



ALEC 50th Anniversary Logo

1973 - 2023



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Exchange
Council
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For 50 years, ALEC has stood as the bedrock for state legislators who believe in free market principles that uphold limited government and amplify our Founding Fathers' vision of federalism.

Since 1973, state lawmakers, industry leaders, and pivotal stakeholders have converged upon the halls of ALEC meetings, forging an esteemed membership and support network of principled policy leaders.

Thanks to ALEC members and supporters, countless trusted policy solutions for the states – like those highlighted in our video series – have taken root over the past five decades, and the true spirit of American freedom draws ever closer.

As we consider the possibilities waiting for us in the next five decades, ALEC remains steadfast in our commitment to pursue the best of policy ideas, extend the cause of freedom, and provide opportunity in the 50 “laboratories of democracy.”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Lisa B. Nelson'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Lisa B. Nelson

ALEC Chief Executive Officer

50 YEARS *of*
TRUSTED POLICY
SOLUTIONS

1

*ALEC's Labor of Love:
A History of Championing
Worker Freedom*





EPISODE

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1

ALEC's Labor of Love: A History of Championing Worker Freedom



GRETCHEN BALDAU
TASK FORCE DIRECTOR



COMMERCE, INSURANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

With a workforce as diverse as America's, labor policy is no simple issue area, and for 50 years ALEC has been an integral part of the effort to champion free market-friendly labor policies across industries, sectors, and the spectrum of labor issues.

The first episode in the ALEC 50th anniversary video series, "Worker Freedom," features ALEC champions Scott Walker (45th Governor of Wisconsin), Matt Hall (Michigan House Minority Leader and ALEC Board of Directors Member), and Vinnie Vernuccio (Senior Fellow, Mackinac Center), discussing ALEC's pivotal role in securing Worker Freedom policy wins across the states.

In some states, private sector workers can be forced to join, leave, or pay fees to a union as job requirement. The Right-to-Work Act, which ALEC task forces approved as a model policy, provides a solution to this issue. It prevents private employers from requiring or banning union membership (or fees) as conditions for employment, giving workers in Right-to-Work states a guaranteed right to support a union or not to support a union without this choice affecting their hiring or job security.

Currently, 26 states have Right-to-Work laws, with West Virginia and Kentucky most recently joining the ranks of Right-to-Work states in 2016 and 2017. Michigan enacted this reform a few years earlier in 2012 (repealed in 2023), and House Minority Leader and ALEC Board Member Matt Hall explained to ALEC what prompted the reform and how Right-to-Work benefited Michigan.

At the time, Michigan led the nation in terms of people leaving the state and had lower incomes and fewer jobs. Understanding the history of Michigan and looking at what we've been able to accomplish over the last 10 years is critical. We've made our state more competitive with job growth in cutting-edge areas like manufacturing and engineering. That's because of Right-to-Work and other economic policies that we've brought forward – many of which were based on ALEC model policies.



Each year, ALEC's Rich States, Poor States takes states' Right-to-Work status into account as it ranks the 50 states on economic outlook by comparing 15 economic policy variables. Rich States, Poor States continues to document how Right-to-Work states experience higher employment and population growth than non-Right-to-Work states.

It is also worth noting that in 2022, Tennessee built on its 1947 Right-to-Work law by enshrining it in the state constitution. Unfortunately for workers in Illinois, voters took a different route and approved a constitutional amendment in November 2022 effectively banning Right-to-Work in the Land of Lincoln.

The Illinois amendment contains another section that guarantees Illinoisians the right to collectively bargain over items that include “protect[ing] their economic welfare and safety at work.” While this might seem like a redundant guarantee of federal legislation—the National Labor Relations Act gives most American workers the right to collectively bargain—there is significant concern that the language strips the state legislature of the authority needed to keep the agreements in check and in budget.



This ability of the state legislature to avoid budget deficits by limiting collective bargaining agreements is exactly what saved Wisconsin from a budget crisis in 2011. Under Governor Scott Walker’s and state legislators’ leadership, Wisconsin passed Act 10 to address a \$3.6 billion deficit. The Act repaired the budget by requiring public sector employees to contribute more for pensions and health care and, importantly, limited their ability to collectively bargain to only certain categories. As Governor Walker detailed in an interview with ALEC:

Act 10 was simply this idea of taking power out of the hands of the big government special interest, and putting it in the hands of the taxpayers, the workers, and the people that the taxpayers elect. Collective bargaining was this thing that, ironically, started in Wisconsin. It was this government-run union boss technique, that over time not only took power away, but really left the decisions in the hands of those union bosses, instead of the people we elect to run our schools, our counties, our local governments. And we said 'no.' We took that away. We still put more money in the schools and the local government. We gave them more flexibility, but we just didn't want the union bosses being the one making the decisions, because they're not elected.



ALEC was unbelievably helpful in terms of not only providing the intellectual ammunition to counter these just out-of-control attacks, but really to have trained the leaders. Someone like Leah Vukmir, a state senator who came in when I was first in office. She ended up being the national chair of ALEC. This was someone who, ALEC helped lift her up, and give her the support to be a leader in the state senate, where we needed it more than ever.



For decades, a key fight has surrounded public sector workers' ability to exercise their First Amendment right to freedom of association when it comes to union membership. The Supreme Court's *Janus v. AFSCME* ruling finally settled the matter in 2018 by banning public employers from requiring public sector workers to join or contribute to a union as a job requirement. As ALEC stated in 2018:

This ruling is a victory for free speech and individual rights. Teachers and other public sector members will now have freedom to choose to voluntarily join a union if they decide it will serve their interests, rather than endure compulsory fees to unions that put their own agenda first. Public sector unions will no longer be able to force non-members to pay bloated "agency fees" as a condition of employment.

Even with the *Janus* decision guaranteeing an important right for all public sector workers, the majority of states protecting workers' Right-to-Work, and important victories like Arizona banning paid union release time, ALEC's work is far from over.



Workers are too often unaware of their rights before making labor decisions, which results in them unknowingly forfeiting free speech rights and suffering financial losses. ALEC's Public Employee Rights and Authorization Act strives to prevent this phenomenon. It requires that all public sector employees be informed of their right to freely join, leave, or pay a union without employment consequences and that each of these workers must give specific, affirmative consent before any money can be deducted from their wages to contribute to unions.

Other ALEC policies give workers the additional flexibility needed to pursue work solutions that work for them. The Uniform Worker Classification Act ensures that the 80% of workers who prefer their independent contractor status are able to keep it, rather than being forced into traditional employment models. ALEC's Model Interstate-Mobility and Universal-Recognition Occupational Licensing Act allows workers to have their licenses, work experience, and private certifications recognized when they cross state lines. As ALEC has detailed extensively, the policy gives workers who have completed work with a

similar scope of practice the ability to practice that same craft in a different state. Led by ALEC champions like Kansas Majority Leader Chris Croft and former Missouri State Representative Derek Grier, a growing number of states across America have now enacted this reform. Virginia became the 20th state to do so just last week, and more states like Arkansas are considering similar legislation this year.

ALEC is also supporting job creators with model policies like the Right to Start Act. This model policy reduces barriers for entrepreneurs by providing them with resources and opportunities for the first five years of business. As new businesses generate almost all net job creation in America, this reform can drive economic growth by giving business owners a helping hand.

Whatever the sector, industry, or work model, ALEC has been a champion for the rights of Americans to make labor choices that work for them. Since 1973, ALEC has joined with state legislators and private sector stakeholders to ensure rights are respected, communicated, and guaranteed. As the workforce continues to evolve and adapt with ever changing advances and models, ALEC will continue to be there to fight for worker freedom.

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2

*ALEC's Flagship
Guide to Economic Growth:
Rich States, Poor States*





EPISODE

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2

ALEC's Flagship Guide to Economic Growth: Rich States, Poor States



NICK STARK
TASK FORCE DIRECTOR



TAX AND FISCAL POLICY

For nearly 16 years, Rich States, Poor States: ALEC-Laffer State Economic Competitiveness Index has been a guiding light for legislators to help improve their state's Economic Outlook. Chronicling how economic policy can cause Americans to "vote with their feet" has provided lawmakers with the evidence and arguments necessary to pursue free market policy solutions.

Our second episode in the ALEC 50th Anniversary video series features co-authors Dr. Arthur B. Laffer, Stephen Moore and Jonathan Williams, as well as free market champion Philip Gunn (Mississippi Speaker of the House and ALEC 2020 National Chairman), discussing the origins and impact of 16 years of Rich States, Poor States.



In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, states were looking to tax increases as the solution to their budget woes as opposed to cutting spending. At the time, economists Dr. Arthur B. Laffer and Stephen Moore approached ALEC with the idea of building a tool that state legislators could use to implement pro-growth, free market policy solutions. The result was Rich States, Poor States: ALEC-Laffer State Economic Competitiveness Index, and in the 15 years since its inception, it has been the inspiration for many economic policy success stories. As co-author Stephen Moore explains:

The thing that's so great about our country is this system of federalism where every state can compete with each other. And we knew from decades of research that states with lower taxes, and states that had right-to-work laws, and states that allowed more freedom for their workers and businesses had better performances. And we wanted to really chronicle that in this report.

The ultimate success story of Rich States, Poor States is Utah, which has ranked 1st in Economic Outlook for every edition. How has Utah been able to hold the top spot? The answer is twofold. Major free-market and pro-taxpayer policy reforms in recent years have been essential to the success of Utah. Additionally, the continued commitment by leading policymakers to study Utah's economic resume and stay ahead of the curve has also been crucial to Utah's longstanding success. As Utah Senate President Stuart Adams, 2021 ALEC National Chairman, explains:

For more than a decade, Utah has secured the top ranking for economic outlook in Rich States, Poor States, validating the hard work and dedication of former and current

lawmakers. Ranking as the most competitive state in the nation this many years in a row does not just happen by chance. Years of planning and preparation placed our state in a strong position to recover and succeed even in tough years like 2020. Our commitment to excellent policy drives our decisions and will keep our state moving in a positive upward trajectory.



The best turnaround story from Rich States, Poor States so far has been that of North Carolina. In the first edition of the rankings, the Tarheel State ranked 21st and would drop to a low of 26th over the next few editions. Today, North Carolina stands strong in 2nd. This is largely due to the commitment to tax reform over the last decade, including the switch to a flat tax in 2015 and business income tax reform in 2021 that will phase out the tax altogether over the next five years. North Carolina Senior Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee and ALEC Board Member Jason Saine described how Rich States, Poor States impacted the commitment to economic reform in North Carolina:

States are continually competing to offer the most pro-growth economic conditions. Over the years, Rich States, Poor States has become the premier source by which state lawmakers measure the economic

competitiveness of their states. The research in Rich States, Poor States and the undeniable interstate competition for economic wellbeing led us down the path of successfully enacting the most significant tax reform in North Carolina state history. When states compete on the merits of good public policy, ultimately our hardworking taxpayers are the real winners.

U.S. Senator Thom Tillis, ALEC alum and former Speaker of the House in North Carolina, explains the utility of Rich States, Poor States to legislators:

Rich States, Poor States continues to generate in-depth policy information that is critical to making decisions that will move states in a more economically sustainable direction. This publication is an important tool for policymakers, and I consider it essential to understanding what makes each state competitive in a global economy.

The success of the North Carolina flat tax reforms, inspired by Rich States, Poor States, created a larger movement: the State Flat Tax Revolution. Kentucky, which is starting to see its own economic outlook turnaround, made the switch in 2019, and in 2022 alone, five states made the switch to a flat tax. The 2022 movement began in Iowa in March, as Governor Kim Reynolds, an ALEC alum, signed the \$2 billion tax cuts the same day that she delivered the rebuttal to President Joe Biden's first State of the Union Address. It then continued in Mississippi with the largest tax cut in state history and then in Georgia. That September, Idaho lawmakers would reconvene for a one-day special session to enact their second tax cut of the year, which made the state's personal income tax flat.



Then there's unique case of Arizona, the fifth state to switch to the flat tax in 2022. The switch was not a product of 2022 legislation but of a court decision combined with the hard work from lawmakers in 2021 that helped Arizona pull off a comeback after a quick downfall. In 2020, voters approved Proposition 208 which implemented a surtax that effectively made the top marginal personal income tax rate 8%. Arizona subsequently dropped to 13th in Rich States, Poor States. The legislature convened in 2021 with the intention of implementing pro-growth tax reform and, as a result, passed a historic budget that, with the surtax, made a two-rate structure with the top rate 4.5%. In 2022, the Arizona Supreme Court overturned the surtax, and Arizona now has a flat tax with the nation's lowest personal income tax rate. Arizona ranks 3rd in Rich States, Poor States. Former Arizona Senate President Pro Tempore Vince Leach, who previously chaired the ALEC Tax and Fiscal Policy Task Force, described the reforms perfectly:

With this victory, taxpayers will be able to keep more of their hard-earned money, and Arizona will remain one of the best states in America in which to live, raise a family and start a business. Furthermore, the Arizona tax structure will once again encourage more businesses to set up shop here and grow jobs and the economy for all.

The State Flat Tax Revolution is notable in its own right, but it may also be the first step in an even more impressive movement. The states with no personal income tax tend to rank well in Rich States, Poor States, and as Mississippi Speaker of the House Philip Gunn, a member of the ALEC Board of Directors, says, the State Flat Tax Revolution could be the first step in the No Income Tax Movement.

As Dr. Laffer puts it, “People go to where they have more freedom, to where they have a better chance of economic prosperity.” In the last 16 years, Rich States, Poor States has helped states legislators to seek pro-growth economic policy in the states, and millions of taxpayers have responded by voting with their feet. The future is bright for those states like Iowa, Mississippi, Kentucky, West Virginia and many more where lawmakers continue to use Rich States, Poor States as a guide to a better economic future.

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3

*ALEC's Success on
Civil Justice Reform*





EPISODE

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3

ALEC's Success on Civil Justice Reform



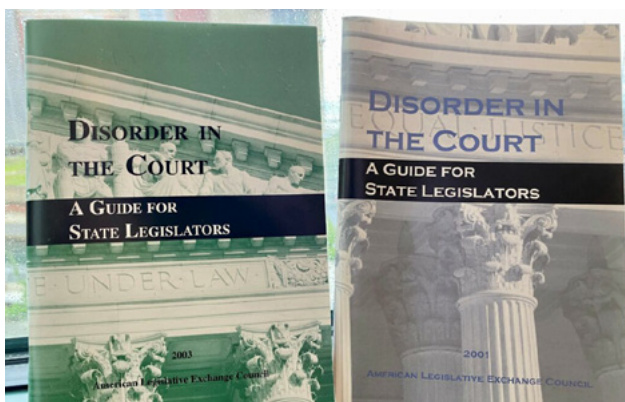
NINO MARCHESE
TASK FORCE DIRECTOR



CIVIL JUSTICE

The third episode in ALEC 50th anniversary video series, “Disorder in the Court,” features former Civil Justice Task Force Chairs Mark Behrens and Victor Schwartz, along with Nino Marchese, discussing the impact ALEC’s Civil Justice Task Force has had on legal reform in the states throughout the years.

For decades, ALEC’s Civil Justice Task Force has connected state lawmakers and legal experts to help one another restore fairness and predictability in the domain of civil justice. The Task Force has developed dozens of model policies to protect the legal system from frivolous litigation which cripples businesses’ ability to innovate, employ and engender economic prosperity. ALEC’s success has helped states restore fairness and justice in their civil justice systems, driving down economic costs from an overly litigious America, making the legal system a better arbiter of the free market economy.



As Mark Behrens, advisor to the Civil Justice Task Force, explains:

There are many examples where unbalanced tort laws have had really detrimental effects. Every consumer in America pays more on virtually everything they buy because of this hidden tort tax that's baked into the cost of those purchases.



Former Civil Justice Task Force Chair and ALEC champion Victor Schwartz says ALEC came to the rescue.

ALEC came to the rescue and formed the Civil Justice Task Force, which I co-chaired always with an elected member. So they had somebody from the private sector and the public sector, and we formed model bills to put some adjustment into the tort system.



From our Disorder in the Court project to Tort Reform Bootcamp guide and many more additional resources, the Civil Justice Task Force earned a reputation throughout the years as a source of trusted policy solutions.

Medical malpractice suits have been another prominent area of focus for ALEC over the years. A 2006 study by researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health and Brigham and Women's Hospital estimated that 37% of medical malpractice claims lacked sufficient evidence of wrongdoing and were likely meritless.



These lawsuits are also very expensive to defend. That same Harvard study found it cost about \$52,000 to litigate a typical case – leading to a significant increase in the phenomenon of defensive medicine. Back in 2006, one large accounting firm estimated that the practice

of defensive medicine increased health-care expenditures by 10% or \$210 billion. In 2008, overall medical liability system costs like defensive medicine, were estimated to be \$55.6 billion annually, equal to 2.4 percent of total health care spending.

In recent decades, ALEC has helped the states adopt reforms reforming civil procedure to prevent such frivolous suits – saving consumers billions of dollars, not just on the medical malpractice front, but in civil litigation at large.

I've been involved in civil justice issues with ALEC for over 25 years. The active engagement of ALEC members in both the private and the public sector have really helped level the playing field and create a balanced legal environment. ALEC model legislation that has been achieved in most states has headed off that litigation avalanche, and really helped protect our small business community so they could thrive. — Mark Behrens



Florida is the most recent champion of civil justice reform, enacting a comprehensive lawsuit reform package this 2023 session addressing prominent issues in the world of civil litigation. Among the various legal reforms, Florida's HB 837 reduced the statute of limitations from four years to two years for general negligence cases, provided limited

situations for which one way attorney fees and fee multiplier provisions can be applied, and ensured that Floridians can't be held liable for damages if the person suing is more at fault than a defendant, as determined by a jury, disincentivizing frivolous lawsuits and prolonged litigation in substantive ways.

ALEC model policies like the Phantom Damages Elimination Act, Punitive Damages Standards Act, Product Liability Act, and Reliability in Expert Testimony Standards Act have all proved to be successful guidelines in the larger efforts to lessen the likelihood of outrageously high verdict awards, lower consumer costs for thousands of goods and services and to protect the free market while ensuring fairness within our justice systems.

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4

*ALEC's Impact on
Criminal Justice Reform*





EPISODE

<< WATCH VIDEO 

4

ALEC's Impact on Criminal Justice Reform



NINO MARCHESE
TASK FORCE DIRECTOR



CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The fourth episode in the ALEC 50th anniversary video series, “Criminal Justice Reform,” features ALEC Board and Criminal Justice Task Force member, Oklahoma Senator Julie Daniels, Criminal Justice Task Force Director Nino Marchese, founder of Public Safety Solutions for America and former deputy advisor to President Donald Trump, Ja’Ron Smith, and ALEC CEO Lisa B. Nelson, all discussing the impact ALEC’s Criminal Justice Task Force has had on our criminal justice system throughout the years.

For over a decade, ALEC has led the way in tackling innovative ways to reform our criminal justice systems to make them more effective in increasing public safety, increasing opportunity and delivering justice, showing what truly effective conservative justice reform looks like. ALEC’s Criminal Justice Task Force has produced over 80 model policies state legislators have looked to for guidance and on a variety of issues —from policing reform to offender re-entry programs and everything in between.

As Senator Julie Daniels explains:

ALEC is a very substantive organization. By the time they hammer out and approve a model policy in a task force, like criminal justice, it's really a discussion among legislators from all over the United States.



Texas is a state which took advantage of these resources to enact reforms in their state, but also led by example to inspire federal reform efforts. Representative Jerry Madden in Texas led several efforts ALEC was behind, including alternatives to incarceration, reducing mandatory minimum sentences, other sentencing reform and recidivism reduction efforts, and even addressing civil asset forfeiture laws. These efforts spread throughout the states and led the way for the First Step Act less than a decade later.



According to ALEC CEO Lisa B. Nelson:

We took all of that positive policy that came out of the states, and brought it to Washington, and were able to work with the White House across partisan lines to get a bipartisan bill passed at the federal level.



As Ja’Ron Smith explains:

We hadn’t had any type of legislation around our justice system since the mid-’90s. It took almost 30 years for us to get to that place. Since the First Step Act has become law, we’ve reduced recidivism overwhelmingly. We learn a lot from ALEC’s leadership.

If we lower recidivism rates, we’re helping prevent crime in the future. And that’s what we learned from the state policy that ALEC presented. Investing in police and community relations — that’s the future of justice reform, and ALEC’s going to be a lead organization that’s involved with that.



The motivation behind many of the reform efforts ALEC's Criminal Justice Task Force members address has remained consistent since the Task Force was conceived: reduce crime, increase fairness, and lower the amount of people caught in the cycle of a criminal lifestyle. Punishment and accountability for those who break the law is non-negotiable and has always been a tenant of our Task Force to maintain law and order. Additionally, Task Force members look to long-term approaches in reducing criminal activity and preventing it from ever occurring. Creating opportunities to help individuals remove themselves from a criminal environment are in everyone's interest and have proven to be key.

We don't want them to re-offend. ALEC's been very active in making sure people are properly trained before they come out of the prison system.

— Senator Julie Daniels

Looking forward, and continuing to battle the crime waves spurred from the COVID-19 pandemic, ALEC's Criminal Justice Task Force will focus on ensuring law enforcement have the resources needed to focus their efforts efficiently to reduce crime in the short and long terms, while continuing the work on the various components of the criminal justice system it has for over a decade now.

To summarize, ALEC CEO Lisa B. Nelson said it best:

We strive for a more effective criminal justice system, one that is fair and just, but one which cycles fewer individuals through it because criminal activity has been reduced. That's what ALEC has helped the states accomplish. It's why we have stood by our principles for 50 years, and we'll continue to do so.

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5

*ALEC's Guiding
Principle of Federalism:
A Uniquely American
Governing Construct*





EPISODE

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5

ALEC's Guiding Principle of Federalism: A Uniquely American Governing Construct



KARLA JONES
SENIOR TASK FORCE DIRECTOR



FEDERALISM AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Our fifth episode in the ALEC 50th anniversary video series, “Federalism,” features ALEC National Chair for 2023, Florida Speaker-designate Daniel Perez; ALEC National Chair for 2022, former Arizona Senate President Karen Fann; ALEC National Chair for 2014 and founder of the ALEC Center to Restore the Balance of Government, former Iowa Speaker of the House Linda Upmeyer; ALEC Chair of the Center to Restore the Balance of Government, Utah Representative Ken Ivory; and ALEC Board of Scholars member Rob Natelson.

Released on the Fourth of July, this day is an ideal time to spotlight federalism – an ALEC guiding principle, and of the three (federalism, free markets, and limited government) the most uniquely American. Springing from our Founding Fathers’ commitment to liberty and their conviction that without strong safeguards, power would inevitably migrate to the national government eroding individual and states’ rights, federalism was woven into the US Constitution to prevent federal overreach. The founding Chair of ALEC’s Center to Restore the Balance of Government Linda Upmeyer

observes in ALEC's 50th anniversary video that many mistakenly believe that federalism is a consolidation of power with the federal government – its opposite. ALEC has addressed this fundamental misunderstanding in the model American Civics and History Act.

I've talked to people about federalism where they say, "Oh, we don't want federalism," because they think that is bigger federal government, when actually the opposite is true. Federalism is putting the responsibilities – the accountability to the people – right in the hands of your state representation.



The states are federalism's defenders but cannot defend rights of which they are unaware. For the last five decades, ALEC has been at the forefront of making sure that our members have a comprehensive understanding of federalism and we continue to adopt model policies meant to sharpen their knowledge such as Federalism Education Requirements for Public Attorneys and the ALEC Model Resolution on Continuing Education on Federalism.

Sadly, many states have accepted laws, regulations, and presidential executive orders (EOs) without challenging their constitutionality often in exchange for federal largesse which increased their dependence on the federal government. ALEC adopted Resolution Reaffirming Tenth Amendment

Rights to remind states that “The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and indefinite.” ALEC’s Commission on Federalism Act calls for the establishment of a state commission to evaluate and review any federal law that could potentially violate the state’s sovereignty. ALEC also adopted Executive Review Process Amendments as an aid for states to determine the constitutionality of presidential executive orders and to establish a mechanism to push back on unconstitutional EOs.

America’s Founders considered the states co-equal partners with the federal government and included constitutional provisions to ensure that no state would be rendered powerless by population or geographical size. The Electoral College is vital to ensuring that smaller states are not eclipsed in presidential elections by more populous ones, and ALEC has reaffirmed our support for this institution in our Statement of Principles for Presidential Elections.



The video player shows a blue background with the title "How States Can Use Article V to Address Federal Dysfunction" at the top. Below the title are three speakers: Rob Natelson, Constitutional Scholar; Lisa B. Nelson, ALEC CEO; and Karla Jones, ALEC Senior Task Force Director. A red play button is centered over the speakers. The ALEC logo is in the bottom right corner. Below the video player is a QR code and the text "<< WATCH VIDEO" with a play button icon.

The Constitutional Framers foresaw a time when Congress might be the source of national dysfunction and the states would be compelled

to lead providing states with a means to propose constitutional amendments in Article V. In addition to authoring ALEC’s Article V Handbook, , Professor Rob Natelson, ALEC Board of Scholars member, is featured in a video series on Article V and ALEC has adopted model policies on a number of initiatives that could be advanced by Article V from a fiscal responsibility amendment to one that keeps the number of Supreme Court Justices at nine. ALEC’s No Runaway Article V Conventions Act aims to prevent a “runaway convention.”



ALEC is a nationally and internationally recognized voice on federalism. ALEC members have been invited to present at the Hanns Seidel Foundation’s Federalism Days conference, and ALEC staff has addressed Congress on the federalism implications of transfer of select portions of the federal estate to state control as well as on federal overreach with respect to USDA regulations. ALEC has also presented at Utah Valley University’s annual Federalism Conference.

ALEC staff was invited to address the US Embassy in Manila on federalism as the Philippines explored ways to incorporate a greater degree of state sovereignty into their governing construct and has spoken to delegations from around the world about state sovereignty often providing opportunities for ALEC members to share their experiences.



Federalism created a fertile environment for policy innovation to flourish, giving states the freedom to craft solutions for both state and national challenges and when effective, these best practices can be shared to solve common problems. The freedom to innovate also serves as a crucial political safety valve for Americans who feel impotent in the face of federal dysfunction and mismanagement.

Now, with a new federalism firmly established, and government refocused on the states, you must carry on our work. The achievements of ALEC and the talents of your members convinces me that you are up to the challenge that our new federalism can lead to a new renaissance for America.

– President Ronald Reagan



Federalism helped shape the nation we have become and could serve as a mechanism to repair some of the damage to the nation's social fabric. ALEC has promoted the idea of a National Federalism Task Force comprised of a healthy cross-section of federalism leaders and model policy. For 50 years, ALEC has been a leader in advancing federalism principles and has created a forum for state lawmakers to realize state sovereignty as America's Founding Fathers envisioned.

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6

*ALEC's Pursuit of
Education Freedom*





EPISODE

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6

ALEC's Pursuit of Education Freedom



ANDREW HANDEL
TASK FORCE DIRECTOR



EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The final video in the ALEC 50th anniversary video series, “Education Opportunity,” features two ALEC Board Members, West Virginia Senator Patricia Rucker and Iowa Speaker Pro Tem John Wills, Jeanne Allen with the Center for Education Reform, Robert Enlow with EdChoice, Don Lee with Stride, ALEC CEO Lisa B. Nelson, and Education & Workforce Development Task Force Director Andrew Handel.

Education freedom has been a cornerstone issue for ALEC since its inception 50 years ago, but it has never been more important in America’s history than it is now. When students were abruptly transitioned onto Zoom, and schools closed during the COVID-19 pandemic, parents got a more intimate look at the education their children were receiving, and many were frustrated with what they saw. The desire among parents to find better educational options for their kids has supercharged the movement for education freedom in just the

past three years, leading to a massive increase in the number of states not only offering such programs, but offering them to all students. Jeanne Allen, the Founder & CEO of the Center for Education Reform highlighted this by saying:

The state legislatures have just been on fire, especially in the last few years. I mean, it's always been where we could expect the best stuff to come when we're looking at education freedom. And so I think ALEC is essential. I don't really think we'd be where we are today without ALEC.



ALEC's Education & Workforce Development Task Force Director, Andrew Handel, also highlighted the success of states passing universal education freedom legislation:

Over the past couple of years we've seen a tremendous increase in the number of universal education states. It started with West Virginia two years ago, Arizona got on board last year, and now this year we've had a ton of states that have gotten it done. We've had Iowa, Arkansas, Florida, Oklahoma, and Indiana, just to name a few.



ALEC Board Member and West Virginia State Senator Patricia Rucker is credited with sponsoring the first universal education freedom bill in the country and based it on ALEC's model policy, the Education Savings Account Act. She credits ALEC with providing inspiration for the legislation:

I introduced, in West Virginia, a universal education savings account (ESA) called the Hope Scholarship -- the model came from ideas that were presented to me at ALEC conferences. This is a perfect example of how ALEC has become a trusted source of policy solutions.



A year after the Hope Scholarship Program became law, ALEC passed a new ESA model policy and titled it the "Hope Scholarship Act," implementing many of the improvements that were found in Senator Rucker's final legislation.

Another ALEC Board Member, Speaker Pro Tem John Wills of Iowa, led a universal ESA bill through his state legislature this year. Speaker Pro Tem Wills notes:

It's especially great for Iowa. Over a period of three years, it's going to provide a universal child educational savings account for every child in the state. We have great public schools, but the bottom line is we want parents to have the choice. Those kids are going to have benefits and a future that they would've never had, if not for ALEC.



One of the greatest champions for universal education freedom was noted economist and nobel laureate, Milton Friedman – who is often called the “father of school choice.” In 1996, Friedman and his wife, Rose, created the Milton and Rose D. Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice. In 2016, the foundation became EdChoice. Robert Enlow, the President & CEO of EdChoice, explains:

When Milton Friedman spoke in 2006 at the ALEC Annual Convention in San Francisco, it was his last major speech that he gave. Milton's main message was that you needed choice for all and that legislators should support the right of parents to be free to choose. Whether those schools are public, private, charter, online, or in any other way we haven't thought about, the landscape has changed for the better. ALEC has been

a great partner with EdChoice to make sure that the information and the awareness is available to all policymakers across the country.



But ALEC's work in education policy hasn't just been limited to universal education freedom. Other critical policies ALEC has worked to promote include freedom in homeschooling, access to charter schools and virtual schools, and implementing open enrollment policies, so students are free to choose between different public-school options. Don Lee, Vice President of Public Affairs for Stride, a leading virtual-school provider, and member of ALEC's Private Enterprise Advisory Council, tells us:

Thanks to ALEC and their model policies and legislative network and communications outlets, virtual school and open enrollment policies have successfully been implemented in some states over the last 25 years, giving more students the option of traditional and virtual public schools.



ALEC and our members believe no student should be locked into one educational option. Instead, states should be providing families a variety of educational options and give them the flexibility to choose. ALEC's CEO, Lisa B. Nelson, says it best:

When people ask me about the impact that ALEC has had on education, all I can think about is the 30 years that we've been working on education choice, exemplifying the idea that parents should have a right to choose their children's education in their schools. There is so much momentum behind education freedom, and I couldn't be more proud of the work that ALEC has done across the country.

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