ANNUAL REPORT

2023





"I really like the way [MSPC] is going about this – that they view it as an educational opportunity." Former Idaho Governor and U.S. Senator **Jim Risch**





"Mountain States Policy Center plays a critical role in the debate over our region's most important issues." Eastern Washington Congresswoman **Cathy McMorris Rodgers**

"Organizations like MSPC can really make a profound difference." Idaho State Representative **Wendy Horman** of Idaho Falls





"I support the work of MSPC and all think tanks that will improve the lives of children." National school choice advocate **Corey DeAngelis**

"MSPC is a welcome addition, providing a vital service to lawmakers and educating the public." Idaho State Representative **Judy Boyle** of Midvale





A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Friends and Supporters,

This is a crucial time in America's history, a time when militant ideologies have taken aim at the foundations of our country. Anti-growth economic policies both at the national level and in numerous states across America are stifling opportunity and putting necessities out of reach for far too many.

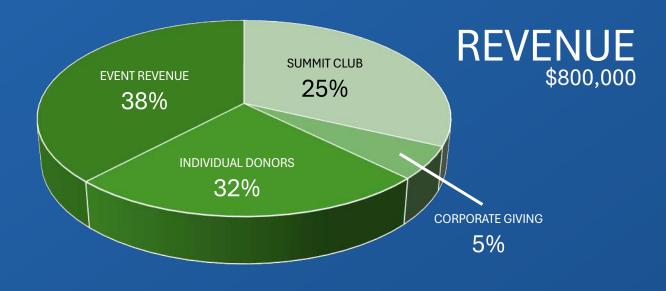
Against this backdrop, our home in the Mountain States has offered a refuge for those seeking to escape the high costs and collapsing living standards on the West Coast. For that reason, the Mountain West today ranks as the fastest growing region in America.

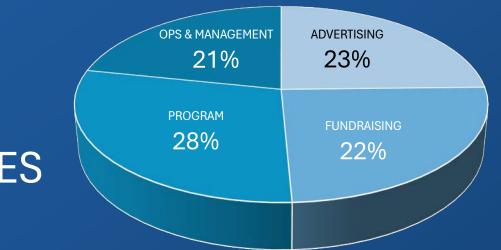
While Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming have fared better than much of the country, the state's rapidly changing population profile is set to re-shape the region's civic and political life. Just as states such as Arizona and Nevada have shifted from reliably conservative and libertarian bastions into "purple" battlegrounds, states such as Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming are undergoing their own seismic realignment with the arrival of thousands of new residents. We must play defense to keep the region from making the same bad choices that have taken other states off the rails. At the same time, we must go on offense and put in place good policies that will advance the region's quality of life for generations to come. This is long overdue. Despite its strong conservative majorities, the region lags the country in adopting conservative policies such as education choice, government transparency, and protections for taxpayers. We must take the lead so that a change in the region's political environment does not destroy its quality of life.

Mountain States Policy Center was built for this moment. We've already established ourselves among the nation's fastestgrowing free-market think tanks, surpassing \$1 million in annual revenue in just its second year of operations. This already makes MSPC larger than many think tanks that have been around for much longer, and the organization has prospects for even further growth in the next few years.

While this look back at the past year showcases these achievements, we believe they represent just a preview of what is possible for our organization. Together, we can not only defeat the big-government ideologies that threaten our region's way of life but go on offense to advance prosperity and opportunity for all. We are grateful for those of you who have brought us to this exciting moment, and excited for what we believe can be a breakout year ahead!

Chris Cargill Founder, President & CEO





EXPENSES \$755,000

2023 SUPPORT

The Summit Club is the major giving program at Mountain States Policy Center. Supporters pledge a gift of at least \$5,000 per year over a period of at least three years. Our sincere thanks to those who are making this work possible.

Associated Builders & Contractors **Bill & Milly Baldwin** Dean & Cindy Haagenson Dave & Susan Denton Dan & Janis Kristiansen Aaron & Cacey Klein Mike & Linda Jones Penn & Nancy Siegel John & Molly Otter Steve & Linda Wilhoit **Elaine Damschen Dan Richter Bill & Elizabeth Junkermier** Mark Fischer Kent & Bonnie Clausen Rafanelli & Nahas **Russ & Tricia Stromberg** Intermountain Gas Company **Dave & Gretchen Buck** Julie Shiflett Zach & Brittany Gautreau Chris & Dalene Patterson **Ron & Heidi Stanley** Simplot Anonymous (1)

STATISTICAL REPORT

Mountain States Policy Center (MSPC) was founded in 2022 to empower individuals to succeed through nonpartisan, quality research that promotes free enterprise, individual liberty, and limited government. With a headquarters in Idaho and coverage of Washington state, Montana, and Wyoming, MSPC works to educate key segments of society—including policymakers, the media, young leaders, and the rising generation of citizens—on the power of free markets and limited government to unleash prosperity and opportunity throughout the Mountain West and the nation.

689	8	5
# of supporters	States with supporters	Staff
17	12,500	62%
Board members	Size of email list	Email open rate
9% Email click rate	36,500 Unique website visitors	6 # of times invited to testify before leg committee
390		



11,200 followers

974 followers

1,127 followers

737,168 video views

in

POLICY IMPACT

UDGET & TAX RECOMMENDATIONS

MOUNTAIN STATES

DOPT REVENUE GROWTH TRIGGERS FOR AU

COME TAX REDUCTIONS

DOME TAX LIABILIT

Restoring faith in K-12 with a "Public School Transparency Act"

A policy recommendation that would require greater transparency for school district budgets.

Ending the government's "home equity theft" scheme

Updating the law to prevent the government from stealing home equity.

COVERNMENT Ending the government's "home equity theft" scheme

Restoring faith in K-12 with a "Public School Transparency Act"



Plugged in: Five keys for expanding broadband coverage

Recommending oversight and free market innovation in any government attempt to expand broadband.

Plugged in: Five keys to expanding broadband coverage

NA

In 2023, MSPC released 19 in-depth policy research papers offering in-depth analysis and thought leadership on critical issues facing the Mountain West such as tax reform, education choice, rural broadband access, and more. We were invited to testify six times before legislative committees and met with Montana Governor Greg Gianforte to present policy ideas.

MSPC's work constitutes a go-to resource for policymakers, the media, and anyone else seeking to understand the social and economic forces shaping our way of life in the region. Collectively, they are a comprehensive reform agenda that any figure of any political persuasion could adopt in to unleash prosperity.

Protecting taxpayers with supermajority requirements

Requiring extra consensus before increasing the financial burden on citizens.







"a brain trust for conservatives."



MSPC's profile continues to grow by leaps and bounds. Our policy research and commentary were quoted or published in the news media nearly 400 times in 2023, both in important regional outlets such as KTVB News Channel 7, the Billings Gazette, the Idaho Statesman, the Tri-City Herald, and Wyoming Tribute Eagle, but also a host of national outlets and major metro dailies across the country, starting with The Wall Street Journal, The Miami Herald, The Fort Worth Star-Telegram, The Charlotte Observer, and more.

BILLINGS GAZETTE It's cruel – and poor policy – to block special needs kids from educational opportunities Idaho Capital Sun 🕍 ial needs families in Montana had reason to be excited in 2023, as lawn By Chris Cargil s tarnities in Honturna had reason to be excited in 2023, as tawning in who need it most. The arrival of 2024, however, put a mean-sp Idaho lawmakers should provide at least 3-Montana House Bill 393 would allow parents of a student with a disability the consistent review on accessing another partners on a answer with a charactery or Education Sarkings Account or "ESA," ESA's are extremely popular with part around the nation. Polling has shown overwhetming support across party innotice of bills scheduled for public hearing rerwhelming support across party lines The ESA in HB 393 allows parents who choose to sign up roughly \$6,800 that The ESA III HIS and allows parents while choose to see up to use if y explore private school fultion and fees, textbooks, curriculum, tutoring, transpor private school fattion and rees, texturans, currelutan, whomig, unseparate expenses, it can be a tremendously helpful tool for parents who might not be s 2024 Legislation public participa to improve public participa governance, law makers sh t heard at public hearings. P THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW Sopech and 0 In the new shopping world, Albertsons-Kroger Put simply, if a st merger could provide the competition we need But the public e Before you head over to the produce department and grab a few tomatoes to hurt in my direction, hear me out: the Albertsons-Kroger merger could be a very good thing for consumers. Why? Because, like it or not, the way we shop has dramatically changed. More Americans are doing their shopping online or at a discount warehouse. Fewer go inside the grocery store. For many, that weekly trip to the market is becoming a thing of the past. Online and warehouse competition has changed everything - and it has helped lower the cost of many goods zon and Costco are now the major players in the grocery marketplace. Chances are, you've purchased an item at one of the three over the past 30 days.

Idaho State Journal, October 13, 2023

art/Sam's Club make up nearly a third – 30 percent – of the U.S. grocery market share These, the most source of the construction of the source of the construction of the co Coseco lastes another / percent, emazor is moving quickey and accounts or more than 250 million subscriptions. And consider this: Amazon Prime, Walmart+ and Costco have more than 250 million subscriptions.

Even if the Albertsons-Kroger merger proceeds, it would account for just 9 percent of nationw sales, according to the International Center for Law and Economics. But what it would do is get the sales, according to use international verses for vary and excedentials but wrat is reasonable to ge attention of the big three – increasing competition with their 42% of the current market share.

Kroger and Albertsons are cognizant of criticisms of the deal. The chains say they will sell 413 stores and eight distribution centers to address any questions about a monopoly in certain



Blate Constitutions follow a similar path, vesting fast powers in the people via their electer representatives – before anything or anyone else.

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become on the exclusive prerogenive or me to past lew decades, a virus of executive over ave sulled the notion of separation of powers.

The consistent and appropriate theme from recent U return to a constitutional framework for making laws. ch and lawn sking from the ben

recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions ha

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ministration's attempt to forgive \$430 billion in atuc

ved such a policy. The White House was usin largiveness. Much to the dismay of activists a

IN THE MEDIA

Forest brightermass, much to the desmay or accordes and said the Administration didn't have authority to do that. ally, justices have been reying on something called the 'major questions doetry' it assa whene- Congress has clearly delegated autoonly to resolve major policy os. If it hasn't, then Congress must decide the issue. oliticians, the



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"committed to federalism and free markets."

MSPC is now the go-to source for free market policy in our state and region. In 2023, we were called upon to offer testimony a half-dozen times in recent legislative sessions. Our legislative tracker offered citizens updates on new laws and proposals in real time. State legislators across the region responded enthusiastically to our outreach and perspective, as we offered insights that broke with conventional wisdom and provided fresh thinking into ways of advancing freedom and prosperity across the Mountain West. To give just one example, Montana Rep. Nelly Nicol wrote: "I wanted to send a note of thanks for your organization... As a Montana legislator, it's like a breath of fresh air and acknowledgment to continue in my direction to fight for our state as well as effecting legislation around our great state. Again, thank you all for your efforts."



FREE MARKETS FIRST

Idaho Secretary of State Phil McGrane speaks at MSPC's 2023 Christmas Lunch.



MAJOR EVENTS

Over the course of 2023, MSPC orchestrated multiple high-profile events that drew prominent figures including former HUD Secretary Dr. Ben Carson, former Congressman Trey Gowdy and Wall Street Journal columnist Kimberly Strassel to the Mountain West. In combination, these events drew more than 1,500 participants in person, and still larger numbers who watched online.

In addition, we launched *The Woman Panel* – a series that supports and empowers women who believe in the power of freemarket principles and solutions.







EYE ON THE FUTURE

Projects launching in 2024





Free Markets are for Everyone While we are proud of what we have accomplished a relatively short time since our founding in 2022, we know that we have our work cut out for us moving forward.

With a growing influx of new residents from liberal states, the political landscape of the Mountain West is rapidly changing. Meanwhile, too many conservatives in our region act as though center-right majorities are divinely ordained to continue into the indefinite future, allowing complacency to creep in when our region should be setting the pace for policymaking nationwide.

Against this backdrop, your support for MSPC allows us to move with a comprehensive policy agenda to advance freedom and prosperity across the region—including education choice, regulatory reform, and a bold embrace of new technologies that are revolutionizing our economy. MSPC is positioned to lead the charge on this because it brings core strengths to the table that for too long have been in short supply in our region, including:

- **Leadership:** While much of the region's political establishment is consumed with political in-fighting and operates as though conservative majorities will last forever, we are under no such delusions. We recognize the time for action is now, and we must work with a sense of urgency lock in conservative policies that advance freedom and opportunity for generations to come.
- **Expertise:** MSPC's leadership is drawn from some of the nation's foremost center-right policy organizations, bringing decades of experience to bear in understanding and communicating policy solutions that advance freedom and opportunity. In a region that is short on such expertise—in fact, legislatures in states like Idaho do not have fulltime policy staff at all—MSPC is poised to have an out-sized impact.
- **Strategy:** Because MSPC is a permanent organization and does not face the pressure to stand for election every two to four years, we have the independence and the staying power to cast a bold vision for what's possible in the policy arena, and work over multiple cycles to bring it into reality.

MSPC has a winning team, and proven formulas for advancing opportunity and prosperity for all. As we build our organization and raise our profile to meet the needs of a changing region—one that embodies many of the trends that will shape the future of our entire country—we now seek new supporters to join us in our crucial work. For that reason, we invite you to join us at this decisive moment for the Mountain West and hope you will join us in advancing freedom and prosperity across the region for generations to come.



mountainstatespolicy.org

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