

West Virginia School Workers Spark National Movement

During the historic 2018 Teachers' Strike, the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy worked closely with school teachers and service personnel to show how past corporate tax cuts were directly linked to cuts in public education and big increases in public health insurance costs. Schools at all 55 West Virginia counties closed as school workers filled the Capitol each day calling for tax hikes on big corporations, affordable health care, and higher pay. Through these efforts, they helped stop school privatization, millions in tax cuts, and over 60,000 public employees received a five-percent pay raise. West Virginia workers and families lit a fire across the nation, causing a wave of statewide teacher strikes from Arizona to Oklahoma and inspiring millions of people to fight for the public good and against austerity!



Photos: Rick Wilson

PRESENTATIONS MADE IN 2018

WVCBP staff made over three dozen presentations to a diverse selection of audiences including: the State Legislature (Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary and the Senate Health Committee), West Virginia University Law School, Marshall University, legislative engagement workshops held across the state, the State Medicaid Conference, the Women's March group in Shepherdstown, and the West Virginia Tax Institute Conference, to name a few.

OUR VISION

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

PROTECTING FOOD ASSISTANCE AND HEALTH CARE

Despite a challenging legislative landscape, the WVCBP and its coalition partners successfully protected the state's safety net by both defeating harmful policies and making proactive recommendations to policymakers. Our work focused heavily on our anti-hunger coalition, Food for All, and our work within the West Virginians Together for Medicaid workgroup.

At the federal level, we fought hunger for thousands of West Virginians. We focused on the importance of protecting food assistance (SNAP) through multiple Hunger Town Halls, letters to the editor and op-eds from partners, and a social media campaign. We also delivered constituent postcards and drove calls to our federal delegation asking them to stand strong against policies that would cut SNAP benefits from vulnerable West Virginians. A Farm Bill that protected SNAP overwhelmingly passed both the U.S. House and Senate with support from Senators Manchin and Capito, thanks to our efforts.



By educating lawmakers on the dangers of requiring asset tests for SNAP eligibility, the WVCBP protected access for tens of thousands of West Virginians who rely on food assistance, including senior citizens who would have had to deplete their life savings. A public hearing organized by the WVCBP was key to weakening proposed legislation by removing several of its punitive provisions.



Nearly one in five West Virginians lives in poverty, though many are working. One-third live in a food desert, and 70 percent live more than 10 minutes from a grocery store. Our food banks serve over

300,000 West Virginians every single month to alleviate hunger. These grim statistics brought us together with food banks and anti-hunger advocates from across the state to form the Food for All Coalition. The coalition held its first Food for All Summit in November which gathered nearly 100 West Virginians from across the state to Buckhannon, WV to create proactive policies to address hunger. It was hosted by West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition, the WVCBP, and other partners to focus on increasing food security and equitable access for all in our state. Attendees included farmers, educators, advocates and food pantry representatives.

DEFENDING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

A major success in 2018 was our work with the West Virginians Together for Medicaid coalition to prevent the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (WVDHHR) from taking coverage away from people who do not meet a work requirement. We helped an estimated 46,000 to 122,000 low-income West Virginians keep their health insurance.

On top of this work, the WVCBP informed the coalition on tax and budget issues related to Medicaid. Our Executive Director, Ted Boettner, chaired the Medicaid Policy Subcommittee. The expansion of Medicaid to pregnant women to 300% of the FPL, Surprise Billing, prescription drug importation, and other policies became part of the state health policy agenda.



The WVCBP worked closely with West Virginians for Affordable Health Care to plan and carry out the WV Medicaid Summit held in Charleston in September 2018. WVCBP Executive Director Ted Boettner was a presenter and moderated a panel on how Medicaid is vital to addressing the state's opioid crisis.

Attacks on the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid continued through 2018, and the WVCBP lifted up the health and economic importance of health care expansion in West Virginia. We urged our federal delegation to protect pre-existing condition protections and successfully advocated against repealing the Affordable Care Act and cuts to Medicaid.



SUMMER POLICY INSTITUTE TRAVELS TO MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

Our third annual Summer Policy Institute (SPI), an immersive 2 1/2 day policy conference for undergraduate and graduate students interested in working in public policy, was held in July at Marshall University. Nearly forty attendees, representing universities from across the state and a wide variety of academic disciplines including social work, public health, law, political science, public administration and much more, came together to network and develop their policymaking and advocacy skills.



This year's SPI took an in-depth look at the opioid epidemic and policy solutions. The keynote was Susan Shepherd, Manager of the Toronto Drug Strategy Secretariat, who spoke about Toronto's supervised injection facilities. Additional speakers included Dr. Rahul Gupta, WV's Commissioner of the Bureau of Public Health; Jan Rader, Huntington Fire Chief; and Dr. Michael Brumage, of the WVU School of Public Health.

Throughout the weekend, students worked in small groups to develop their own policy proposals and put all their knowledge and tools together by presenting their recommendations to policy professionals on the final day of the conference.

- Protecting Our State Budget -

During the 2018 Legislative Session, WVCBP staff worked to prevent the repeal of the state's business personal property tax on industrial businesses, keeping \$140 million in state and local budgets that fund public education, colleges, and other important public services. The WVCBP also worked diligently to stop other harmful tax and budget proposals that would hurt state residents and our state's long-term fiscal health. In a break from the last two legislative sessions, the state budget was passed on time and higher education received additional funding.

An April report released by Policy Fellow Tara Holmes highlighted how increasing the state's tax on sugary-sweetened beverages would bring much-needed revenues to the state while combating West Virginia's obesity epidemic. Modernizing the tax could bring in as much as \$100 million annually. The current tax, which provides funding to the state's medical schools, has not been increased since it was enacted in 1951.



WVCBP In the News

In 2018 the WVCBP was featured in such wide-ranging national media outlets as The Nation, Christian Science Monitor, Huffington Post, CBS Money Watch, Vox, CNN, Playboy, PBS News Hour and Forbes.

Our Social Engagement

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
FB LIKES	828	907	1,759	2,119	2,872
SUBSCRIBERS	1,153	1,503	1,974	2,039	2,521
FOLLOWERS	1,054	1,131	1,825	2,101	2,515
MEDIA HITS	165	224	164	258	153

2018 Major Publications

Strengthening West Virginia's Soda Tax Would Bring Much-Needed Revenue, Improve Health Outcomes for Residents (April)

Strengthening West Virginia Families (August)

State of Rural West Virginia (October)

Climbing the Mountain: Closing the Gender Pay Gap in West Virginia (October)

Making Medicaid Work in the Mountain State (Nov.)

NEW FACES



KELLY ALLEN: With the addition of Policy Outreach Coordinator, Kelly Allen in March, the WVCBP expanded our capacity in the north central area of the state. Kelly is based in Morgantown and manages the Summer Policy Institute, federal anti-hunger work, and health care outreach.



RACHEL RUBIN: The WVCBP was proud to host Research Associate Rachel Rubin for the summer. A rising senior at Duke University, Rachel focused her research and analysis on policies to strengthen West Virginia families, coauthoring a report with senior staff that was published in August. Rachel also traveled to Wetzel County to interview families and businesses impacted by the expansion of natural gas drilling in the area.

Expenditures

General Program

\$566,281

Management & General

\$83,747

Fundraising

\$6,941

\$656,969 Total

2018 Funders

The West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy thankfully acknowledges the following foundations and organizations who financially contributed to its work in 2018:

AFL-CIO - WV, American Federation of Teachers - WV, American Friends Service Committee, Americans for Financial Reform, Ami Nagle and Associates, Center for Responsible Lending, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Communications Workers of America, Fairness WV, Institute for Labor Studies and Research, Marshall University, Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, MAZON-Jewish Response to Hunger, National Association of Social Workers - WV, New Venture Fund, Rockefeller Family Fund, Sisters Health Foundation, Southwestern District Labor Council, Stoneman Family Foundation, West Virginia Association of Counties, West Virginia Citizen Action Education Fund, West Virginia Education Association, West Virginia FREE, West Virginia Healthy Kids and Families Coalition, 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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jennifer Wells, President

West Virginia Healthy Kids and Families Coalition

Dr. Marybeth Beller, Vice President

Marshall University

Jennifer Thacker, Secretary

Alliance for Sustainable Families

David Efaw, Treasurer

West Virginia State Building and Construction Trades Council

John Christensen

Mountain View Solar

Harvey Cohen

Retired

Daniel Eades

West Virginia University Extension Service

Joyce Gibson

Service Employees International Union District 1199

Dr. Karen Kunz

WVU Department of Public Administration

Reverend James Patterson

Partnership of African American Churches

Rick Wilson

American Friends Service Committee

STAFF

Ted Boettner

Executive Director

Kelly Allen

Policy Outreach Coordinator

Caitlin Cook

Communications Director

Seth DiStefano

Policy Outreach Director

Linda Frame

Operations Manager

Sean O'Leary

Senior Policy Analyst

Tara Holmes

Policy Fellow

Rachel Rubin

Summer Research Associate

COALITIONS

Food For All

Call to Action for Racial Equality

Legislative Action Team for Children & Families

Invest in Working Families

Our Children, Our Future

West Virginia Criminal Justice Reform Coalition

West Virginians Together for Medicaid

West Virginians United