

Amendments 2+4 Overwhelmingly Defeated!



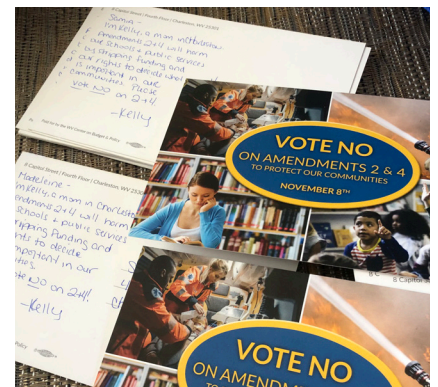
West Virginians vote to fund public services over tax cuts for big businesses

Over the summer and fall of 2022, staff of the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy (WVCBP) undertook our most significant education campaign to date to talk to voters about the potential community impacts of two constitutional amendments that appeared on the November ballot. Both Amendments 2 and 4 would have drastically increased the power over the state legislature over decision-making for local communities, while taking hundreds of millions of dollars out of local public services. From funding for our libraries, schools, parks, and emergency services to decisions over curriculum in public schools, Amendments 2 and 4 represented a significant threat to local control and our state's public education system.

The WVCBP supported and helped build a robust outreach, education, and coalition building effort in opposition to Amendments 2 and 4. Critical partners included the West Virginia Education Association, the National Education Association, the American Friends Service Committee, the NAACP of West Virginia, the Coalition for Truth in History, Young West Virginia, and the West Virginia Revenue Coalition, among many others. By summer, county commissions, city councils, county school boards, and other local organizations began to courageously oppose Amendment 2.



Boone County residents gather after a presentation on Amendment Two at the Racine volunteer fire department building. Photo by Ian Karbal



The WVCBP educated West Virginians by putting together county-specific impact analyses on the potential costs of Amendments 2 and 4 to funding for public schools, libraries, first responders, and other critical community services. Altogether the WVCBP and our partners hosted more than 80 community meetings in over 30 West Virginia counties, making the case in courthouses, volunteer fire halls, public libraries, 4-H gathering spaces, local Boards of Education, and city councils across the mountain state.

In the end, Amendments 2 and 4 were defeated overwhelmingly. Not only did communities across the state reject giving the legislature the authority to enact hundreds of millions of dollars in corporate tax cuts, across West Virginia voters also approved excess levies to fund schools, parks, emergency services, and more. The defeat of Amendments 2 and 4 combined with the success of most excess levies during the 2022 election makes one thing clear—when given the chance, West Virginians choose vital public services over tax cuts that mostly benefit those at the top.

OUR VISION

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

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

We believe that the people closest to the problem must be engaged in the work to solve it. In 2022, the WVCBP partnered with grassroots organizations and individual community members impacted by the policy issues on which we work. This informed our research and advocacy agenda and led to some important community-rooted policy wins for West Virginia.

Reentry Listening Project with Race Matters WV

The importance of community-rooted engagement is especially true when it comes to criminal legal reform, an issue for which the people most deeply impacted are often barred from participating in the political process.



In 2022, the Center was proud to partner with Race Matters West Virginia to conduct an unprecedented research project alongside formerly incarcerated people. Together our organizations conducted 51 30-minute interviews and two focus group listening sessions in Logan and Mercer counties – all with high participation from Black respondents (1 in 2 respondents) and Latino respondents (1 in 10). This work would not have been possible without the partnership of Darrin Lester, a graduate student at West Virginia University's School of Social Work and co-founder of Olive Tree, one of the state's only prison leadership and reentry programs led by impacted people. The WVCBP hired Darrin, who was released from prison in 2021, to advise on the project's aims and to serve as a facilitator for the in-person listening sessions.

Not only did this research project produce a policy brief animated with powerful stories, it deepened our relationships with impacted people who will continue to advise us on research and advocacy priorities.

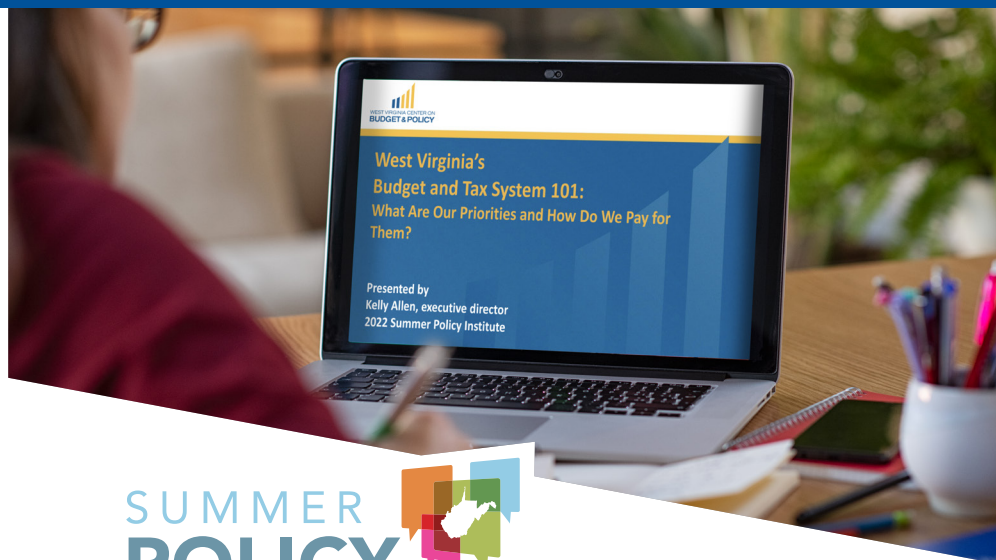
Medicaid Listening Project

In recent years, we have strengthened our understanding of Medicaid by interviewing those directly impacted by the program. By hearing directly from the community, we hope to better understand how the program works in practice and to make policy recommendations that address the challenges and barriers they highlight. This work culminated in an issue brief that outlined several barriers that impact access to and quality of health care. We were able to leverage this work with the state and encourage them to implement improvements to the Medicaid process. One of our recommendations, ex parte or automatic renewals based on information the agency already has access to, will improve the renewal experience for the agency and enrollees, making sure more people who qualify for Medicaid will keep their coverage.



A NEW ADDITION TO THE WVCBP TEAM

In April, Sara Whitaker joined the Center as the criminal legal policy analyst. A nine-year veteran of the Kanawha County Public Defender Office, Sara brought with her a commitment to organizing the people who know the most about the criminal system: those who have been harmed by it. In her first eight months, Sara conducted 276 one-to-one meetings with impacted people, stakeholders, and allies. She also traveled the state, holding workshop presentations from Wheeling to Marlinton to Roanoke. The results of this relational work can be seen in her first two issue briefs and a criminal law reform conference that for the first time boasted a planning committee with majority representation from people who had been incarcerated.



SUMMER POLICY INSTITUTE

Connecting WV's Future Leaders to Policy Work & Networks

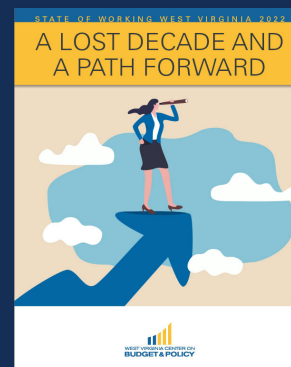


SUMMER POLICY INSTITUTE

In 2022, the WVCBP hosted our seventh annual Summer Policy Institute, a convening for college students, young people, and policy-interested community members to work together to create their own policy-based proposals to improve the lives of West Virginians. This marked our third consecutive virtual convening due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 40 participants attended sessions walking them through the policy development process, from quality data collection practices to equitable and thoughtful ways of story sharing. On the final day of the convening, attendees presented their well-developed policy proposals to a panel of judges including state legislators and policy experts. Proposals included increasing supports for West Virginians with substance use disorders, increasing housing affordability by banning payment discrimination, and increasing the pool of health care professionals to address workforce shortages.

For our team, the Summer Policy institute remains an important tool for learning from West Virginians what policy issues we should prioritize for research and advocacy efforts.

OUR MAJOR PUBLICATIONS



- State of Working West Virginia 2022: A Lost Decade and a Path Forward
- Closest to the Problem: A Vision for Reentry from the People Who Live It
- Counsel at First Appearance Can Protect Liberty and Reduce Jail Costs
- Amendment Two: A Power Grab that Puts Local Public Services at Risk
- Simplifying Medicaid Processes Can Increase Efficiency and Improve the User Experience
- Flat Budgets, Flat Expectations: The West Virginia Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Proposal
- West Virginia Policymakers Will Soon Lose Power to Use SNAP Flexibilities to Address Economic Downturns if Action is Not Taken
- Improving Community Supervision to Safely Reduce Incarceration in West Virginia

WEST VIRGINIA CENTER ON BUDGET & POLICY

Social Engagement

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
FB LIKES	2,119	2,872	3,300	3,701	3,961	4,244
SUBSCRIBERS	2,039	2,521	2,839	4,434	3,954	4,077
FOLLOWERS	2,101	2,515	2,946	3,404	3,836	3,971
MEDIA HITS	258	153	90	153	263	176





Expenditures

General Program

\$942,485

Management & General

\$34,286

Fundraising

\$1,295

\$978,066 Total

Expenditures figures are preliminary

2022 Funders

The West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy thankfully acknowledges the following foundations and organizations who financially contributed to its work in 2022:

- Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation
- Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation
- Stoneman Family Foundation
- Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
- West Virginians for Affordable Health Care
- The Just Trust
- Economic Policy Institute
- ACLU of West Virginia
- American Friends Service Committee - Charleston
- Fairness WV
- National Association of Social Workers - West Virginia Chapter
- Planned Parenthood South Atlantic
- West Virginia Association of Counties
- West Virginia Citizen Action Education Fund
- West Virginia Council of Churches
- West Virginia Education Association
- SEIU District 1199

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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Call to Action for Racial Inequality

Food for All

Health Care for All WV

Legislative Action Team for Children and Families

Paid Leave Works for WV Race Matters

West Virginia Criminal Law Reform Coalition

West Virginia Tax and Budget Coalition

West Virginians Together for Medicaid WV United



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