

2024 Essential Policy Solutions



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Essential Policy Solutions for 2024

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Acknowledgements and Disclaimers

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2024 Essential Policy Solutions

ESSENTIAL POLICY SOLUTIONS FOR 2024

Since 1973, the American Legislative Exchange Council has been at the forefront of producing and exchanging trusted policy solutions that benefit all Americans. For 50 years and counting, ALEC has stood as the crucible for state legislators and the bedrock of free market principles that uphold limited government and amplify our Founding Fathers' vision of federalism.

For 2024, our team has analyzed the best free market ideas to add to the important discussions taking place across the states and at the federal level in Washington. Together, our mission to preserve and protect the American way of life will persevere as we safeguard our republic for the generations to come.

We look forward to hearing from you as we continue to build our free market collection of policy ideas from the 50 "laboratories of democracy."

As you review these key policy ideas, please do not hesitate to reach out to our team if we can ever be of assistance.

Lisa B. Nelson

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Jonathan Williams





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AMERICAN LEGISLATIVE EXCHANGE COUNCIL

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ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

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SOUND PENSION REFORM



Keeping Politics Out of Pensions

In April 2023, Arkansas Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders and Montana Governor Greg Gianforte signed bills in their respective states that require fiduciaries to only consider pecuniary factors when making investment decisions with state pension funds. With Arkansas and Montana leading the charge in 2023, many more states followed suit.

By contrast, in March 2023, President Biden issued his first veto, rejecting a bipartisan resolution from Congress that protected pensions from politicized investment strategies like Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG). As states like California have learned over the years, pension funds that utilize similar strategies can be a recipe for disaster. Progressive initiatives seek to divest state pension funds from companies deemed noncompliant with ESG values. These politically motivated divestments – often from financially prosperous companies – threaten to increase unfunded pension liabilities. Investment strategies should be designed to keep politics out of pensions to ensure financial stability.

MODEL POLICY

- [State Government Employee Retirement Protection Act](#)

PUBLICATION

- [Keeping the Promise: Getting Politics Out of Pensions](#)

OP-ED

- [The Orange County Register: With First Veto, President Biden Fails to Learn from California](#)

Keeping the Promise

Unfunded state pension liabilities are growing rapidly, now totaling \$6.96 trillion or just under \$21,000 for every man, woman and child in the United States. Clearly pension plans are in serious need of reform. Several states, most recently North Dakota in 2023, have taken steps to switch new state workers from the broken defined-benefit plans to defined-contribution plans, but many are still in need of reforms. Until they do, plans will continue to under-perform as unfunded liabilities grow and these states will struggle to keep the promise made to plan beneficiaries without soaking the taxpayer in the process.

PUBLICATION

- [Unaccountable and Unaffordable, 7th Edition](#)

RESPONSIBLE BUDGETING



State Budget Reform

As many states continue find themselves with budget surpluses at the end of fiscal year 2023, the ALEC State Budget Reform Toolkit is a great resource. The toolkit outlines 23 proven policy solutions for states to improve their budget process, while avoiding wasteful spending and economically damaging tax increases.

States' dependency on federal funds has accelerated in recent years. Federal funding to the states comes in many forms such as education spending, Medicaid, infrastructure spending, and housing grants. But these dollars often come with costly strings attached, and funding levels can change, leaving state taxpayers to foot the bill.

States should learn from Utah, which passed its Financial Ready plan in 2013. This package of bills created a Federal Funds Commission to monitor the impact of federal overspending on the state. It also required every state agency to have an emergency action plan in the event of a 5%-25% reduction in federal funding.

Another way to stabilize budgets over time is to embrace Tax and Expenditure Limitations (TELs). The most effective TELs, like Colorado's Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR), require voter approval to raise taxes or issue debt. Policy reforms like TABOR give hardworking taxpayers more protection and ensure that state budget growth is stabilized at a reasonable level. ALEC's Fiscal Rules microsite and animated video explore how a hypothetical TABOR could help control state spending and taxes.

MODEL POLICY

- [Federal Grant Review Act](#)
- [Federal Receipts Reporting Requirements Act](#)
- [Tax and Expenditure Limitation Act](#)
- [Taxpayer Receipt Act](#)

PUBLICATION

- [State Budget Reform Toolkit](#)

OP-EDS

- [National Review: Colorado Offers the Gold Standard for Fiscal Restraint](#)
- [The Orange County Register: States Must Respond with Discipline after Credit Downgrade](#)



Putting America's Fiscal House in Order

America's strength domestically directly impacts our ability to meet global challenges and to be helpful to our friends around the world, so putting our nation's fiscal house in order is crucial to our success here and abroad. Inflation exacerbated by federal overspending is striking a serious blow to US households that are still recovering from the economic hardship created by the COVID pandemic response. This fiscal reality underscores the need to address the federal government's unsustainable spending habit and to begin chipping away at the national debt which is approaching \$34 trillion. Congress has consistently demonstrated that it is unable to police itself, leaving it to the states to restore fiscal sanity to the nation.

MODEL POLICY

- [Act to Ensure US Amendments Ratified by Article V State Conventions Are a Vote of "We the People"](#)
- [Article V Application for a Federal Fiscal Responsibility Amendments Convention to Curb Runaway Inflation and Restore Fiscal Sanity](#)

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PRO-GROWTH TAX POLICY



Reforming State Tax Codes

A tax system that allows citizens to keep more of what they earn spurs increased work, saving and investment. This is evident across 16 editions of our annual report Rich States, Poor States: ALEC-Laffer State Economic Competitiveness Index, which reveals the economic benefits associated with states that keep tax burdens and spending at prudent levels. All taxes matter for economic growth, but taxes on capital, including business and individual income taxes, have the largest negative impact on economic outlook and growth.

In recent years, we've seen significant income tax relief in the states. Notably, 10 states – Kentucky, West Virginia, Montana, Utah, Arkansas, North Dakota, Indiana, Nebraska, Connecticut, and Ohio – cut personal income taxes (PIT) in 2023 alone. Since 2021, 23 states have provided personal income tax relief.

In 2022, five states joined the 2022 State Flat Tax Revolution: Iowa, Georgia, Mississippi, Idaho, and Arizona, by creating single rate personal income tax structures. These flat taxes help to stabilize income tax volatility and ween states off over-dependency on income tax.

MODEL POLICY

- [ALEC Principles of Taxation](#)

PUBLICATION

- [Rich States, Poor States: ALEC-Laffer State Economic Competitiveness Index](#)

OP-EDS

- [The Daily Caller: Pro-Growth Policies Have Americans Flooding to These States](#)
- [Deseret News: For the 16th Time, Utah's Economic Outlook Tops the Nation](#)
- [The Daily Caller: Tax Relief is Coming to Millions of Red State Residents](#)

Federal Tax Reform

Following in the footsteps of Arizona and Michigan, states leaders can continue to call on Congress to make permanent the federal 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), which supercharged the American economy. However, at the end of 2022 and into 2023, businesses began to experience several scheduled TCJA changes, including a switch to five-year amortization of R&D expenses, the phaseout of 100% bonus depreciation, and more.

Absent congressional action, 23 provisions of the 2017 tax cuts directly relating to individual income taxes, such as the reductions in personal income tax rates, the near doubling of the standard deduction, and the substantial reduction of the hated Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) will expire after December 31, 2025.

MODEL POLICY

- [Resolution Urging Congress to Permanently Extend the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017](#)

Avoiding Discriminatory Taxes

Imposing discriminatory taxes can negatively affect state economies and lead to unintended consequences. The ALEC Principles of Taxation are clear: “The government should not use the tax system to pick winners and losers in society, or unfairly shift the tax burden onto one class of citizens. The tax system should not... engage in discriminatory or multiple taxation, nor should it be used to bestow special favors on any particular group of taxpayers.”

MODEL POLICY

- [ALEC Principles of Taxation](#)



Property Tax Reform

Truth-in-Taxation is Utah’s most taxpayer-friendly property tax law. This law and the ALEC model policy, Truth in Taxation Act, aim to reduce the growth of property taxes through transparency and accountability. The measure was enacted in Utah in 1985 to provide a solution to taxpayer unrest from ever increasing assessments and property taxes. While Truth in Taxation does not technically limit property taxes, it makes local elected officials think twice about increasing property taxes because they know all citizens will be notified of the increase and its potential impact on their property. They also know that they will have to hold a broadly advertised public hearing and recorded vote, where citizens can communicate their concerns about a proposed tax and spending increase.

In 2023, Iowa lawmakers and Governor Kim Reynolds delivered a bipartisan win for Iowans, as Truth in Taxation became the latest free market policy solution signed into law in the Hawkeye State. Iowa joined Utah, Tennessee, Kansas and Nebraska in enacting one of the most taxpayer-friendly laws in the nation.

MODEL POLICY

- [Truth in Taxation Act](#)

OP-EDS

- [National Review: The Heartland Property Tax Rebellion](#)
- [The Center Square: To Achieve Meaningful Property Tax Relief, Right Size Government](#)

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MAINTAINING ENERGY RELIABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY



While global instability upended energy prices throughout the world last year, 2024 is a chance for state governments to make sensible, market-based decisions concerning the costs and reliability of the fuels and infrastructure that power our nation. Reliability and affordability are two of the most important drivers of our economic system.

There is an increasing trend of shuttering traditional power plants before new generation sources are online and ready to operate that must be reversed. By closing power plants before their replacements are ready, Americans are at increased risk for rolling blackouts, especially during critical periods such as height of summer and dead of winter.

However, energy costs have a much larger impact on society than the utility bills paid at the end of the month. Energy costs are inextricably linked to agricultural production and modern transportation. From the cost of fertilizer, which is primarily a product of natural gas, or the cost of freight shipment, which is primarily powered by diesel, almost every aspect of every product used in our day-to-day lives is impacted by the price of energy.

MODEL POLICY

- [Resolution Supporting Reliable and Affordable Energy](#)
- [Electric Generation Facility Closures and Reliability Act](#)
- [Affordable, Reliable, and Resilient Electricity Act](#)

PUBLICATION

- [Energy Affordability Report, 3rd Edition](#)

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



In 2023, more than 10 states considered legislation specifically focused on fostering economic development by recognizing the Right to Start. This policy alleviates barriers for entrepreneurs and creates a “domino effect” as entrepreneurial success attracts and encourages even more entrepreneurs, thus further boosting state and local economies. Last year, Nevada became the first state to enact the legislation, implementing important reforms that make it easier for Nevadans to become and remain entrepreneurs. Other policies can bolster these efforts by ensuring that budding businesses are not prevented from succeeding due to overburdensome regulations and restrictions.

MODEL POLICY

- [Right to Start Act](#)
- [The Home-Based Business Fairness Act](#)



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WORKER FREEDOM



Flexibility is now king in the job market as Americans continue to select jobs that offer flexible options. States can get on board by reducing regulations that limit work options and hinder economic development. Lawmakers should ensure government does not get in the way of Americans seeking work options that are best for them and their families. That includes opening state economies and communities to talented, experienced workers by recognizing comparable, out-of-state occupational licenses and qualifications. It also means protecting workers' right to choose a work model that works for them and their unique needs, as well as giving public sector workers more say about union representation by requiring union recertification.

MODEL POLICY

- [Model Interstate-Mobility and Universal-Recognition Occupational Licensing Act](#)
- [Uniform Worker Classification Act](#)
- [Union Recertification Act](#)

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REGULATORY REFORM



Holding executive branch departments and agencies accountable has proven to be an important issue to legislators and their constituents throughout the states, particularly throughout the pandemic. By implementing accountability measures and review processes to scrutinize new and existing rules and regulations, states can use proposed regulations as opportunities to take a look at the old as well. Setting regulatory caps and deregulation requirements can aid states in streamlining government.

MODEL POLICY

- [An Act to Establish a Cap on Government Red Tape](#)
- [Universal Regulatory Sandbox Act](#)
- [Targeted Legislative Review Act](#)
- [Accountability in Rule Making Act](#)
- [Democratic Accountability in Board Appointments Act](#)
- [Emergency Power Limitation Act](#)

LAWSUIT REFORM



ALEC remains a consistent long-term leader on lawsuit and tort reform issues in the states. Primarily focused on the issues of exorbitant civil litigation payout amounts, otherwise known as “nuclear verdicts,” ALEC aims to educate further on the root causes and solutions to these issues throughout the states in 2024.

Florida is the most recent champion of civil justice reform, enacting a comprehensive lawsuit reform package in 2023. 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 cannot 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.

MODEL POLICY

- [Overtime Exceptions and Class Actions Prohibition Act](#)
- [Anchors Away Act](#)
- [Liability Protection for Employers in a Declared Disaster or Public Emergency Act](#)
- [Transparency in Lawsuits Protection Act](#)
- [Prejudgment and Post-Judgment Interest Act](#)
- [The Phantom Damages Elimination Act](#)

COMMENTARY

- [Florida Achieves Major Lawsuit Reform](#)

BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES

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VIOLENT CRIME REDUCTION



From 2019-2020, the U.S. experienced a roughly 30% increase in homicides—the largest single year increase in US history. Motor vehicle theft rose 59% from 2019-2022, with similar spikes in robberies, nonresidential burglaries, and larcenies alike. Most concerning, the national clearance rate for violent crime is only 32.5%, with roughly half of murders going unsolved.

To protect our communities, targeting and reducing violent crime in effective and responsible ways is critical for the states in 2024. While legislators are eager to crack down on the crime in their states, they also understand that truly doing so means pursuing long-term, data-driven responses to efficiently target violent crime while providing specific support systems to both law enforcement and civilians to prevent crime cycles altogether.

MODEL POLICY

- [Resolution In Support of Effective Strategies to Support Law Enforcement and Reduce Violent Crime](#)
- [Resolution In Support of Enhancing Police Officer Training, Wellness, and Support Mechanisms](#)
- [Statement of Principles on Policing and Community Engagement](#)
- [Act to Prepare Inmates for Re-Entry and the Workforce](#)

COMMENTARY

- [Re-Entry Reform is Sweeping the States](#)

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JUSTICE SYSTEM CLEANUP



The criminal justice systems in the United States, while the best in the world, face a significant amount of strain. The states are reforming their laws to provide alternatives and opportunities to individuals with high levels of potential, while prioritizing the prosecution of serious, violent crime. Employing such reforms cleans up and maximizes the efficiency of our systems, reduces the likelihood of violent crime occurring in the future, and better applies the rule of law.

MODEL POLICY

- [Elimination of Youth Justice Fines and Fees Act](#)
- [Record Expungement Act](#)

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MENTAL HEALTH AND HOMELESSNESS



Many individuals with mental illness are homeless or arrested and imprisoned for minor offenses. State and local leaders should pursue alternative approaches, such as the sequential intercept model for identifying and diverting such individuals in appropriate cases, for the betterment of all actors in our criminal justice systems.

MODEL POLICY

- [Resolution on Mental Health and Criminal Justice](#)

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HOUSING AND LAND USE



Home ownership continues to be the greatest source of wealth for American families, but America is millions of homes short of meeting housing needs and demands. States can help address this problem by introducing reforms like these that encourage housing development of all kinds.

MODEL POLICY

- [Housing Affordability Impact Statement Act](#)
- [Rent Control Preemption Act](#)
- [Factory-Built Housing Act](#)
- [Accessory Dwelling Units Act](#)



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SCHOOL SECURITY



The safety and education of our children is of paramount importance, yet violence in our schools is increasing. Lawmakers should learn from tragedies like the Uvalde school shooting to determine how best to protect America's precious and vulnerable children.

MODEL POLICY

- [Statement of Principles on School Safety and Security](#)

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SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUTH ONLINE SAFETY



The subject of children's online safety was a top issue across state legislatures in 2023 and remains a critical priority for parents, educators, and government officials nationwide. Although some policy solutions like strict age verification mechanisms are often crafted with noble intentions to protect children online, some stakeholders have raised concerns about the unintended consequences of excessive government intervention in social media platforms and likely First Amendment concerns.

ALEC members offer a better approach that puts parents in the driver's seat and aims to prepare teens for the digital world by incorporating digital literacy and internet safety into the school curriculum. Such instruction in grades 6-12 would not only promote healthy online behaviors and the benefits of responsible social media use, but also teach the negative effects of social media on topics like mental health, cyberbullying, and the permanency of sharing information online.

By teaching teens how to responsibly navigate online platforms, states can partner with parents to mitigate the risks and determine the appropriate level of use for each individual child. This approach allows our kids to develop the skills they need to become productive members of our digital-first future and advance in their careers, all while avoiding the perils of ever-expanding government overreach.

MODEL POLICY

- [Teen Social Media and Internet Safety Act](#)

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ENABLING INNOVATION IN EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES



The United States is on the cusp of another leap in technology innovation as promising emerging technologies inch closer to mainstream adoption, such as artificial intelligence, automation, advanced manufacturing, blockchain technologies, autonomous vehicles, virtual and augmented reality, and more. These groundbreaking technologies often disrupt the existing market, while legacy statutes and regulations can inhibit or prohibit the development and testing of such technologies.

Across the pond, the European Union's years-long legislative rampage against American companies has worsened with the passage of two new laws: The Digital Markets Act (DMA) and Digital Services Act (DSA). For federal and state officials in the U.S., pushing back against these sweeping EU regulations – designed to damage successful American companies – should be a no-brainer.

MODEL POLICY

- [Resolution Supporting Innovative Technologies to Strengthen States and Local Communities by Enabling Statewide Use of Distributed Ledger Technology](#)
- [Resolution in Support of Free Market Solutions and Enforcement of Existing Regulations for Uses of Artificial Intelligence](#)

PUBLICATION

- [A Threat to American Tech Innovation: The European Union's Digital Markets Act](#)

OP-ED

- [The Orange County Register: The European Union Regulates while America Innovates](#)

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TACKLING THE TRAGIC FENTANYL CRISIS



The current fentanyl epidemic that is devastating communities across America is fueled by illicit drugs entering the US largely through international mail and legal crossing points. A nation must be able to control the flow of people into its territory, and as we have witnessed, our current insecure southern border has facilitated human trafficking, drug smuggling, and criminal activity. Border security will continue to be an issue for the foreseeable future.



PROTECTING INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY

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CAMPUS SPEECH



ALEC's Education and Workforce Development Task Force, in collaboration with the Center to Protect Free Speech, passed a new model policy at the 2022 States and Nation Policy Summit titled The Free Speech in Higher Education Act. The model was designed as a follow-up to the successful Forming Open and Robust University Minds (FORUM) Act, which became an ALEC model policy six years ago and has now been implemented in over 20 different states.

The Free Speech in Higher Education Act addresses specific concerns around student-on-student harassment that results in free speech violations (i.e. a student shouting down a classmate, thus preventing the classmate from being heard). It also bans the use of "bias response teams," which universities have regularly used to intimidate students into silence under the threat of investigation.

MODEL POLICY

- [The Free Speech in Higher Education Act](#)
- [Forming Open and Robust University Minds \(FORUM\) Act](#)

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ONLINE SPEECH



For decades, the internet has traditionally served as a great equalizer of free speech and a bastion of First Amendment values. Thanks to broadly supported policies enacted in the early days of the internet to minimize government regulation, the United States remains the undisputed global leader in the technology sector to this day.

However, recent reporting unveiled efforts by the Biden Administration to pressure social media platforms to remove online speech they disagree with or classify as misinformation, disinformation, or malinformation. In 2022, the Administration was rightly criticized for its plan to create a Disinformation Governance Board housed within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, but further documents and reporting revealed the underlying work of this body continues.

Congress must address these repeated government efforts to curate online speech by investigating the full extent to which the Biden Administration pressured platforms to restrict or limit information online.

MODEL POLICY

- [Resolution in Support of Congressional Law to Combat Government Pressuring of Social Media Platforms to Remove Speech](#)
- [Resolution Investigating Biden White House Pressuring of Social Media Platforms to Remove COVID Information](#)
- [Statement of Principles on Online Free Speech](#)

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CONSUMER DATA PRIVACY



For well over a decade, state and federal lawmakers have considered various legislative proposals regarding the use of consumer data in our increasingly digital and internet connected world. To date, twelve states have enacted so-called comprehensive data privacy laws: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Indiana, Iowa, Montana, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Virginia. We expect this momentum to continue across the states in 2024 as Congress remains stalled on this issue.

ALEC maintains that a unified federal standard on consumer privacy is preferable to a 50-state patchwork. However, absent a federal solution, many states are likely to advance their own comprehensive privacy bills. When crafting privacy legislation, lawmakers must carefully balance the issues of consumer protection and child safety without hampering innovation and unduly burdening interstate commerce pursuant to Article I of the U.S. Constitution.

As part of this effort to balance privacy and innovation, ALEC members have already approved a model resolution opposing the development of a central bank digital currency (CBDC). While CBDCs are a significant financial innovation, they also open the door to granting the federal government significant control of and access to personal financial data and accounts. Nine states passed legislation against an American CBDC this year, and another five considered similar policies. As President Biden and federal agencies continue to signal interest in developing a CBDC, states can play an important role in pushing back against this development.

MODEL POLICY

- [Resolution for a Single Federal Standard for Consumer Privacy](#)
- [Principles on Online Privacy](#)
- [The Privacy Protection Act](#)
- [Employee Online Privacy Act](#)
- [Reject CBDCs and Protect Financial Privacy Act](#)



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JUDICIAL REFORM



Maintaining the structure and integrity of the judiciary throughout the states is of it most importance. Tailoring ways which the states' judiciary can deliver justice in more fair and accountable ways is of critical importance for almost any policy issue.

MODEL POLICY

- **Independent Administrative Law Judges Act**
- **Judicial Deference Reform Act**

INFRASTRUCTURE

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CYBERSECURITY



Bad actors, global and domestic, will continue to attack networks for any number of purposes. State networks are still vulnerable and need to improve their cybersecurity infrastructure as recent crippling cyber-attacks demonstrate.

The energy sector’s interdependencies between physical and cyber infrastructure leaves the industry uniquely vulnerable to state-sponsored threats and sophisticated criminals. Although high-level threats are dealt with on the federal level, state and local governments must be prepared to deal with the initial first response to emergencies and disruptions.

MODEL POLICY

- [Statement of Principles for Cybersecurity](#)

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BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT AND ACCESS



In recent years, the federal government has appropriated over \$40 billion to close “digital divide” and In recent years, federal and state governments have dedicated massive sums of taxpayer funding and resources for rural broadband deployment. One report estimates there are at minimum 16 federal programs totaling over \$400 billion dedicated to broadband expansion. With precious taxpayer dollars on the line and dozens of federal and state agencies involved, there is a risk that funds could be wasted on duplicative projects in areas that already enjoy broadband services, or on problematic government-owned networks with a long track record of failure in the U.S.

One program—the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD)—recently appropriated over \$40 billion in 2021 to close the “digital divide” and make high-speed broadband internet available to all Americans. Unfortunately, as the federal National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) works to implement the BEAD program and allocate broadband funds to the states, the Biden Administration injected unhelpful political priorities into the grant process that threaten to undermine the program’s effectiveness. Many of these NTIA “guidelines” clearly deviate from Congress’ intent in the underlying statute, including preferences for union labor, equity provisions, government rate regulation of broadband service, and favorable treatment for government-owned networks (GONs).



Federal agencies should work in tandem with states and localities to ensure broadband dollars are spent wisely, not squandered on counterproductive pet priorities for the Administration. Such broadband projects must be rooted in free market principles that have been proven to improve access in unserved or underserved communities, particularly in rural areas. State lawmakers should work closely with their broadband program administrators to solve this problem in an all-of-the-above, technology-neutral fashion.

MODEL POLICY

- [A Resolution on Network Neutrality](#)
- [Principles on Municipal / Government Owned Networks](#)
- [Resolution Supporting Pro Consumer Public Policy for Voice, Video, and Data Services](#)

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PROTECTING CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE



As one of the cornerstones of modern society, power infrastructure plays a critical role in delivering electricity to the vast majority of Americans. However, significant parts of this infrastructure, particularly electrical substations, are vulnerable to unsophisticated attacks that can easily be carried out by a single person.

Although electrical operators are continually working on building redundancy and security into our electrical infrastructure, the fact remains that if a relatively small percentage of the nation's 2,000+ high-power transformers are taken offline all at once, most of the country could lose power for weeks, if not months.

When it comes to critical infrastructure versus free speech, protect both.

MODEL POLICY

- [Critical Infrastructure Protection Act](#)

COMMENTARY

- [Protecting Critical Infrastructure amid Recent Substation Attacks](#)

EDUCATION FREEDOM

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PARENTAL EMPOWERMENT THROUGH SCHOOL CHOICE



Last year was another massive success for American students and families as more states implement programs designed to empower parents and provide more choice in education. In all, 10 different states have now implemented universal school choice programs, including eight in 2023 alone. State leaders are challenging the notion that public dollars must be sent directly to public school districts and are instead recognizing that money should follow the student to wherever they will achieve the most. Education Savings Accounts allow states to send education dollars into managed accounts where parents oversee spending the money on anything education-related (books, uniforms, supplies, testing fees, tuition, etc.).

Today, the 10 states that have passed universal education freedom policies include Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Utah, and West Virginia.

As we outline in our new ALEC Index of State Education Freedom, states can also expand education freedom through policies on charter schools, open enrollment, homeschooling, and virtual schools.

MODEL POLICY

- [The Hope Scholarship Act](#)
- [Protecting Religious Homeschooling Act](#)
- [Next Generation Charter Schools Act](#)
- [Open Enrollment Act](#)

PUBLICATION

- [The ALEC Index of State Education Freedom: A 50-State Guide to Parental Empowerment](#)

OP-ED

- [Fox News: Every Child Deserves Education Freedom. Let's Take It Nationwide](#)



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ADDRESSING CONTROVERSIAL CURRICULUM



Parents should have greater input with local school boards, including curriculum decisions. Local boards should also focus on providing great education for students on the trades.

Controversial curriculum in K-12 schools continues to be a major issue for lawmakers around the country. ALEC advocates for a two-pronged approach. The first is represented by our Academic Transparency Act and Honesty in Teaching Act, which both create mechanisms for parents to object to controversial material and file complaints with the school board when it is being taught. The Academic Transparency Act also requires all teaching and learning materials to be posted online, while the Honesty in Teaching Act creates professional development opportunities for teachers found to be teaching controversial curriculum in violation of the Act.

When families discover and object to this controversial curriculum, but the school district refuses to remove it, ALEC believes they should have an alternative. Our Hope Scholarship Act model policy, which is discussed in the above section, creates a universal education savings account program that parents can access to send their children to another school that better aligns with their values.

MODEL POLICY

- **[The Academic Transparency Act](#)**
- **[The Honesty in Teaching Act](#)**

HEALTH CARE

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PRICE TRANSPARENCY



Giving patients more information and, as a result, more control over their health care is the key to bringing down health care costs. Health care is one of the only industries where customers are expected to buy products or services without knowing the cost up front. Laws like those passed in Virginia, Texas, and Colorado will help patients take more control over their care, better plan for health care needs, and shop for the best value and best price.

MODEL POLICY

- [Hospital Price Transparency Act](#)

COMMENTARY

- [Transparency in Health Care: It's Up to States to Lead](#)

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MEDICAID REFORM



Currently, all but 10 states expanded Medicaid under the “Affordable Care Act” (ACA) believing those generous federal matches were permanent. States that opted for Medicaid expansion, however, are already contributing more towards Medicaid spending than originally planned, causing some to warn that current Medicaid spending is unsustainable, especially with budget battles on the horizon. Meanwhile, expansion has diverted resources from low-income pregnant women, individuals with disabilities, seniors and children.

The vast majority of the waste, fraud, and improper spending in Medicaid comes from a failure to verify eligibility. Recent reports from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) show an estimated \$132 billion annually in improper payments and fraud. Cleaning up state Medicaid rolls will be a daunting but necessary task in 2024.



MODEL POLICY

- [Requiring Legislative Approval for Medicaid Expansion Act](#)
- [Self Sufficiency in Medicaid Act](#)

OP-EDS

- [The Wall Street Journal: Fitch Downgrade Could Mean Medicaid Cuts](#)
- [The Daily Caller: Let's Ditch the Masks and Make these Common-Sense COVID Changes Permanent](#)

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PRESCRIPTION DRUG POLICY



We continue to see misguided efforts to lower the price of prescription drugs on both a state and federal level. A new debate is also taking place over prescribing authority. Scope of practice reforms that would allow pharmacists and mid-level providers like psychologists to prescribe certain kinds of medication are going to be a hotly debated issue in 2024.

PUBLICATION

- [Price-Fixing Prescription Drugs Will Cost Us in Cures](#)

COMMENTARY

- [The 340B Program and State Mandates](#)

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SECURING HEALTH CARE DATA



As technology and our personal devices continue to advance, much of our health care data is collected and maintained on apps, phones and cloud-based systems. Looking at who has access to this data, how the data is kept secure and ways policymakers can use the data to make better policy decisions is something that will be increasingly discussed at both the federal and state levels.

MODEL POLICY

- [Statewide Health Data Utility Act](#)

INTERNATIONAL

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CHINA'S THREAT POTENTIAL



China has devised and is accelerating a highly sophisticated subnational strategy in the United States and has identified state and local governments as an American Achilles' heel to undermine federal legislation to counter the PRC's influence. As speakers from the Federalism and International Relations Task Force have observed, "Beijing is poised to subvert the subnational U.S. system, turning the country inside-out against itself." It is long past time for state and local governments to protect their institutions against influence by rogue global actors including but not limited to China and to press the federal government to do its part on the national level.

While the federal government has mechanisms in place to protect national security (although these protections are not foolproof), the states are highly vulnerable to Chinese influence campaigns through the United Front and other entities; China's acquisition of US rural lands; and the homeland security risks inherent in Chinese-manufactured technology.

MODEL POLICY

- [Act to Prohibit Confucius Institutes in Public Institutions of Higher Education](#)
- [An Act to Prohibit State Contracts with Chinese Government-Owned or Affiliated Technology Manufacturers](#)
- [State Infrastructure Protection Act](#)
- [An Act to Facilitate the Disclosure of Foreign Grants or Gifts Received by State Agencies](#)

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STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS



The United States is strongest when acting in concert with likeminded economic and strategic allies and measures to strengthen these bonds can take the form of establishing ties between individual states and overseas partners or a resolution encouraging the federal government to strengthen ties with a nation or region.



MODEL POLICY

- [Resolution to Affirm Support for Israel and to Condemn Hamas](#)
- [Resolution Commending This State's and the United States' Cordial and Mutually Beneficial Relationship with the Nation of Israel](#)
- [Resolution in Support of Deepening Euro-Atlantic Integration of the Republic of Moldova](#)
- [Resolution Urging the United States to Invite Taiwan to Join the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework](#)
- [Resolution to Prioritize Strengthening the US-Taiwan Partnership to Enhance Global Supply Chain Security and Resilience](#)

FUNCTIONAL FEDERALISM

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ELECTIONS AS THE FOUNDING FATHERS INTENDED



America's Founding Fathers crafted a system of elections that is fair and ensures that smaller states still wield influence at the national level. However, these protections are being undermined systematically, as some want to experiment with the most precious American right – suffrage. Emphasizing the importance to upholding our federal republic of the structure the constitutional framers devised – including but not limited to the Electoral College – will be of the utmost importance in 2024.

Additionally, special interests are pushing a novel and complicated election process called ranked-choice voting. Often they try to enact these in local jurisdictions, creating a conflict between local and state election processes.

MODEL POLICY

- [Statement of Principles for Presidential Elections](#)
- [Safeguard American Votes and Elections Act \(SAVE Act\)](#)

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