were overcharged in a shady scheme by her union. The Fairness Center and its allies will continue to expose these abuses, not only in the court of law but also in the court of public opinion. fairnesscenter.org



Remember the first time you read *I, Pencil*? **Foundation for Economic Education** is excited to announce this classic parable about the free market is available in iBook and Kindle formats (www.FEE.org/ebooks). Other new eBooks include: *99 Ways to Leave Leviathan*, *Advice for Young, Unemployed Workers*, and *Rendering Unto Caesar: Was Jesus A Socialist?* Additionally, FEE announces James Anderson as senior development associate and deputy publisher of the *Freeman* magazine, available in bulk at no charge for SPN member groups (www.FEE.org/bulk). Visit www.FEE.org to discover a wealth of intellectual resources you need to make the moral case for free markets and the free society. fee.org



As the **Foundation for Excellence in Education's** flagship initiative, the National Summit on Education Reform annually convenes the best and brightest from around the world to share strategies to improve the quality of education for all children everywhere. This one-stop shop of policies and practices offers an opportunity for lawmakers, policymakers, and advocates to learn the nuts and bolts of reform. Attendees leave the National Summit armed with the knowledge and

networks to advance bold education reform in their states. This uncommon conference annually serves as a catalyst for energizing and accelerating the reform movement across the nation. Be there or be left behind. excelined.org



The new **Fraser Institute** book, *What America's Decline in Economic Freedom Means for Entrepreneurship and Prosperity*, explores the U.S. economy's tepid recovery from the 2008 recession, concluding that one of the main causes is a decline in small business start-ups and entrepreneurship. This, in turn, is caused by cascading regulations and increasing government mandates. For example, in 1993, the cumulative count of final rules published in the Federal Register was 4,369. By 2014, the number had swelled to 90,823. To read the book, visit <http://tinyurl.com/p463ogw>. Watch the YouTube video at <http://tinyurl.com/kq9emg3>. Subscribe to *Insight*—their U.S. newsletter—at <http://tinyurl.com/lfk4fp6>. fraserinstitute.org



On May 15, **The Free State Foundation** president Randolph May testified in support of FCC process reforms at a House Subcommittee on Communications and Technology hearing on "Improving Commission Transparency Part II." On June 2, Mr. May testified before the Senate Commerce Committee on reforming the FCC's Lifeline program. With FSF research fellow Seth Cooper, Mr. May published an article in *Engage*, a Federalist Society publication, explaining that the FCC's action preempting state restrictions on municipal government telecom systems is unwise and likely unconstitutional. A Free State Foundation book on intellectual property rights is forthcoming. freestatefoundation.org



On August 15, India's Independence Day, **Free To Choose Network** will release its latest one-hour documentary, *India Awakes*. True to their mission, *India Awakes* will examine how economic liberalization has helped to break down India's oppressive caste system. Hosted by Cato Institute Senior Fellow, Johan Norberg, *India Awakes* will air nationally on public television this fall; visit http://www.freetochoosemedias.org/broadcasts/india_awakes/index.php for more information about the film and for dates and times in your area. Contact them directly if you are interested in hosting a private screening or similar event in your area. freetochoosenetwork.org



Galen Institute recently relaunched www.ObamaCareWatch.org, the go-to website for the best news, opinion, and polling about the impact of the health overhaul law on jobs, health costs, taxes, government spending, and access to care. *ObamaCareWatch* also offers a page with contact information for the leading experts on market-oriented health policy from academic institutions and think tanks around the country. Meanwhile, the Galen Institute has been working with state and federal legislators on options for the states following the Supreme Court's decision in *King v Burwell*. galen.org



The Heritage Foundation's 2015 Resource Bank Meeting featured lively presentations; small group dinners for CEOs, fundraisers, leadership development and communications officers; tech tours; and barista bars. Videos of talks

by Steve Forbes, Victor Davis Hanson, and others are available for viewing: <http://heritagereport.org/1HOT3vE>. The annual Red Tape Rising publication highlighted six years of escalating regulation under President Obama and estimated the cost at nearly \$80 million annually. Heritage experts have produced dozens of research papers and commentaries detailing the costs, cronyism, and corruption of the Export Import Bank. Their Reclaim America campaign and tour (www.reclaim.heritage.org/) shares Heritage's four strategies to restore America's foundations. heritage.org



In July, **The Independent Institute** wrapped up the third and final session of their 2015 *Challenge of Liberty* summer seminars. More students than ever joined together in California and Colorado this summer to study under Robert Higgs, Benjamin Powell, and 14 other leading academics. Independent also reached capacity for the summer Learning to Lead internships program, and 15 highly qualified young professionals are training under senior Independent staff. Independent is inspiring new audiences about freedom through cutting-edge projects like the *Love Gov* Millennial video series. Stay updated. Independent is activating the next generation as advocates for peace, prosperity, and freedom. independent.org



No scholars, no research, no change. That's why the **Institute for Humane Studies** has developed Find Scholars—a FREE service that connects liberty-based organizations to experts who can help advance their goals. The Find team has successfully connected credible academic experts to engage in research, op-eds, media comments, or speaking opportunities with organizations such as the Platte Institute, Coalition to

Reduce Spending, Mackinac Center, and the Commonwealth Foundation. If you are looking for experts on any policy area, please email: Find@TheIHS.org.
theihs.org



Institute for Policy Innovation president Tom Giovanetti appeared on several Dallas-Fort Worth news shows discussing how a new Texas law preempting local drilling bans is a win for the rule of law and protects citizens from majority tyranny. Several media outlets covered an IPI-hosted event featuring a geologist's explanation that the recent earthquakes in the Dallas area are likely caused by fault lines, not drilling practices. In a new IPI publication, Dr. Merrill Matthews makes the case for privatizing Social Security's disability program in order to save it and improve benefits for the disabled. **ipi.org**



It has been a busy summer for **Intercollegiate Studies Institute's** seven Collegiate Network professional journalism fellows and nine journalism interns. Last month they reported to their assignments at *USA Today*, *The Hill*, the *New York Post*, and other leading national and local news outlets, where they are working as full-time reporters and editors. Over the course of their summer internships and year-long fellowships, these talented student journalists will build polished portfolios and develop invaluable networks of media contacts. Look for their work on *Drudge Report*. Many past ISI student journalists have been featured there. **isi.org**



The Jesse Helms Center recently launched their MOOC (Massive Open

Online Course) **Free Enterprise Now®**. Developed by Dr. Peter Frank, Helms Center Free Enterprise Fellow and professor of economics at Wingate University, the course consists of lessons covering subjects such as free-market economics, how to run a business, ethical leadership, and how excessive government regulation damages the free enterprise system. Targeted to homeschoolers, public and private school educators, and students, this course is built upon their highly successful Free Enterprise Leadership Challenge summer program held on college campuses across the country. View for yourself at www.freeenterprisenow.org.
jessehelscenter.org



The John W. Pope Center for Higher Education Policy is making waves. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the leading news source for higher education nationwide, profiled the Pope Center in May. In "Conservative Think Tank Puts Pressure on North Carolina's Colleges," the Chronicle outlined the Pope Center's growing influence in the state. The story highlighted positive changes in North Carolina, including policymakers' renewed focus on faculty workloads, college graduates' job prospects, and university spending. The article also called attention to the Pope Center's work to decrease regulatory oversight, increase transparency, and eliminate administrative bloat.
popecenter.org



Judicial Watch continues to investigate the Benghazi/Clinton scandals while fighting to protect election integrity and expose IRS corruption. JW obtained documents from the DOD and State Department which showed Obama administration officials knew within 24 hours the Benghazi attack was a terrorist attack, and which confirm shipment of weapons from Benghazi

to Syria. A federal court sided with JW on the IRS scandal, forcing the IRS to provide answers about Lois Lerner's 32,000+ emails which were supposedly "lost" and recently declared recovered. JW won a hearing before the Supreme Court for Maryland voters disenfranchised by the state's nonsensical, unreasonable legislative redistricting plan.
judicialwatch.org



Leadership Institute will train and deploy field representatives this fall to universities across the country to organize, train, and inspire conservative students. LI's unique network of 1,581 active conservative student groups is the largest such network in the country. In 2014, LI field staff identified 34,091 conservative students on college campuses around the country. Since 1997, LI's field program has activated thousands of students to fight and win battles against leftist abuses. Conservatives interested in working as an LI field representative can apply at www.conservativejobs.com/fieldrep
leadershipinstitute.org



This April, the **Manhattan Institute for Policy Research** launched a new project exclusively for New Yorkers: *The Beat*. Drawing from the work of Manhattan Institute scholars, *The Beat* is a daily email blast that cuts through the clutter on the issues that matter most in New York City. Sign up at www.thebeatmi.com. One of the issues on every New Yorker's mind is health care. On May 15, MI released a new book, *New York's Next Health Care Revolution*, featuring essays from leaders and innovators in the field on how N.Y. employers can empower patients and consumers. Download the Kindle version at www.amazon.com/dp/B00Y12IS52.
manhattan-institute.org



Mercatus Center had a busy spring working to pursue better health for more people, at lower cost, year after year in the states. In May, Mercatus hosted a health innovators dinner with Dr. Bob Graboyes and entrepreneurs working in health policy to tell their stories and struggles to a free-market audience. Also in May, Christopher Koopman and Dr. Graboyes spoke to thought leaders and legislators about Certificate-of-Need Laws in North Carolina at events hosted by John Locke Foundation. In June, Mercatus released its second annual report, *State Fiscal Conditions: Ranking the 50 States*, by senior fellow Eileen Norcross.

mercatus.org



Moving Picture Institute is producing *FI\$H: How an Economy Grows*, an animated series that brings economics to life. Adapted from Peter and Andrew Schiff's bestselling book, *How an Economy Grows and Why it Crashes*, the free, ten-part series provides educators with supplementary videos featuring prominent professor Antony Davies, as well as teacher-designed lesson plans that meet state educational standards. "Like" the project on Facebook or join MPI's email listhost for updates. MPI-supported sci-fi short *Little Brother* is now available on iTunes. MPI films are available for SPN screenings. Visit www.TheMPI.org to learn about their films, grants, and internships.

thempi.org



On April 30, **National Center for Policy Analysis** announced the new two-year Financial Crisis Initiative, made possible by the generosity of Cary Maguire, a long-time NCPA friend and philanthropist,

during a Dallas speaker's event with respected financial expert James Rickards. The nation's economy suffered a critical blow during the 2008 financial crisis. A task force of financial policy experts will determine why the crisis happened, how it affected the nation and formulate solutions to prevent future financial crises. The task force will present a series of peer-reviewed publications at summit meetings in Dallas and Washington, D.C., in 2016. ncpa.org



As the route to a man's heart is said to be through his stomach, was the route to assistance from the State Department through the Clinton Foundation? **National Center for Public Policy Research** asked GE's Jeff Immelt and Boeing's W. James McNerney to release written communications with each as their companies received help from the State Department on billion-dollar deals while making donations to the Clinton Foundation. Both declined, which earned the Center multiple days of *O'Reilly Factor* coverage and more. The Center also received an apology from Marriott's CEO for calling Indiana's religious liberty law "madness," another result of many recent efforts to combat leftism among big businesses. nationalcenter.org



According to a report by the Office of Congressional Ethics that was leaked to the *Washington Post*, ten House members broke House rules when they took an all-expenses-paid junket in 2013 to a conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, courtesy of an oil company known as SOCAR. The ethics office apparently acted in response to a July 2014 story describing the trip in the *Houston Chronicle*. **National Legal and Policy Center** provided significant background information for the *Chronicle* story, which described how nonprofit organizations were apparently used as fronts to launder the prohibited corporate funding. nlpc.org



This spring, **National Review Institute** utilized its Regional Partnership Events program to execute a 14-city tour for *National Review* writer Charles C.W. Cooke, whose highly acclaimed book, *The Conservatarian Manifesto*, was released in March. Vital partners along the way were six SPN members: The Heartland Institute, Wisconsin Policy Research Institute, James Madison Institute, Pacific Research Institute, Texas Public Policy Foundation, and John Locke Foundation. These organizations hosted Cooke for talks before full-house crowds in their areas, brought together through joint promotion efforts that introduced new people to each group. In the second half of 2015, NRI is eager to form more partnerships within the network. nrinstitute.org



National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation staff attorneys have filed a brief on behalf of four non-union employees to defend Wisconsin's new Right to Work law from a union state court legal challenge filed just hours after the law went into effect. Foundation attorneys have extensive experience defending state Right to Work laws in state and federal courts, including recently in Indiana and Michigan which both passed Right to Work laws in 2012. The Foundation continues to provide free legal aid to any Wisconsin employees seeking to exercise his or her rights under the new Right to Work law. nrtw.org



National Tax Limitation Committee is working on two strategic, major reforms for the country: the Federal Balanced Budget Act (FBBA) and targeted Electoral College reform. First, a powerful movement is underway in the states to control federal

spending and deficits through the FBBA. This renewed effort (now often called “The Reagan Project”) has already obtained 27 state resolutions (with the recent addition of Utah, North Dakota, and South Dakota in 2015) to require Congress to call a convention of states to prepare the amendment. Only seven additional states are now necessary. Second, Electoral College reform is necessary in that most states allocate electoral votes on a winner-take-all approach, rather than by a prorated method to the various Presidential candidates. In contrast, Maine and Nebraska allocate their electoral votes to candidates based on one vote going to the winner of each Congressional district. This approach evenly balances the election playing field for all concerned, and the method of choosing the allocation of electoral votes is done state by state per the U.S. Constitution. limittaxes.org.



Pacific Legal Foundation lawsuits produced victories for economic liberty in Florida and Montana. Governors in those states have signed bills to repeal troublesome laws: Florida’s prohibition on the sale and filling of 64-oz. “growler” containers of craft beer and Montana’s “Competitor’s Veto” law on new taxi and limousine businesses. PLF attorneys represented entrepreneurs in both states who challenged the constitutionality of the laws. Chicago property rights attorney, William E. Ryan, has joined PLF’s Board of Trustees. PLF welcomes two law students to serve as summer law clerks: Kirk Jing of Harvard Law School and James Reed of Emory University. pacificlegal.org



Every summer, **Property Environment Research Center** hosts dozens of

visiting fellows and enviropreneurs from around the world. This year’s scholars will research and present findings on issues ranging from market incentives for marine conservation, to wildfire management on public lands, and market adaptation to climate change. Ten enviropreneurs will evaluate their business plans, including one designed to reduce waste in the beer industry and another developing technology designed to map nonpoint source pollution in waterways. PERC will also host research workshops on wildlife conservation, trade, and property rights in Bozeman in July, and on market adaptation to climate change at Stanford in August. perc.org



On May 5, **Reason Foundation** presented the inaugural Savas Award to former Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels for his work to advance public-private partnerships. At the award ceremony in New York City, Governor Daniels discussed how he worked from within government to create the conditions for privatization to succeed. In June, Reason science correspondent Ronald Bailey released his new book, *The End of Doom*, which offers a fact-based and ultimately hopeful perspective on our environmental future. This spring, Reason launched the Center for School Funding Portability, which will promote weighted student formula, a school funding model in which money follows the child, to policymakers and educators nationwide. reason.org



Filling the need for a shorter, more skills-oriented messaging workshop, the **Spark Freedom** team created the ArrowHead Tools Primer. They were ecstatic at the interest in their first event, which launched at the end of May to a sold-out crowd. Some highlights from the Primer were

learning ways to make messages stick and how to easily lay out an effective and memorable presentation. In May, Spark Freedom’s president was a featured speaker at FGA’s Blogger Conference. Her presentation, “Hit Your Target: 7 Strategies to Make Your Blog Posts Stick,” was a useful addition to the already excellent lineup. sparkfreedom.org



A new study from **State Budget Solutions** finds that smoking-related health care costs should decline as more traditional smokers convert to vaporized nicotine, saving billions of Medicaid dollars. Notwithstanding the probable benefits of e-cigarettes, misguided regulations and “sin taxes” may discourage their use. On the Federalism in Action (www.FederalismInAction.org) front, Financial Ready laws were enacted in Idaho and Mississippi, while the Office of State Based Initiatives was codified in Indiana. Measures like these will help states prepare for likely cuts in federal aid, or “just say no” when too many strings are attached to federal grants. statebudgetsolutions.org



Join **The Steamboat Institute** for their annual Rocky Mountain retreat, the Steamboat Institute’s Seventh Annual Freedom Conference, August 28–29, in Steamboat Springs, Colo., (elevation 6,700 feet). Enjoy a scenic gondola ride to the Keynote Dinner on the mountaintop, featuring keynote speaker Laura Ingraham. Those under 30 are eligible for the special \$50 Festival rate. All are invited to enjoy the best conservative speakers, beautiful mountain scenery, live music (Madison Rising), and more. Register at www.steamboatinstitute.org. This event will sell out. steamboatinstitute.org



Check out the **Tax Foundation's** new chartbook on Illinois's tax system and economy at www.TaxFoundation.org. taxfoundation.org



The Fund for American Studies enrollment is up by 20 percent this summer in Washington, D.C., where 400 college students are studying the concepts of liberty, developing leadership skills, attending exclusive site briefings, and interning 35 hours a week with various D.C. institutions. Students are taking courses at George Mason University and learning from first-rate TFAS faculty: professors Randy Barnett, Don Boudreaux, Chris Coyne, and Anne Bradley. Overseas, TFAS international programs in Hong Kong and Prague are spreading the principles of economic opportunity, freedom, and conflict management skills to student leaders in Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. tfas.org



Recovery, achievement, opportunity, transformation: these are the aspirations of statewide turnaround school districts. Modeled after the Recovery School District in Louisiana, these entities work to take over failing public schools and move them quickly to an acceptable range of performance, often by turning them into charter schools. This idea has caught the imagination of leaders in a growing list of states, including Georgia, Nevada, Texas, Mississippi, and Wisconsin. In the **Thomas B. Fordham Institute's** new report, *Redefining the School District in America*, charter school expert Nelson Smith analyzes three existing recovery school districts and lays out nineteen policy

recommendations on how more states can implement turnaround districts to allow for major structural, policy, and governance innovation. edexcellence.net



Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty released a report, *Diminishing Returns*, authored by WILL economist Marty Lueken, Ph.D., Associate Counsel and Education Policy Director CJ Szafir, and WILL President and General Counsel Rick Esenberg. The report asks whether K-12 education spending in Wisconsin has hit a wall. The study found that for every additional dollar spent per pupil student achievement and outcomes remain unchanged, running contrary to the widely accepted expectation. The study release was timed to budget deliberations in the State Legislature, where Governor Walker had submitted a budget proposal calling for a reduction in K-12 funding. Additionally, WILL released a study that found Wisconsin's independent charter schools scored significantly higher on all student growth and achievement gaps measures than traditional public schools. will-law.org



In April, **Young America's Foundation** sponsored the 12th annual New Jersey Reagan Day event, which welcomed 1,000 people to hear Vice President Dick Cheney. In addition, the Foundation launched the Wendy McCaw Freedom Lecture Series featuring lectures by Newt Gingrich and Charles Krauthammer who spoke to capacity crowds at the University of Notre Dame and the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. The Midwest Freedom Conference in Wisconsin attracted nearly 200 participants from 23 states to hear from Jonah Goldberg, Greg Gutfeld, Congressman Sean Duffy, and Rachel Campos Duffy. At the Reagan Ranch, Foundation alumnus John Tamny spoke on his book, *Popular Economics*. yaf.org SPN

FREEDOM'S FUTURE *Legacy Society*

For those who value liberty and a proven, positive, active strategy in pursuit of individual freedom, free markets, and limited government, State Policy Network (SPN) provides both current and deferred opportunities for you to make a difference.

SPN's unique focus is to grow, strengthen, and empower our dynamic network of more than 60 organizations who fight for constitutional government and economic liberty in all 50 states. Through this thriving interstate network built up over the past two decades, SPN strategically deploys our battle-tested strategy to secure durable wins for liberty. These big wins are creating momentum and, ultimately, *national* impact.

State Policy Network launched the Freedom's Future Legacy Society to recognize extraordinary partners who make commitments to SPN's mission through bequests and other estate planned gifts. Just as your current gifts are deeply appreciated, SPN is sincerely grateful to those who share their intentions to make a legacy gift, investing in the pursuit of a durable freedom majority.

To learn how you can make a lasting impact on the future of our nation by becoming a "charter member" of SPN's Freedom's Future Legacy Society, please contact Cindy Kilduff at kilduff@spn.org or 703-910-3481.

MULTI-STATE COLLABORATION FROM PAGE 1

an “all hands on deck” mentality when an ESA bill starts moving forward in any of the target states.

It was this mentality that helped Nevada pass the first universal ESA program, offered to every public school student in the state. “That was possible because we could look at the positive benefits of programs all over the country,” Victor Joecks of the Nevada Policy Research Institute said.

Nevada was also able to point to Arizona to demonstrate the program’s success and the opportunities it has given to children in failing schools, children in the foster system, active duty military families, and others.

“As we’ve expanded the program, we’ve seen that it is in fact something that can be used by children with all kinds of different needs,” Butcher said. “ESAs allow a parent to say, ‘I know what my child needs, and I can create something that is unique for them that is going to provide them with the best chance at a great future.’”

FINANCIAL READY

Wayne Hoffman of the Idaho Freedom Foundation explains Financial Ready by carrying a microwave package of Dinty Moore Beef Stew—without the label sleeve—around the state capitol building.

“The beef stew is a metaphor for the state budget,” he explains to anyone who asks about the nondescript white pouch. “Without some kind of container, you don’t know what’s in the state budget. Put the sleeve on and suddenly you are prepared for some sort of federal financial calamity. The simple fact of knowing what’s in the package allows you to be prepared.”

That’s the idea behind Financial Ready. It is the “sleeve” that details what is in the state budget: what federal dollars come into the state and what commitments they come with.

Since the New Deal, federal and local governments have been intertwined. With over two-thirds of the states depending on federal transfers for 30 percent—or more—of their budgets, sustainability and innovation within state budgets have been stifled.

Unfortunately, legislators are unaware of how much federal funding flows into their coffers and what strings are attached to it.

“What we discovered [in Utah] is that none of our agencies seemed to know how dependent they were on federal funds, and they had no backup plan,” said Utah House Representative Ken Ivory.

Utah was the first state to pass Financial Ready legislation in 2011.

Financial Ready is the first phase of a long-term effort to wean states off “free” federal money so that, when federal budget crises occur, they are prepared and can protect their constituents. Much like government transparency policies shine a light on unchecked government spending, Financial Ready legislation gives states a tool to assess the impact of federal overreach on their programs. It arms decision makers with information that can change how they think about federal grants and their effect on state budgets and programs.

As a result, Utah has remained one of only 10 states that have received top bond ratings from all three rating agencies.

“It’s important for people to understand that this can only happen if you have passionate legislators and dedicated statewide leaders and organizations that are active on the policy and political fronts.”

Forest Thigpen, Mississippi Center for Public Policy

And its success spurred a movement. After its passage in Utah, SPN brought several groups together to work on talking points and operation plans to help carry the success forward.

The state of Idaho offered to take the lead after Utah’s successful passage and was able to get the governor to sign an executive order. Now leaders from Idaho and Utah serve as sounding boards for other states looking to advance Financial Ready policy through biweekly conference calls, research sharing, message brainstorming, and many other resources.

This has encouraged other states to take similar steps to promote budget transparency and prepare a contingency plan for if—or, more likely, when—the federal funds dry up.

“Getting a better idea of what the picture truly is and having some kind of game plan in place to deal with it is something we are very eager to work toward,” said Paul Gessing of the Rio Grande Foundation in New Mexico, where Financial Ready is in its infancy.

Even states like Mississippi, generally considered to be one of the most federally-reliant states, have passed a light version of the bill, which requires reporting on federal dollars but does not require the state to come up with a contingency plan.

“With the bill that [Mississippi] passed, we can better understand our profound dependency,” said Jameson Taylor of the Mississippi Center for Public Policy.

In South Carolina, Oran Smith of the Palmetto Promise Institute said they were pleased with the wide support the policy received. “It was seen for what it is—which is a commonsense bill,” he said.

The North Carolina state government discussed a new position in the state budget office. “This position would work on implementing effective federal grants management and oversight. So, that’s a nod to the issue,” Brian Balfour of the Civitas Institute said.

Even states in which the governor has vetoed reform efforts have seen forward progress.

In Oklahoma, the legislature will hold hearings and potentially subpoena agency staff. “That is a result of public pressure and legislators understanding this issue and its importance,” said Trent England of the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs.

And in Montana, where the governor has vetoed the legislation twice, state legislators are starting to take a deeper look at the budget. “This is the first time in my career that I’ve seen a

committee take a hard look at even the minor grants that come into the state,” said Brent Mead of the Montana Policy Institute. “There is an effort to understand what it means when we agree to take this federal money.”

This multi-state working group has continued to collaborate on messaging, strategy, and next steps states can take to ensure financial stability.

“The next step is to proactively get agencies to plan for the possibility that these finances might go away,” Hoffman said. “After that, the other aspect is having a good grasp of which programs are absolutely critical or necessary.”

THE ASSET OF COLLABORATION

All of these states cited collaboration as key to their victories. In addition to the support from fellow state think tanks, the network’s efforts were boosted by partnerships with State Budget Solutions, Spark Freedom, Federation for Children, Friedman Foundation, The Heritage Foundation, and Institute for Justice—among others—as well as public leaders who stood up for these policy solutions.

“We are fortunate to have a network of groups that are likeminded and can collectively collaborate and put our resources together,” Butcher said.

This is true of many other successful collaborations, such as Texas Public Policy’s Right On Crime initiative, which has brought meaningful criminal justice reforms, and the Foundation for Government Accountability’s Medicaid reforms, which have extinguished the wildfires of many Medicaid expansion efforts that would have increased the scarcity of accessible, affordable health care for the most vulnerable and imposed additional financial hardship on several states.

“It is an asset that makes the passage of these solutions possible,” Thigpen said, echoing several others engaged in these victories: “It’s important for people to understand that this can only happen if you have passionate legislators, dedicated statewide leaders and organizations that are active on the policy and political fronts.” **SPN**



Sarah Leitner Kramer is a freelance contributor to *SPN News*. She previously worked as an investigative reporter for Media Trackers Pennsylvania and her work has appeared in outlets such as the *Washington Examiner* and *National Review Online*.

EVENT STRATEGY FROM PAGE 3

audience receives by attending. Invest in marketing materials and hire a photographer for large events, which can be used for future outreach and development opportunities.

Create Quality Content. Every detail of your program timeline, speakers, and content should reflect your key objectives. Keep your target audience in mind when you draft your program timeline and abstain from scheduling lengthy speeches. Diversify your program format with videos, interviews, award recognition, and interactive sessions to keep your audience engaged.

Consider Value Sponsors/VIPs. How will you appeal to and acknowledge sponsors at the event? Whether you thank them publicly from the podium or provide photo opportunities or reserved seating, make them feel uniquely valued and create a personal experience connected to your goals and mission.

Follow-Up and Reflect. Don’t lose momentum at the conclusion of the event. Capitalize on the post-event excitement and energy: post highlights to your website, follow-up with attendees, contact media for interviews, and send thank you notes. Also, schedule a meeting with staff to receive their feedback on what went well and how to improve events in the future.

Be Flexible. Most importantly, be prepared with back-up plans and maintain flexibility to handle last-minute changes. Many things that happen during events are out of your control, but if prepared with the right tools in advance, your team will be able to quickly resolve problems as they arise. **SPN**

MARKETING PLAN FROM PAGE 5

Identify and mobilize leaders across your state

Tax policy affects everyone. Your campaign will need buy-in from a broad base of residents to earn credibility and succeed. Seek out key legislators, community leaders, and business organizations.

Listen carefully to taxpayers and stakeholder groups as you develop your policy and communications framework. An effective coalition needs to grow its supporters and avoid collecting unnecessary opponents.

Think beyond one policy victory

Building a new coalition and identity for tax relief activism in Nebraska has been the most rewarding part of the Strong Roots Nebraska campaign.

People know that Strong Roots Nebraska is a project of the Platte Institute, but this new channel helped us connect with more Nebraskans based on our shared values.

The brand we built, including our icon: the house firmly rooted in the Nebraska soil, carried an emotional impact for many people. The simple idea of strengthening a family’s roots in the state they love through economic opportunity carried our policy farther than any single research paper or think tank ever could. **SPN**

SPN 23RD ANNUAL MEETING

experience
FREEDOM

COMING AUGUST 2015

THE SPN ANNUAL MEETING

MOBILE APP

SPNAM.ORG

Four ways to use the app to get the most out of your conference experience:

1. Contact speakers, sponsors, and attendees to set up networking meetings.
2. Browse the agenda and bookmark sessions you plan to attend.
3. Rate sessions and speakers.
4. Share your conference experience by posting status updates and photos to the activity feed.



All registered attendees will receive an invitation to download the app (iOS or Android) by August 31, 2015. Register at spnam.org.