

2019 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM



Our VISION is for West Virginia to be the best place in the world to live, work, and raise a family - no matter who you are. This means...

- good education and jobs
- healthy communities
- a government that invests in people and people who invest in government

Great Education and Jobs

Affordable Solar Power	Legalizing Power Purchase Agreements will allow customers to have energy systems installed by a third party, then pay a fixed rate for 15-25 years. This will broaden access to affordable energy, expand economic development, and create good local jobs. <i>Autumn Long Info@EnergyFreedomWV.org</i>
Debt Free Higher Ed	Young people are being saddled with student debt that follows them for years, affecting their ability to live independently, buy a home or car and start a family. WV needs a plan to make higher education more affordable and debt-free. <i>Chris Kimes chris@ourfuturewv.org</i>
Katherine Johnson Fair Pay Act	Women, minorities, and people with disabilities receive consistently lower wages than their peers and WV has one of the highest gender pay gaps in the US. Banning wage secrecy policies and setting wages based on skill and merit protects families' economic security. <i>Rebekah Aranda aranda05@yahoo.com</i>
Paid Family and Medical Leave	The US is the only developed country that does not guarantee paid family and medical leave. A paid family medical leave law would give WV workers the ability to maintain financial security when recovering from serious illness, or caring for a family member or new child. <i>Kelli Allen kallen@wvpolicy.org</i>
Public Education Support Campaign	Free, quality public education for all children is the backbone of a strong democracy. In addition to supporting increased pay and a permanent fix to PEIA, we encourage community schools, trauma-informed schools, after school programs, and additional funding. We will defend against initiatives that take money from public schools: charter schools, vouchers, and certain tax cuts. <i>Jenny Anderson janderson@ourfuturewv.org</i>
Reinstate the Governor's Summer Youth Program	In order to save a generation of youth from adverse outcomes like addiction and incarceration, we are proposing a resuscitation of state programming that invests in summer employment for young people, and high school students in particular. <i>Shanequa Smith sqsmith@mix.wvu.edu</i>

Healthy Communities

Black Lung Benefits	The vast majority of coal miners have some degree of lung disease, but have to jump through hoops to qualify for benefits. This policy will allow any miner with 10+ years of experience to receive black lung benefits automatically. <i>Terry Steele (304) 846-9166</i>
Drug Epidemic Response Plan	Framework of 16 initiatives for a comprehensive substance abuse response in West Virginia. It includes some of the most ambitious ideas from around the state (and country), as we call on state government to take bold action. <i>Drema Mace dmace@osteo.wvsom.edu</i>
Fracking Water-Use Fee	Horizontal drilling consumes millions of gallons of water taken from our streams. Require gas drilling companies to pay a one-cent fee for each gallon, creating a revenue source and levelling the playing field between gas and other industries that pay for water use. <i>April Keating apkeating@hotmail.com</i>
Mental Health in Schools	Comply with national 1:250 ratio counselor/social worker to student and increase the number of psychiatrists serving the students in West Virginia schools. In addition, explore other solutions needed to ensure students get the mental health help they need as quickly as possible during the school day and beyond. <i>Jenny Anderson janderson@ourfuturewv.org</i>
Protect Our Drinking Water	The EPA recommended that WV update its drinking water standards to adequately protect human health and the WVDEP complied. In 2018 a Legislative committee voted to remove the updated protections. Lawmakers should protect public health and restore the standards. <i>Angie Rosser arosser@wvivers.org</i>

Women's Health - Equity with Period Products	Pads, tampons and other menstrual products are a necessity for all people who have periods. Lack of access can limit a person's ability to participate in everyday activities. WV needs to remove sales tax from period products and make them available for free in schools. <i>Alisa Clements alisa.clements@ppsat.org</i>
WV Summer Feeding for All	1 in 4 WV children struggle with food insecurity, but summer feeding programs only reach about 10% of those in need. Each county would create a plan to ensure that school sites are working with the community to meet the demand for summer meals. <i>Jenny Anderson janderson@ourfuturewv.org</i>

Strengthening Democracy: A government that invests in people & people who invest in government

Clean Elections	Strengthen election disclosure laws, increase campaign & lobbying transparency, close loopholes in election & ethics laws, ensure accountability, combat political corruption, and lower barriers to participation in political life. <i>Julie Archer julie@wvcag.org</i>
Creation of Welfare Reform Committee	Ensure that we are taking the measures necessary to do everything possible to help incentive work and promote self-sufficiency. A percentage of members on this committee must include members of low income working families across the state. <i>Stormy Matlick scmatlick@gmail.com</i>
End Cash Bail: Bail Reform Now	Thousands of people in WV spend days, weeks, and months in jail without ever being found guilty of a crime. Instead, they're in jail because they cannot afford to pay bail. A new system is needed. <i>Mollie Kennedy mkenedy@acluwv.org</i>
Fixing Medical Cannabis Law	Due to burdensome federal banking regulations, the WV State Treasurer's Office can't take in any money related to the cannabis industry. Allow WV patients to grow small amounts of medical cannabis for personal use after a written recommendation has been issued by a WV physician. <i>Rusty Williams russellwilliams304@gmail.com</i>
Foster Care/Managed Care	Preserve current access to Medicaid for foster kids, build on our success planning for vulnerable families affected by addictions, and make improvements without sending money to out-of-state managed care organizations (MCOs) and their stockholders. <i>Betty Rivard bettyrivard@yahoo.com</i>
Restore SNAP Benefits for People in Re-Entry & Recovery	People with drug convictions have many obstacles to re-entry and recovery - and such stressors contribute to relapse, recidivism and sometimes fatal overdose. A lifetime ban on basic food assistance should not be another obstacle for people. <i>Lida Shepherd lshepherd@afsc.org</i>
State Bank	West Virginia can keep state money at home and partner with community banks to put it to work for the local economy. With a public bank, West Virginia can open up the economy to the people, spurring business and agricultural growth and funding local infrastructure projects. <i>McCabe Keliher macabe@demalt.us</i>
State EITC	Establishing a refundable state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) will lift low income families out of poverty while boosting long-term earnings and workforce participation, as well as improving health and educational outcomes. <i>Seth Distefano sdistefano@wvpolicy.org</i>
Strengthen the Office of Minority Affairs	A robust and diverse workforce and community is vital for West Virginia's future which can be achieved through a strong Office of Minority Affairs. Senate Bill 252 instructs the Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs to work within eight pillars ranging from Workforce Development to Education while also establishing a community pilot project. <i>Jennifer Wells jennifer@ourfuturewv.org</i>

The Our Children, Our Future Campaign is a non-partisan coalition of over 177 congregations, community organizations, schools, unions, chambers of commerce, and other partners – dedicated to ending child poverty in West Virginia. In 6 years, we have worked together to win 28 policy victories, from 127,000 working West Virginians receiving a raise to 3+ million more meals served in schools. Follow us on Facebook for more information on the issues above or to find out how you can get involved!