



# 2020 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

NPRI



**NEVADA POLICY**  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE

# CONTENTS

## THANK YOU!

2020 HAS BEEN A TIME OF CHALLENGE AND UNCERTAINTY. BECAUSE OF YOUR SUPPORT AND CONTINUED PARTNERSHIP, WE FIGHT DAILY ON YOUR BEHALF FOR A PROSPEROUS, THRIVING AND FREE NEVADA.

## Nevada Policy

Nevada Policy's mission is to effectively promote policies that encourage free-market solutions, protect individual liberties, and eliminate unnecessary governmental restrictions on the citizens and businesses of Nevada.

<i>A NOTE FROM LEADERSHIP</i> .....	4
<i>ABOUT NEVADA POLICY</i> .....	6
<i>KEY METRICS</i> .....	7
<i>NEVADA POLICY IN ACTION:</i>	
<i>COVID-19</i> .....	8
<i>SEPARATION OF POWERS</i> .....	10
<i>TRANSPARENCY</i> .....	12
<i>EMPLOYEE FREEDOM</i> .....	14
<i>OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING</i> .....	15
<i>TAXES AND SPENDING</i> .....	16
<i>EDUCATION REFORM</i> .....	18
<i>OTHER PROGRAMS</i> .....	20
<i>FINANCIAL SUMMARY</i> .....	21
<i>MEET THE TEAM</i> .....	22
<i>SUPPORT NEVADA POLICY</i> .....	23

# READY, NEVADA?

**Dear friends,**

It's past time that Nevada opens for business.

One could hardly imagine in 1991, when Nevada Policy was founded, that 30 years later the governor of the state would amass enough executive power to shut down the neon lights of Las Vegas and Reno and shutter most of the rest of the economy with nothing more than a stroke of his pen. But in 2020, we experienced this very thing.

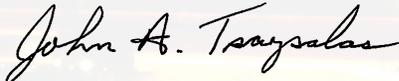
When the shutdown happened, Nevada Policy was the first to call out Governor Sisolak for his executive overreach. We were ready with a list of recommendations that could be implemented to reverse the damage done to hard working Nevadans and risk-taking entrepreneurs. Most importantly, we provided policymakers, lawmakers and members of the media with a "blueprint" for helping Nevadans rebuild their livelihoods!

After all, without the freedom to conduct enterprise, there is no innovation — and with no innovation, we stunt our ability to unleash the creative power of free markets and free people.

It's high time we turn on the lights for good, open for business and unleash the future.

In the following pages you'll see how we're achieving that impact. Again, thank you for being our partners. Now, more than ever, your partnership is needed to keep the Silver State a place where individuals are capable of pursuing their dreams.

Sincerely,

  
John Tsarpalas | President

  
Ranson Webster | Chairman

# WHAT MAKES NEVADA POLICY UNIQUE?

**A HISTORY OF IMPACT...** In September of this year, 2021, Nevada Policy will celebrate 30 years of impact in Nevada. In 1990, Nevada Policy's founder, Judy Cresanta, traveled to the Soviet Union to train pro-democracy leaders in the principles of free markets and free elections. Judy saw people with no concept of personal freedoms, ownership, property rights or how market-driven economies work.

Determined not to let freedom slip away here at home, Judy founded Nevada Policy that very next year. We carry that legacy forward — now more than ever.

**UNCOMPROMISING...** Nevada Policy will always fight for limited government, unleashing free markets and the innovative power of the individual.

**NON-PARTISAN...** Nevada Policy avoids partisanship by staying focused on policies that lead to a free and prosperous Nevada. An example of this work is our Separation of Powers litigation or the groundbreaking coalition we helped create for greater transparency in government.

**INNOVATIVE...** Nevada Policy continually strives to inject innovation and out-of-the-box thinking to achieve our policy goals and get our message heard. In 2020, we launched *Free to Offend* – a podcast created to defend free speech by unapologetically practicing it.

# KEY METRICS

- Nevada Policy staff met with individual lawmakers and conducted briefings 30 times with 156 legislative contacts.
- Nevada Policy appeared as speaker or host at 6 in-person events, 3 virtual webinars and 25 coalition meetings.
- Daniel Honchariw, Director of Legislative Affairs was named a "[Top 10 Conservative Rising Star](#)" by Chuck Muth, a leading conservative thought leader in the state
- We partnered with a statewide syndicated three-hour radio program, *Live & Local with Kevin Wall*. Our radio commentaries were broadcast 36 times, reaching audiences in Las Vegas, Carson City, Reno and southern California.
- Our work has appeared in *The Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Reason.com, Townhall.com, *The Nevada Independent*, *The Washington Free Beacon*, *The Hill* and countless local TV and radio outlets in Nevada and California.
- We have partnered with *Nevada Business Magazine*, publishing a monthly feature on free-market principles, and Michael Schaus, director of communications, has joined *The Nevada Independent* as a weekly columnist.
- Our engagement on Twitter grew by 112 percent in 2020, earning over one million impressions!
- 2020 was an all-time high in web traffic, with 42 percent growth in new users from 2019.
- Google ads promoting and linking to NevadaPolicy.org reached 18,800 people and generated 2,810 clicks to our website.
- Our engagement on Facebook (people reacting, sharing and engaging with our content) also grew — reaching nearly 100,000 viewers.
- TransparentNevada.com had 576,904 pageviews, reaching roughly *one-in-four* Nevada voters. TransparentCalifornia.com reached 4.5 million users, generating nearly 50 million pageviews!



# PRESERVING FREEDOM DURING COVID-19

Exacerbated by the Coronavirus pandemic, demoralizing headlines have captured the attention of Nevada's citizens.

Nevada has endured one of the highest unemployment rates in the country... and, once again, US News reports Nevada's public-school system is one of the worst five school systems in the country. This, on top of Nevadans' declining personal income and overall loss of economic opportunity, means the public is seeking answers that stem the wave of negativity and rejuvenate Nevada. Nevada Policy is that resource. How do we know? Because of the articles our policy scholars have written that have gone viral and helped spearhead a movement.

We are making the case, on your behalf, to reopen Nevada, to turn on the neon lights of Las Vegas and Reno, and get our economy moving again!

And we started making that case as early as April 2020 with a commentary (*A Free Society can Respond to Coronavirus*) critical of the authoritarian nature of shutdown orders here and elsewhere.

Communications Director Michael Schaus was critical of how emergency powers were a clear violation of separation of powers with his July 2020 commentary. ([NevadaPolicy.org](https://NevadaPolicy.org), *Self government is still possible in times of emergency*)

We spelled out our recommendations on how to rebuild Nevada with our July 2020 blueprint. ([NevadaPolicy.org/RebuildNevada](https://NevadaPolicy.org/RebuildNevada))

And we're not done. Our work in 2020 laid the foundation for a groundbreaking report in 2021 on how, exactly, Governor Sisolak's shutdown is in direct violation of Nevada's Constitution. ([NevadaPolicy.org](https://NevadaPolicy.org), *State of Emergency?*)

April 27, 2020 COVID-19

**Rebuilding Nevada after the COVID-19 pandemic**

>>> Click here for Nevada Policy's blueprint

The COVID-19 pandemic, the statewide shutdown, and the economic consequences will have a lasting impact on Nevada. We must get under control and rebuild the livelihoods of Nevadans, preserving the values that have made Nevada such an attractive state to live in, protected and even promoted.

To do this, Nevada Policy has identified principles that all policy thought leaders must adopt in order to bring prosperity back to our great state's economy.

**Guiding Principles for rebuilding Nevada**

**Protect the rights of Nevadans**

Both civil and property rights must be protected to move forward through this health and economic turmoil that follows. Government actions are not determined to be the "least restrictive" when controlling health risks are a direct violation of economic and civil rights of Nevadans. We must remove unnecessary limitations on business and consumers. As we reexamine our guiding principles of the coronavirus — and as we rebuild Nevada in the years to come, our discussions should focus on how we preserve and expand the freedoms and rights that secure the freedoms necessary for Nevadans.

**Related Policy Solutions:**

**SOLUTIONS FOR REBUILDING NEVADA**  
A BLUEPRINT FOR GETTING THE SILVER STATE WORKING AGAIN

NEVADA POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

**STATE OF EMERGENCY?**

SAFEGUARDING THE CONSTITUTION DURING TIMES OF CRISIS

NEVADA POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE ROBERT FRIEDL NEVADA POLICY VICE PRESIDENT

# SEPARATION OF POWERS

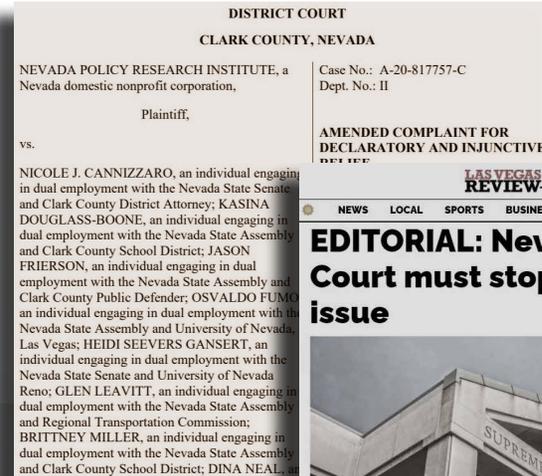
Nevada Policy's Separation of Powers lawsuit requests that the courts finally enforce Nevada's Separation of Powers doctrine.

For years, members of the Nevada Legislature have violated the state's constitutional prohibition against serving in two branches of government at the same time. Per Article 3, Section 1 of the Nevada State Constitution,

“The powers of the Government of the State of Nevada shall be divided into three separate departments, — the Legislative, the Executive and the Judicial; and no persons charged with the exercise of powers properly belonging to one of these departments shall exercise any functions, appertaining to either of the others, except in the cases expressly directed or permitted in this constitution.”

The conflict of interest that results from government employees serving as legislators has led to higher taxes, bloated bureaucracies, reduced governmental accountability, and less educational choice. Legislators with the power to make crucial decisions benefiting their position in another government agency creates a clear conflict of interest. Yet, countless legislators, both past and present, continue on in their careers as government employees even after being elected to the state legislature. This defies both the spirit and plain text of this constitutional prohibition on dual servants.

Nevada Policy asserts that the Separation of Powers constitutional provision is simple: preserve the independence and integrity of each branch of Nevada state government. We expect to fight for this protection all the way to the Nevada Supreme Court.



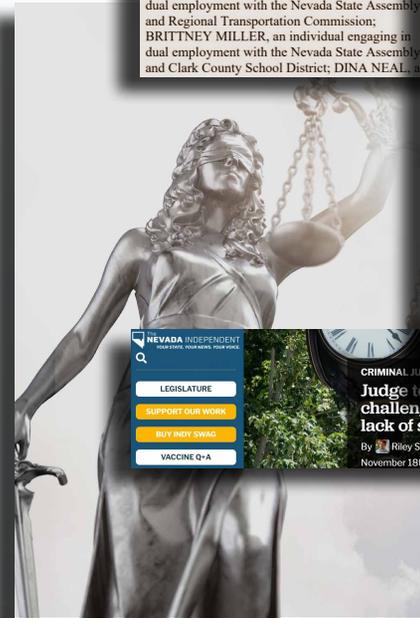
## EDITORIAL: Nevada Supreme Court must stop dodging this issue



The exterior of the Supreme Court of Nevada in Carson City is seen in this Feb. 9, 2017, file photo. (Benjamin Hager/Las Vegas Review-Journal) @benjaminhphoto

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The Nevada Supreme Court has spent years skirting cases involving the state constitution's separation of powers clause. It shouldn't put it off any longer.



# TRANSPARENCY

Nevada Policy hands education and transparency tools over to Nevadans, empowering them to make informed choices. The TransparentNevada.com website is home to Nevada's largest and most comprehensive public pay and pension database. Combined, TransparentNevada.com and TransparentCalifornia.com reveal how taxpayer money is being spent — driving 7.2 million visits in total to both sites in 2020. Transparent Nevada alone **receives over 500,000 unique users a year**, translating into approximately 1 out of every 4 registered Nevada voters.

Working class Nevadans are constantly being hit with higher taxes to fuel the state's soaring public pay, and transparency exposes the true drivers of this never-ending growth in government spending. Transparency is needed to provide citizens and policymakers with the facts necessary to make informed decisions about the numerous public policy issues affecting their incomes, opportunities and lives.

Here are just a few examples of how Nevada Policy's transparency projects have informed public policy in the last year:

- The Washoe Sheriff wanted to charge \$200 per hour to redact body cam footage — however, thanks to Nevada Policy's work with the *Open Govt Coalition* (Nevada Policy is a founding member) the Sheriff quickly withdrew the request.
- In California, a user of TransparentCalifornia.com wrote, "We used Transparent California data to send the West Covina's sales tax increase to a resounding defeat: 80% of the votes cast were 'NO, do not increase the city sales tax.'"

- In the wake of the economic devastation caused by the Covid-19 shutdown, Nevada Policy published a commentary in *The Las Vegas Review-Journal* making the case that labor transparency was needed more than ever as local governments grapple with the financial uncertainty of the shutdown.
- In 2019, Nevada Policy spearheaded a diverse coalition of transparency advocates dedicated to ensuring public officials who violate the NPRA (Nevada Public Records Act) would face a penalty for doing so. This coalition — The Nevada Open Government Coalition — continues to fight for this reform in 2021. The coalition includes the following members:

National Alliance on Mental Illness  
Society of Professional Journalists Las Vegas  
Journalism and Media Studies Professor, UNLV  
Las Vegas Review-Journal  
League of Women Voters of Nevada  
Reno Gazette-Journal  
Nevada Policy Research Institute  
Nevada Press Association  
Las Vegas NAACP  
Nevada Independent  
Guinn Center for Policy Priorities  
ACLU of Nevada  
Community Health Alliance  
Strategies 360



**TRANSPARENT CALIFORNIA**  
California's largest database of public sector pay and pension

# EMPLOYEE FREEDOM

The outsized impact of government-sector unions in Nevada has resulted in policies that too often put the interests of union-cronies and powerbrokers ahead of individual Nevadans, taxpayers and even public-sector workers themselves.

For years, Nevada Policy has helped workers act on their constitutional right when it comes to pushing back against coerced union membership. With more than a 30 percent drop in teacher-union membership alone, it's obvious that many workers are desperate for this basic freedom.

In 2021, Nevada Policy will expand education to all of Nevada government workers on their right to refuse union membership. We are armed with one-to-one communication strategies, and new polling data is allowing us to highlight reforms most likely to gain support; specifically, expanding "opt-out rights" for government workers — something 72 percent of Nevadans support, including nearly **two thirds of union workers** themselves, according to a 2020 Nevada Policy poll on the issue.

Other key areas for reform include: Transparency in government-union collective bargaining (supported by 73 percent of Nevadans); fighting for Worker's Choice in Representation; and periodic recertification of government unions.



**TRANSPARENCY**  
IN COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

# OCCUPATIONAL LICENSING

Nevada Policy stands ready to champion occupational licensing reforms in 2021. Given the devastating effects of Covid-19 on Nevada's economy, there is no better time to advance these common-sense regulatory changes.

As of October 2020, Nevada joined Hawaii as one of the states with the highest unemployment rate in the nation — with Las Vegas suffering the highest metropolitan rate in the country. In addition, 397,000 Nevada residents are categorized as low-income and poverty-level, including the robust Asian and Mexican immigrant populations.

A thriving Nevada demands that people have opportunities for gainful employment and entrepreneurial freedom. Simple occupational reforms can make that happen, despite the economic effects of the pandemic.

This is why Nevada Policy, through our Director of Legislative Affairs Daniel Honchariw, is advancing reforms by educating stakeholders and business coalitions including interior design firms, contractors and cosmetology practitioners. We are also making the case for occupational licensing reforms directly to those 397,000 low-income residents and the newly unemployed.

Reform efforts include identifying specific individuals harmed by the existing occupational licensing regime and sharing their stories. Areas of focus include: Eliminating mandatory occupational fees; lowering educational experience and/or training requirements; eliminating unnecessary and redundant types of licenses; and encouraging smooth state-to-state reciprocity.

# TAXES AND SPENDING

Nevada was built on a heritage of low-taxes and limited regulation. This is why we are dedicated to keeping our state free and prosperous. Intellectual ammunition is central to our successful strategy and Nevada Policy is the leading authority, the go-to, for tax policy and government spending analysis.

In November 2019, the State of Nevada officially surpassed the three million population mark, thanks, in large part, to “refugees” from California<sup>1</sup>. Estimates further suggest that approximately 100,000 Californians emigrated to Las Vegas in 2019<sup>2</sup>. The AP’s article on Nevada’s population growth continued, “Robert Lang, executive director of Brookings Mountain West at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, said there are now more adults in Nevada who were born in California than native Nevadans.” Nevadans worry that we’ll be forced to adopt the high-tax and government spending ways of California.

Ensuring that Nevada holds onto her unique low-tax culture is crucial to a thriving future. Will these new Nevadans understand the true reason taxes were so high in California and why they found themselves priced out of the California housing market? The answer to that question will affect every Nevadan for years to come

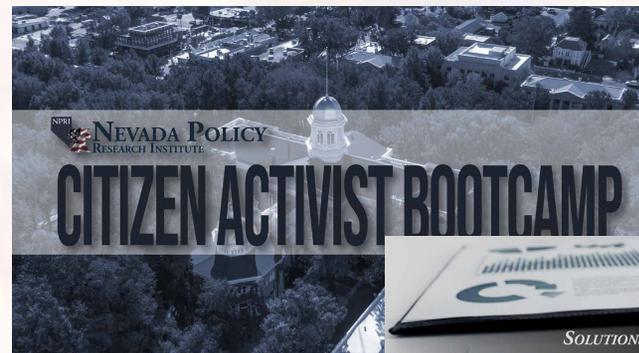
Nevada Policy is out front sounding the alarm on tax and regulation policy. We were the first to point out the inefficiencies and pain caused by government agencies like

DETR during the coronavirus shutdown. We brought attention to the high costs and failures of the public school system even *before* the world turned upsidedown.

In early March of 2021, Director of Legislative Affairs Daniel Honchariw co-presented AB99 with Assemblyman John Ellison, making the case before the assembly that prevailing wage laws are a handout to politically connected unions at the expense of public schools, students and taxpayers. Such policies drive up the costs for state and local government agencies on construction projects — with taxpayers left holding the bill.

We continue to lead on messaging through the use of coalitions, mainstream media, our policy work in Carson City, online strategies and the web, and we bring issue-specific groups together to advance our policy solutions.

In 2020, we launched the *Citizen Activist Bootcamp*. It is more important than ever that Nevadans are engaged and active. This is just one of the ways that Nevada Policy is updating and retooling our citizen outreach for policymakers, activists and candidates: We give them the vital tools to win the policy battles needed to keep Nevada low-tax.



**CLICK HERE TO GET MORE INVOLVED!**

1 <https://apnews.com/article/32430f171f4d4457903cb047a2b22811>  
2 <https://thenevadaindependent.com/article/nevada-the-new-california>

# EDUCATION REFORM

Nevada Policy continues to demonstrate the reality that taxpayer “investment” in traditional public education far outweighs our return-on-investment.

We’ve proven that the Clark County School District’s special education department is rife with waste, fraud and abuse. We demonstrated the high level of dissatisfaction among teachers as evidenced by their absenteeism, as well as their continued opt-out of union membership — especially in 2020. US News reports Nevada’s public-school system is one of the worst five school systems in the country, and suicides among students trapped at home during the pandemic shutdown surged in Clark County.

Nonetheless, regular Nevadans are paying more every year for this failing system. When teachers’ unions say they want an added \$1.4 billion in tax hikes (as they did in 2020), that funding will come from hard-working Nevadans while parents, teachers and (most importantly) *students* continue to suffer.

Nevada Policy is the voice for parents, students and taxpayers.

A *Las Vegas Review-Journal* article by Director of Policy Robert Fellner argues that the Pandemic exposed the teachers union for who they really are. He demonstrates how they were delaying

reopening the classroom for reasons that had nothing to do with “health and safety” — denying tens of thousands of mostly lower-income students of a quality education during the never-ending coronavirus “emergency.” Delays were used by teacher unions as leverage to argue for new taxes, experiments in “progressive” social engineering, and even moratoriums on charter schools and private school scholarships!

Up to 70 percent of Nevada parents believe in some form of educational choice, such as Education Savings Accounts and Opportunity Tax Scholarships. At Nevada Policy, we understand that school choice not only makes a difference in the lives of children and their parents — setting everyone up for a prosperous, productive and rewarding life — it also makes fiscal sense. Again, Nevada Policy is the only voice pushing back against the entrenched public-school establishment.



## CCEA TAX INCREASE

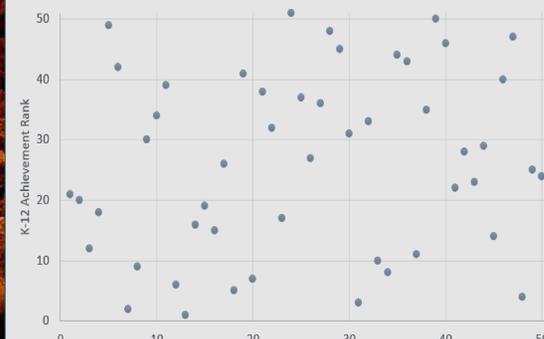
The Clark County Education Association is lobbying for a \$1.4 billion tax hike to increase spending on public education.

This would raise Nevada’s average sales tax rate to the highest in the nation.

***Nevadans deserve an educational system that actually works for students — not merely one that takes more hard-earned money away from working families.***

### More public spending doesn't mean better education:

K-12 Spending and Performance Ranking of the 50 States



**CURRENT NEVADA EDUCATION SPENDING COMPARED TO OTHER STATES:** Nevada’s per-pupil spending levels are already comparable to states that have consistently higher levels of academic performance, such as Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and Florida.

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2020 took us by surprise with the Covid-19 related cancelation of our Reno and Las Vegas dinners. However, online giving increased, representing 4% of total revenue. We requested 238 meetings throughout the Covid shutdown, conducting 71 live or virtual Zoom donor meetings.

## OTHER PROGRAMS

*Free to Offend* is a podcast featuring Nevada Policy Communications Director Michael Schaus. On this platform, marketed to Nevada's young entrepreneurial community, Michael and Robert discuss the important ideas impacting Nevada while radically defending free speech by practicing it.

The Spirit of Nevada Celebration in Reno and Spirit of Las Vegas Anniversary Dinner allows Nevada Policy, our supporters, thought leaders and others to get together in person. While events in 2020 were canceled due to the Covid environment, we look forward to this year's celebrations.

Our intern program allows Nevada Policy to bring aboard talented college students in Las Vegas — and virtually — for a summer-long immersion in the operations of a state based, free-market think tank. On average, we host about 10 students per year who assist in every aspect of the organization. This experience sets our interns up for success in fighting for free-market principles. One of our interns went on to work at the United States Supreme Court, and another even landed an internship in the White House!



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### ***Our key initiatives for 2021 include:***

- Building Free-Market Capacity in Nevada
- Separation of Powers Litigation
- Occupational Licensing Reforms
- Worker Freedom
- Transparency Initiatives
- Education Choice
- Stopping Tax Hikes & Spending
- Implementing Charter Agencies
- Educating New Nevadans

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You can review all of our giving clubs by visiting:  
[NevadaPolicy.org/membership-levels](https://NevadaPolicy.org/membership-levels)

# MEET THE TEAM...

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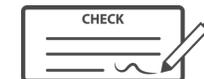
**Kaeley Cook**  
Office Manager

**Keith Beauvais**  
Transparency Researcher

# SUPPORT NEVADA POLICY



Tax-deductible donations can be made online by visiting: [nevadapolicy.org/donate](https://nevadapolicy.org/donate)



Mail donations to:  
**7130 Placid Street,  
Las Vegas, NV 89119**



*AmazonSmile is a simple way to support Nevada Policy when you shop online at no extra cost to you. Visit [Smile.Amazon.com](https://Smile.Amazon.com) to get started!*

## WHAT WILL BE YOUR LEGACY?

2020 and 2021 proved that freedom is not self-sustaining — it must be fought for with every generation.

By remembering Nevada Policy in your estate plans and becoming a member of our Legacy of Liberty Society, you can ensure your legacy keeps Nevada free, low-tax and thriving. In 2021, our goals include endowing a litigation center as well as setting up enduring policy centers. It's an audacious goal but we know, like you, that Nevada is worth it.

If you've been considering leaving Nevada Policy in your estate plans, don't hesitate and join the exclusive club today! You can find more information at [NevadaPolicy.org/donate/legacy-gifts](https://NevadaPolicy.org/donate/legacy-gifts)

Contact Kelly Smith, Director of Development at [kelly@nevadapolicy.org](mailto:kelly@nevadapolicy.org) to request additional information about joining Nevada Policy's Legacy of Liberty Society.

# CONNECT WITH US!



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2021

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