

IT'S TIME TO PROTECT WEST VIRGINIA

Throughout 2016, WVCBP staff hit the road to make dozens of presentations across the state to community groups, colleges and universities, and coalitions about how to address the state's impending budget crisis. To cap off this successful outreach effort, the WVCBP launched the Protect West Virginia campaign in December to connect West Virginia values to state budget priorities that secure a brighter future for our state.

Protect WV emerged amid concerns about the impact of ongoing cuts to important programs like higher education, schools and public safety. It also grew out of opposition to "tax reform" proposals and support of creating a West Virginia Earned Income Tax Credit.

70% of West Virginians Agree!

In November, the WVCBP released the results of a statewide poll that showed 70% of West Virginians are willing to pay more in taxes to maintain funding for public schools, police protection, and roads. It also showed that West Virginia voters largely place the blame for the state's budget crisis on tax breaks for large corporations and the wealthy. The poll was conducted by Anzalone Liszt Grove Research, selected because of its experience in conducting surveys on tax and budget issues in more than 10 states.

First Tobacco Tax Increase in 13 Years as West Virginia Faces Budget Turmoil

West Virginia faced one of its worst-ever budget crises in 2016. Lawmakers failed to pass legislation to reconcile a \$270 million budget gap and had to be called in for a special session to work solely on the state budget. The WVCBP worked with legislators who were reluctant to raise any taxes at all and preferred to close the budget gap with more cuts and a huge draw-down from the state's Rainy Day fund. Our report, "Revenue Options Crucial to Sustaining Public Investments That Promote Shared Prosperity" presented recommendations beyond drastic cuts. In the end, legislators raised the state's tobacco tax by 65-cents a pack, the first increase in 13 years. Some lawmakers who had signed pledges promising to not raise any new taxes voted for the increase. This action helped the state avoid cuts to schools, public colleges, and health care services.

Beating Back Severance Tax Decreases

The WVCBP provided data and analysis to policymakers during the 2016 Legislative Session as they deliberated on whether or not to cut severance taxes on coal and natural gas. The measure passed the West Virginia Senate but was not taken up by the House Finance Committee. The bill would have cost the state about \$159 million a year and local governments about \$11.6 million a year.



**70% of West Virginians want to maintain
PUBLIC SCHOOLS, PUBLIC SAFETY, AGING ROADS & BRIDGES
EVEN IF IT MEANS RAISING THEIR TAXES**

OUR VISION

A prosperous West Virginia where everyone has a meaningful and equitable opportunity to thrive.

Fighting Back Against Harmful Public Policies

During the 2016 Legislative Session, the WVCBP worked with its coalition partners to provide testimony and analysis of legislation on a strict Voter ID law, a federal SNAP work waiver, and a drug-testing policy for TANF recipients. In each of these cases, legislation was significantly curtailed or stopped from being enacted.

A solution looking for a problem is how the WVCBP explained the state's misguided efforts to pass an onerous voter ID law. The WVCBP's data on the incidents of voter fraud across the nation, and the populations of people who would be disenfranchised by requiring photo IDs at the polling place, convinced legislators to weaken their legislation and provide ample alternative forms of identification for voters to present to officials on Election Day.

Making sure that all West Virginians have access to quality, affordable health care continued to be a WVCBP goal throughout 2016. Due to Medicaid Expansion and the Affordable Care Act (ACA), 94 percent of West Virginians now have health insurance, making the state's uninsured rate 6.0 percent, down from 8.6 percent in 2014, and 14.0 percent in 2013, before the ACA was fully implemented. Thanks to funding from the Benedum Foundation, the WVCBP provided research and analysis to the West Virginia Medicaid Coalition on finding sustainable ways to fund Medicaid, and to preserve advances in coverage made by the passage of the ACA.

Not all battles were won in 2016. Unfortunately, West Virginia became a "Right to Work" state as legislators furthered policies to harm unions and collective bargaining. The state's prevailing wage was repealed. And, despite a successful campaign to push it back in 2015, a resolution calling for a convention of states to amend the U.S. Constitution was passed by both Houses. Convening Congress to amend the Constitution for the first time in history could open up a dangerous and unbridled process, causing out-of-control changes such as a Balanced Budget Amendment.

Expanding Our Influence:



The WVCBP's staff continued to grow in 2016 with the hiring of our first full-time Communications Director, Caitlin Cook, and Health Policy Analyst Kathleen Stoll.



1: Ted Boettner at the 2016 Budget Breakfast



2: Summer Policy Institute Panel Discussion



3: Our 2016 #WVSPi group

TAKING THE LEAD:

Invest in Working Families Coalition - With one of the nation's highest poverty rates and lowest rates of labor-force participation, a West Virginia EITC could give a big hand-up to help some of the state's lowest-paid workers. A state EITC bill was introduced during the 2016 Legislative Session with bipartisan support. A WV EITC would bring over \$46 million into the state's economy. Over 160,000 children in West Virginia would benefit. The WVCBP continued to lead the coalition to advocate for this important policy.

West Virginians for Food Security - In response to attacks on safety net programs that protect struggling West Virginia families, the WVCBP established the first statewide coalition to organize outcry over continuing cuts.

A Few Cents Makes Sense: In July, Summer Policy Associate Tara Holmes released her study of the impact of an increase of West Virginia's sugary-sweetened beverage tax. A modest hike in this tax would not only raise much-needed revenue but also have important health benefits. The WVCBP kicked off its coalition work on this issue with its collaboration with Harvard University's Childhood Obesity Intervention Cost-Effectiveness Study (CHOICES). As the year closed, state partners were ramping up education efforts on policymakers.

The Marcellus Shale Research Collaborative - The WVCBP continued its work with the collaborative including the release of the report "Grading Places: Towards Tri-State Shale Policies for the Public Good." This "scorecard" grades policies in West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Ohio and how effectively they address the social and economic issues caused by drilling for natural gas in their communities.

IN THE COMMUNITY

SUMMER POLICY INSTITUTE

Connecting WV's Future Leaders
to Policy Work & Networks



INAUGURAL SUMMER POLICY INSTITUTE

At the end of July 2016, the WVCBP launched its inaugural Summer Policy Institute (SPI) on the West Virginia Wesleyan College campus. Attendees from colleges and universities around West Virginia, as well as students who

have gone out-of-state and are interested in returning home after graduation were a part of the weekend. Nearly 50 presenters and panelists from areas of academia, private and public sector service, non-profit work and government officials shared in lectures and discussions with the attendees. SPI 2017 will be hosted at West Virginia University in Morgantown, WV and we will move to different host schools each year to build "the bench" of young policy makers and influencers in the state and to promote social and economic justice.

MONTHLY LUNCH AND LEARNS

Throughout 2016, the Covenant House hosted WVCBP speakers for a monthly Lunch and Learn event. Topics ranged from Tax Reform to Legalizing Marijuana to establishing a Sugary-Sweetened Beverage tax.

JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM

During the fall of 2016, the WVCBP was cosponsor for forums across the state entitled: Hearts, Minds and Future: A discussion of Juvenile Justice, Mental Health Care and Education in West Virginia. The forums were a collaboration with Mental Health Matters, West Virginia and were held in Huntington, Charleston, Wheeling, Beckley, Morgantown and Martinsburg, WV. These forums are a starting point to vital discussions for social work practitioners in efforts to reform West Virginia's juvenile justice system. Featured at the events were data compiled by the WVCBP showing that while most states are seeing declining rates of youth incarceration, West Virginia's rate has increased by more than 40% from 1997 - 2013.



Race Matters *in West Virginia*

Tara is also a member of the Call to Action for Racial Equity steering committee, which is coordinating a number of statewide initiatives including the hiring of a racial justice coordinator for the state. The WVCBP also worked with partner organizations to coordinate the All Kinds Are Welcome and Second Chance for Employment initiatives and advocacy days at the Capitol. Work has begun with the council of African American Churches on the issue of Disproportionate Minority Contact and Law Enforcement.

WORKING FOR EQUALITY





This year the WVCBP continued to build on the racial justice work of the Race Matters Coalition. Policy Outreach Coordinator Tara Martinez was involved with several committees, coalitions and working groups on a

variety of areas addressing the racial disparities. Her work included facilitating Cultural Awareness Training for organizations such as local police departments and social workers across West Virginia.

WVCBP In the News

In 2016 the WVCBP was featured in 164 stories in 50 local and national media outlets including the Wall Street Journal, National Public Radio, Radio Canada, WV Executive Magazine, Bloomberg, SNL, Radio Italy, and Think Progress.

Our Social Engagement

	2013	2014	2015	2016
 FB LIKES	661	828	907	1,759
 SUBSCRIBERS	775	1,153	1,503	1,974
 FOLLOWERS	590	1,054	1,131	1,825
 MEDIA HITS	158	165	224	164

2016 Major Publications

A Tax Cut That Works for Working Families:
A West Virginia Earned Income Tax Credit

Confronting the Fiscal Gap

Revenue Options Crucial to Sustaining Public
Investments That Promote Shared Prosperity

Your Guide to the State Budget (revised)

Lessons for Gas Patch Communities: A Local
Government Guide for Dealing with Drilling

Grading Places: Towards Tri-State Shale
Policies for the Public Good

Modernizing West Virginia's Marijuana Laws:
Potential Benefits of Decriminalization,
Medical Marijuana and Legalization

Reforming Youth Incarceration in West Virginia

West Virginia Taxes at a Glance

West Virginia Budget at a Glance

State of Working West Virginia 2016

Budget Crisis Threatens
West Virginia Communities

Defending Health Care in 2017:
What's at Stake for West Virginia



Expenditures

General Program

\$488,433

Management & General

\$71,516

Fundraising

\$11,189

\$571,138 Total

2016 Funders

The West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy thankfully acknowledges the following foundations and organizations who financially contributed to its work in 2016:

American Federation of Teachers – WV, American Friends Service Committee, Ami Nagle and Associates, Center for Responsible Lending, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation, Cabin Creek Health Systems, Communications Workers of America, Highmark West Virginia, Marshall University, Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, MAZON, National Association of Social Workers – WV, Service Employees Union International 1199, Sisters Health Foundation, Southwestern District Labor Council, Stoneman Family Foundation, Strong Mountain Communities, West Virginia Citizen Action Group, West Virginia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, West Virginia Education Association, West Virginia FREE, West Virginia Healthy Kids and Families Coalition, West Virginia Kids Count, West Virginians for Affordable Health Care, and W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy

OUR MISSION

The West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy's mission is to use research and analysis to advance the well-being of West Virginia communities, and to promote and support the essential role of government in improving the quality of life in the state.

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WV Medicaid Coalition

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