



Progressive States Task Forces

Representatives from the following organizations serve on task forces relevant to specific issues and to act as a resource to legislators and local organizations.

ACORN
AFL-CIO
AFSCME
Americans for Health Care
America's Agenda
Apollo Alliance
Center for American Progress
Center for Housing Policy
Center for Policy Alternatives
Citizens for Tax Justice
Community Catalyst
COWS
Economic Policy Institute
Families USA
Federation of State PIRGs
Free Press
Herndon Alliance
Gamaliel Foundation
JR Commons Center
Labor Project on Working Families
Inclusion- CPER
MomsRising
Multi-States Working Families Consortium
National Caucus of Environmental Legislators
National Employment Law Project
National Housing Conference
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center
Northeast Action
People for the American Way
PolicyLink
Public Campaign
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Skyline Public Works
Smart Growth America
State Environmental Leadership Program
UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research
Universal Health Care Action Network (UHCAN)
Vote by Mail Project

Progressive States Board of Directors

Joel Barkin, *Progressive States Network, Executive Director*
Steve Doherty, *Founding Co-Chair*
David Sirota, *Founding Co-Chair*
Wes Boyd, *MoveOn.org*
David Brock, *Media Matters for America*
Asm. Adriano Espaillat, *New York Assembly*
Rep. Garnet Coleman, *Texas State Assembly*
Leo Gerard, *United Steelworkers*
Ellen Golombek, *SEIU*
Lisa Seitz Gruwell, *Skyline Public Works*
Joe Hoeffel, *Former PA Congressman and state legislator*
Steve Kest, *ACORN*
George Lakoff, *Rockridge Institute*
Robert McChesney, *Free Press*
Rep. Hannah Pingree, *Maine House of Representatives*
John Podesta, *Center for American Progress*
Lee Saunders, *AFSCME*
Naomi Walker, *AFL-CIO*
Rep. Neva Walker, *Minnesota State House*
Rep. David Zuckerman, *Vermont State House*

For More Information

For more information on policy options discussed in this program or for help in your states, visit www.progressivestates.org, where we will be adding additional details in coming months. Also feel free to contact:

Nathan Newman
Policy Director at Progressive States Network
(212) 680-3114
nnewman@progressivestates.org



BUILDING A PROGRESSIVE MAJORITY IN THE STATES:

Policy Options for 2008



UPDATED AUGUST 2007

Table of Contents

Building a Progressive Majority in the States: Policy Options for 2008

- Introduction1
- Supporting the Program1
- What Progressives Face2
- The Progressive Opportunity2
- Values: The Need for a Multi-Issue Narrative:3
- Outline of the Policy Program3

Wage Standards and Workplace Freedom5

- Key Wage Standards and Workplace Freedom6
- Recent Developments: Wage Standards and
Workplace Freedom7
- Resources: Wage Standards and Workplace Freedom7

Balancing Work and Family8

- Key Balancing Work and Family Policies:9
- Recent Developments: Balancing Work and Family10
- Resources: Balancing Work and Family10

Health Care for All11

- Key Health Care for All Policies12
- Recent Developments: Health Care for All13
- Resources: Health Care for All13

Smart Growth and Clean Energy14

- Key Smart Growth and Clean Energy Policies15
- Recent Developments: Smart Growth
and Clean Energy16
- Resources: Smart Growth and Clean Energy16

Tax and Budget Reform17

- Key Tax and Budget Reform Policies18
- Recent Developments: Tax and Budget Reform19
- Resources: Tax and Budget Reform19

Clean and Fair Elections20

- Key Clean and Fair Elections Policies21
- Recent Developments: Clean and Fair
Elections Policies22
- Resources: Clean and Fair Elections Policies22

Broadband Buildout and Technology Investments23

- Key Broadband Buildout and Technology
Investments Policies24
- Recent Developments: Broadband Buildout
and Technology Investments25
- Resources: Broadband Buildout and
Technology Investments25

BUILDING A PROGRESSIVE MAJORITY IN THE STATES:

Policy Options for 2008

Last November, we saw voters taking the first steps to repudiate the rightwing ideology and institutions that have long dominated much of the political landscape in our states.

For too long, we have seen rightwing politicians, backed by corporate money and by conservative think tanks, blocking communities from improving wages, impeding expansion of health care, and auctioning off public assets and public contracts to big monied interests.

But now we can build on these progressive victories to move towards a progressive majority in all our states. On issue after issue of concern to working families, there are solid majorities for enacting progressive policies. What we need is a coordinated strategy across states to highlight those issues that can broaden the coalition of progressive voters and reframe the debate about why it matters to working families that progressives hold office in our statehouses.

In 2005, a group of legislators, non-profit leaders and advocates formed the Progressive States Network (PSN) to provide day-to-day support to state legislators and community organizations in each state to help make that happen. This accompanying package of issues is not designed to be an exhaustive set of policies but instead strategically focuses on those that can attract support from potential voters and thereby “wedge” those rightwing politicians whose allegiance to campaign contributors clashes with the desires of many of the voters who put them into office. Progressive States as an organization has committed to providing legislative support to campaigns in states advancing these policies.

The efforts of PSN and the progressive allies we work with in the states are beginning to bear fruit, as we detailed in our recently published *Taking the Lead: A Report on State Legislative Successes in Enacting Progressive Policy*. But these achievements are only the beginning. The need for bold progressive leadership has never been greater as our states confront challenges of stagnant wages, global warming, exploding health care costs, and civic disgust with elections dominated by monied interests. The following package of reforms provides a range of options progressive legislators and allied advocates can use to build an enduring progressive legacy in our states.

Supporting the Program

The policy options in the following pages are meant to be just that: a set of options that can each illustrate the values associated with each set of issues. Some are simple, common-sense reforms while others are more ambitious, comprehensive policies, but all would make concrete improvements in the lives of working families and our communities. Each policy builds on the others to reinforce the progressive message. The idea is that local legislators can promote those options most appropriate for the political environment and needs of their states.

As an organization, Progressive States Network provides progressive legislators with both the technical and messaging support needed to turn these policies into law. Our constant goal is to help legislators by promoting best practices for these issues, providing background research, drafting versions of the policy appropriate to their individual states, and helping them advance related legislation that has already been introduced in their states.

Through partnerships with think tanks, national political partners, and local grassroots organizations, we build support for these state-specific legislative campaigns, while promoting message continuity across states that reinforces the progressive

message nationally. By strengthening communication between legislators and grassroots organizations across different states, Progressive States acts as an information hub so that legislators can keep up-to-date on news from other states, anticipate trends that are coming their way, and educate each other on how to win.

Progressive States also acts as a “war room” to help legislators respond quickly with legislative amendments, provide expert policy testimony, and generally act as surrogate staff members to support passage of legislation. Our aim is to promote campaigns, including innovative online communication strategies, that generate a crescendo of interest that sweeps across multiple states simultaneously and raises progressive issues to a political prominence that redefines state politics.

What Progressives Face

Even with last November’s victories, progressives confront a political landscape shaped by a well-organized rightwing network that has worked for decades to establish political power in the states. In a February 2006 report, *Governing the Nation From the Statehouses: The Rightwing Agenda in the States and How Progressives Can Fight Back*, the Progressive States Network outlined how groups like the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and other allied rightwing groups have hijacked public policy in the states.

Tens of millions of dollars of corporate money have poured into local research think tanks and lobbying organizations to create an “echo chamber” around their issues. This rightwing network of groups has drafted and promoted state legislation across the country that has crippled social service budgets, deregulated industries, cut medical care for the poor, and undermined consumer and worker protections in state after state. At both the federal and state level, they have promoted policies that have wedged progressive groups against each other while cementing a coalition around a rhetoric of tax cuts and rightwing social issues. Progressives have often failed to counter these wedge issues promoted by the corporate-backed conservative movement and de facto ceded what should be progressive voters to the opposition.

A prime goal of the Progressive States Network is to assist progressive state leaders in expanding support among voting groups that should be supporting progressive policies. The opportunities for that outreach are significant, as the Pew Research Center, which has developed a typology of voter beliefs, emphasizes. In its “2005 Political Typology,” Pew divided the population into nine different voting blocs and found that even many voters who sympathize with progressive economic values are voting for politicians with rightwing economic views.

- Among two groups, “Social Conservatives” and “Pro-Government Conservatives”—who make up a majority of the Re-

publican base—over 80% feel “too much power is concentrated in the hands of a few large companies” and a strong majority of both groups support stricter environmental regulation, raising the minimum wage, and guaranteeing health care for all Americans.

- In fact, one small demographic, what Pew calls “Enterprisers” who make up just 9% of the population, are the only group whose members generally oppose raising the minimum wage, the only group which opposes guaranteed health care, the only group that thinks outsourcing is good for the economy, and the only group whose members generally think environmental regulations are not worth the costs.

It is startling to think that this last small voting group, just 9% of the population, in combination with the corporate-backed rightwing apparatus, has been the tail wagging not only national and state politics but driving many policies with which even the majority of the Republican base disagrees.

The Progressive Opportunity

The Progressive States Network believes these numbers highlight an opportunity for progressives to make inroads in all fifty states. Most progressive policies have far more popular support than past voting patterns would indicate.

Some progressives argue that politicians need to “move to the center” and blur the political lines with their opponents, especially on issues like reproductive rights or other social issues. Yet given that a majority of the population supports *Roe v. Wade*—as reflected by all three anti-abortion initiatives being voted down this past November—such an approach is as likely to lose votes from the present progressive base as gain them with new voters. The rising number of young voters are even more progressive on issues like gay rights, so adopting conservative social positions or just remaining silent on them would actually alienate the voters who will determine elections in the future.

And, if anything, the recent historic problem for progressives has not been that its leaders are seen by the population as too ideological but that they are seen as not standing for much of anything. For example, **a 2005 Democracy Corps poll found that only 27% of Americans thought Democratic leaders “know what they stand for”** compared to 55% who see GOP leaders as clearly articulating their positions.

As progressives reverse this perception of empty vision, clearly asserting what they stand for and defining themselves around popular progressive policies—especially the core economic justice issues which are overwhelmingly supported by the public—it leads to two major results:

- First, socially conservative, economically progressive voters

will have a real choice at election time. In recent years, those voters knew where rightwing leaders stood on the social issues they supported, but were often unsure where progressive leaders stood on the economic and environmental issues in which they also believed. Those voters often deliver their votes to the rightwing leaders who take a clear stance on SOMETHING they support. But if progressive leaders clearly stated the policies that those disaffected voters DO support, as the November 2006 election results emphasize, it can lead to electoral gains for progressive candidates.

- Second, campaigns on these popular progressive issues will solidify support among many swing voters and mobilize the base of progressives. Such mobilization is important not only for increasing turnout of those voters but for expanding the volunteers who recruit their neighbors—and gives those activists a message they can use to win over members of their communities to the progressive cause.

In this way, good policy becomes good politics.

Values: The Need for a Multi-Issue Narrative

Still, it's not enough to just highlight a few popular issues; those issues need to be embedded within a narrative and a broader set of values. An issue, no matter how popular, loses much of its political force when discussed in isolation. The political power of any issue is that it expresses the values that connect that issue to peoples' lives and to other issues that also matter to them. In this way, a politician's support or opposition to any issue becomes symbolic of a larger connection to the interests, values and cultural worldview of a voter. Additionally, without that multi-issue narrative, it is far easier for opponents to pit single-issue progressive groups against each other and undermine voter identification with progressive leaders.

Adam Werbach, the dynamic former president of the Sierra Club, has emphasized that, despite general support by the public for environmental policies, those policies have often failed politically because they were not articulated in ways that united them with the concerns of worker advocates, civil rights organizations, womens' groups, and other progressives. But he also emphasizes the success of environmental advocates who frame environmentalism as an investment in new technologies and jobs when they talk to manufacturing workers, who then connect environmental values to the broader value of strengthening our communities.

Similarly, it's not specific issues but rather some progressives' lack of a strong pro-family narrative that alienates many cultural conservatives. The modern economy is hard on families, with both parents often forced to work long hours in a workplace that usually gives them little flexibility to deal with family emergen-

cies. The rightwing will succeed in promoting a narrative that it's abortion and gay rights that endanger the family unless progressives promote the stronger message that promoting a living wage, family leave, and better health care can ease their real burdens. With a strong progressive pro-family narrative in place, any particular cultural issue gets debated on its own merits, not as a symbol of some general "anti-family" bias by progressive leaders.

How this multi-issue narrative is shaped will no doubt differ in each state, but there are core values that progressives share which will help reinforce that message across states. Progressive States' goal is to help legislators build, from these values, a narrative about improving the lives of their constituents. All of our policies start literally from where people live and work to promote a core progressive narrative of **Rewarding Work, Valuing Families, Promoting Justice, Growing the Economy, and Increasing Democracy** in our society. These or appropriate variations can be used to highlight the broad values that tie together specific issues into this multi-issue narrative.

Outline of the Policy Program

Within this framework of values, Progressive States is initially providing legislative support for seven key issue clusters. Although these are obviously not exhaustive of the issues that embody the progressive agenda, the issues detailed in this set of policy options reflect opportunities where progressives can make some of the most serious political inroads in the present environment. Those issues include:

- **Wage Standards and Workplace Freedom:** assuring that American workers receive a decent wage and protecting freedom of speech in the workplace to stand up for their own interests.
- **Balancing Work and Family:** helping create a more family-friendly workplace and society through better family leave policies, paid sick days, support for child care and access to contraception.
- **Health Care for All:** extending health care coverage to all Americans, while helping cut costs for those currently receiving health coverage.
- **Smart Growth and Clean Jobs:** promoting energy independence and job growth through new transit options, smart development to strengthen our communities, and new energy technologies.
- **Tax and Budget Reform:** creating more equity and accountability in state tax systems, economic development subsidies and public contracts.

- ***Fair and Clean Elections:*** eliminating corruption in lobbying, establishing public financing for elections, protecting voting rights, and promoting election reforms like vote by mail to improve the voting process.
- ***Broadband Buildout and Technology Investments:*** promoting universal and affordable Internet broadband, networking energy, health care & education systems, investing locally in technology jobs, and promoting diverse voices in local media.

As will be outlined in more detail in the following pages, each of these issue clusters are not only good policy for working families, but they each expand and deepen the progressive coalition by appealing to disaffected, swing and even many self-described conservative voters who nonetheless care about these issues which express the value of work, family, justice, economic growth and democracy.

Additional details on legislative models and other support materials will be available on the Progressive States website (www.progressivestates.org) in coming months.

We also encourage you to subscribe to our twice weekly e-dispatch which regularly updates state legislators and advocates on policy proposals and victories (as well as defeats) across the country on these and many other progressive issues. Please go to <http://www.progressivestates.org/dispatch/> to sign up.



Wage Standards and Workplace Freedom

Policies to raise wages should be a linchpin of progressive leadership. A higher wage is the best anti-poverty program and a key “pro-family” policy to allow parents to work fewer hours and have more time with their families. It is also one of the best local economic development tools, since workers earning a higher wage will contribute to an increase in local consumer spending. Fundamentally, strong wage policies express the progressive value of the dignity of work and that all labor deserves a reasonable reward. Unfortunately, three decades ago, our national progressive leadership began losing focus on such policies and the resultant collapse of wage standards has undermined support for progressive leaders during that time.

Wages have largely been stagnant in recent decades. For many workers—especially those without a college degree—pay has actually gotten worse, meaning that this generation is the first one in American history which is not doing significantly better than their parents. Symbolic of the problem is the fact that the value of the federal minimum wage, adjusted for inflation, has declined from \$9.12 per hour in 1968 down to just \$5.15 per hour in 2005. Because of weak enforcement, many workers don’t even receive the minimum wage or overtime, and many receive lower pay because of illegal discrimination. Also, as the freedom to form unions has been eroded across the country, fewer workers have been protected by collective bargaining agreements, leading not only to lower wages but less ability to speak out on a range of other abuses in the workplace.

States are increasingly taking action to make wage issues front and center to the progressive message—and receiving strong support from the public. Most states have already raised the minimum wage above the federal level and some are already raising them again. A number of states and well over one hundred local communities now require companies receiving public money to pay a “living wage.” Other state and local governments have cracked down on wage law violators by in-

creasing enforcement of labor laws. States are also doing what they legally can to protect free speech rights in the workplace and help strengthen the right of employees to form labor unions.

Public opinion strongly backs these wage policies. Most polls show support for raising the minimum wage in the 80%+ range and, even under the onslaught of attack ads, voters have supported initiatives to increase the minimum wage by margins as high as 72% in Florida and 76% in Missouri, meaning that roughly two-fifths of Bush voters in those states opposed his position on the minimum wage. Even among small business owners, supposedly the heart of opposition to the minimum wage, a recent Gallup poll showed a plurality of 46% supporting an increase in wage rates.

By embracing the wage issue as a core part of their message, progressives have seen direct political gains. The wage issue has created new alliances for progressives, especially with religious leaders, including Catholic and other denominational officials who have made living wage issues a core part of their social justice teachings. It gives progressives what the Rev. Steven Copley, who led a recent successful minimum wage drive in Arkansas, calls “a moral issue, a faith issue and a family values issue” to rally supporters.

And the wage issue is helping turn out disaffected voters to support the election of progressive officials. A study on Nevada’s 2004 minimum wage initiative detailed how the issue was crucial in helping maintain a Democratic majority in that state’s legislature, becoming a crucial voting issue especially for younger women, new registrants, non-college women, lower-income voters, and independent voters of all stripes.

Key Wage Standards and Workplace Freedom Policies

► Wage Standards

While **raising the minimum wage** is the most basic headline wage standards issue—including **indexing the rate to inflation** so that we never again see another thirty-year decline in its value—there are other campaigns to extend even higher wage standards for other sectors of the economy that:

- **Use Government Contracts to Raise Wage Levels:** State and local governments now purchase over \$400 billion of goods and services from the private sector, so conditioning those purchases on contractors meeting prevailing wage and living wage conditions can have powerful effects in strengthening wage standards throughout the economy.
- **Leverage Economic Development Funds and Leases:** Additionally, attaching living wage requirements to businesses leasing government property, such as airports, or those receiving economic development funds, gives governments leverage over tens of billions of dollars in wages.
- **Create Wage Standards in Specific Industries:** Even where no public money is involved, some cities establish higher wage standards for various employers whose industries can absorb higher wages, such as larger employers (Santa Fe, NM), those in tourist zones (Berkeley, CA), large hotels (Emeryville, CA), and large retail stores (proposed in Chicago). State efforts to require employers to provide health care also in practice raise industry compensation above the minimum.

► Enforcement

Progressives can bring a bit of “law and order” energy to wage and discrimination laws that are on the books but too rarely enforced in many industries through policies to:

- **Increase Penalties for Violations:** To make penalties more than just a cost of doing business, states can create more serious fines for repeat wage violators, expand compensation to employees whose wages are stolen, deny licenses and government contracts to wage and discrimination law violators, and apply criminal sanctions to employers breaking the law.
- **Expand Resources for Enforcement:** Along with providing more money for enforcement departments, states can unleash local governments by assuring them the right to estab-

lish higher wage rates and additional enforcement locally, expand legal services funding, and enact “private attorneys general” statutes to allow worker advocates to bring private enforcement actions.

- **Hold Employers Accountable for “Fly-by-Night” Operations:** To prevent employers from evading labor laws by shifting employees into subcontractors or other sweatshop conditions, states have made businesses liable for subcontractors’ violations, held shareholders of private companies liable for wage debts in bankruptcy court, tightened the definition of “independent contractors,” and better regulated temporary and day labor work.

► Protecting Workplace Speech and Freedom to Form Unions

Protecting employee free speech serves both an enforcement function to encourage employee complaints of illegal employer activity and to embolden employees to act collectively to demand higher wages. Such policies should:

- **Protect Employees from Free Speech Retaliation:** States can enhance protections for workers who bring wage claims against employers, end discrimination against employees for their political views, and ban political indoctrination in mandatory meetings at the workplace. Workers also need greater whistleblower protection against retaliation for revealing potentially illegal actions by their employers that endanger public health or safety.
- **Extend Union Rights to Additional Employees:** States can extend labor rights to classes of employees excluded from federal labor law, including farm workers, domestic workers, public employees, and independent contractors such as many home health aides and day care workers.
- **Increase Free Speech Access to Employer Property:** States and local governments are increasingly reclaiming lost civic space by opening up malls and other retail store areas that have often replaced traditional downtowns. These measures, plus others that give worker advocates more access to employer property, help increase employees’ education about their rights.

Recent Developments: Wage Standards and Workplace Freedom

- **Minimum Wage:** Propelled by ballot victories in fall 2006 and new progressive majorities in a number of states, the momentum for minimum wage victories continued across the country with many more states increasing their minimum wage rates this past year. In fact, even with the federal increase in the minimum wage, at least twelve states will still have higher minimum wage levels than the national one. Vermont's legislature voted to index the minimum wage for tipped workers to inflation, a critical reform to insure that low-wage pay keeps up with the cost of inflation.
- **Living Wage:** While a number of states condition economic development dollars on recipients paying a higher-than-minimum "living wage" to their employees, Maryland this year became the first state to require that any company receiving a government contract pay a living wage, a critical reform to assure that government contractors are competing based on higher quality and efficiency, not just abuse of their workers compared to the public sector.
- **Wage Law Enforcement:** In the area of workers' rights enforcement, Colorado joined other states in increasing financial penalties paid to workers when they are denied their legal wages. Colorado, New Jersey and Minnesota all cracked down on misclassification of workers as independent contractors, with Colorado requiring anyone on a construction site to have workers' comp insurance and New Jersey creating new criminal penalties for intentional misclassification. Also New Jersey and Ohio both launched new programs to crack down on violations of prevailing wage laws among companies doing public works construction.
- **Freedom to Form Unions:** New York and Oregon both expanded the rights of child care workers to form unions, while New Hampshire and Oregon joined a number of other states in approving "majority signup," allowing public employees to join unions when a majority of a workers sign cards requesting it. Delaware, Missouri and Oregon each provided for or expanded collective bargaining rights for their state employees. Both Oregon and Ohio expanded public benefits for private sector workers locked out of their jobs by employers during a labor dispute. While they didn't pass, state chambers in New Hampshire and Oregon approved bills giving workers the right not to attend mandatory meetings on religious, political or union issues.

ON-LINE RESOURCES

Wage Standards

Progressive States, *Beyond the Minimum Wage*
<http://tinyurl.com/3dyvpt>

Department of Labor, *state minimum wage rates*
<http://www.dol.gov/esa/minwage/america.htm>

Economic Policy Institute
<http://tinyurl.com/yowwnm>

Center for American Progress
<http://tinyurl.com/3dry8z>

Let Justice Roll
<http://letjusticeroll.org/>

Brennan Center for Justice
<http://tinyurl.com/2pun7f>

ACORN Living Wage Resource Center
<http://livingwagecampaign.org/>

AFL-CIO Building Trades, *Prevailing Wages*
<http://tinyurl.com/2wtfr>

Good Jobs First
<http://www.goodjobsfirst.org>

Wage Law Enforcement

Progressive States, *Wage Law Violations*
<http://tinyurl.com/23d3rm>

National Employment Law Center
<http://tinyurl.com/2jzhfv>

UC- Berkeley, *Sweatshop Accountability*
<http://tinyurl.com/2ey5gx>

Local Wage Enforcement Organizations
<http://tinyurl.com/yuf2g6>

Workplace Speech and Freedom to Form Unions

Progressive States, *Freedom to Form Unions*
<http://tinyurl.com/2lh8sq>

AFL-CIO
<http://www.aflcio.org/>

American Rights At Work
<http://www.araw.org>

CA Building Trades, *Project Labor Agreements*
<http://tinyurl.com/32a8pm>

SEIU and AFSCME Child Care Workers Sites
http://www.seiu.org/public/child_care/
<http://www.afscme.org/childcare/>



Balancing Work and Family

Helping parents balance the demands of work and family underlines progressive pro-family policies. With the rhetoric of “family values,” the rightwing has convinced large swathes of voters that gay marriage and other hot-button social concerns are endangering the family. Those same corporate conservatives studiously downplay the real stresses on families, especially a workplace that is unforgiving of parents trying to balance the demands of work and home. A core challenge for progressives is to reclaim their image as defenders of the family against the pressures of modern life and work. Providing parents with time to stay home with new children or sick loved ones, supporting decent child care and early education, and providing support for contraception to assist family planning all express a core progressive vision of valuing families and offering real support to them.

The reality for most families is that it usually takes two paychecks to pay the bills, with a majority of women and men with children under five—and an even larger percentage with older children—working outside the home. Despite these pressures on families, the government does remarkably little either to help parents who want to stay home with their children, even when the children are first born, or to help them afford quality child care when both parents need to work. And most workplaces extend little flexibility to parents to deal with the day-to-day challenges of raising kids; most workplaces don’t even allow parents to use sick days to care for a sick child. The workplace typically punishes parents, usually mothers, who take extended leave to care for their children, with fewer promotions and lower paychecks over their careers. And for all that the rightwing talks about preventing abortion, those same conservative politicians often oppose making contraception readily available and fail to extend mothers the extra support they need even if they want to have a child.

States and local governments are taking the lead in promoting policies to make work more family-friendly. Since the federal Family and Medical Leave Act passed over a decade ago, almost all innovative policy to assist families has been coming from the states.

- California and Washington became the first states to enact laws providing paid family leave for employees needing to care for a new child.
- The city of San Francisco in November 2006 became the first jurisdiction to guarantee all employees paid sick days off to care for family members.
- Oklahoma guarantees pre-K for all its children – becoming a state leader in extending guaranteed early education for 4-year olds.
- Dozens of states have contraceptive equity laws that assure contraception is covered by insurance.

Politically, these issues divide rightwing politicians from their culturally conservative base. When California enacted its paid family leave law, surveys found 85% approval—with even 77% of those who identified themselves as political conservatives in support. Polls in the state of Washington found that 74% of voters are in support of paid family leave—with an even higher percentage of support among workers with children under 18. Even an issue like access to contraception divides the leadership of the religious Right from all but the narrowest base of voters: a June 2006 *Wall Street Journal* poll found that 81% of Americans saw access to contraception as important in preventing abortions, 73% said contraception should be available regardless of a person’s ability to pay, and 58% said the “morning after pill” should be readily available at any pharmacy.

What is remarkable about family leave, early education and contraception issues are the broad-based coalitions that support these policies, from medical professionals to worker advocates to PTAs to advocates for the elderly. By highlighting these issues, progressives can force rightwing politicians that use “family values” rhetoric to either assist families by passing such legislation or expose their anti-family rightwing loyalties.

Key Balancing Work and Family Policies:

► Family Leave

States have moved beyond the federal Family and Medical Leave Act to help more parents who need to take extended time off to care for children or ill family members, including:

- **Strengthening Unpaid Leave Laws:** Some states extend family leave rules to smaller workplaces, allow more weeks of leave, and guarantee that leave can be taken in multiple increments.
- **Providing Paid Leave:** To make family leave affordable for families, states provide paid leave for public employees, expand paid disability leave for new mothers, or create a full paid leave program for new parents and for those caring for ill family members.
- **Promoting At-Home Infant Care:** As part of welfare reform, some states have programs that allow low-income, working parents to directly provide care for their newborn or adopted children as an alternative to paid child care.

► Time to Care

States are taking action to help employees gain the flexibility to take care of family needs with policies such as:

- **Paid Sick Days:** A basic reform is protecting time to attend kids' school activities. Where sick days are provided, employees should be allowed to use them to care for a sick child, spouse or parent. More comprehensively, employees should be guaranteed a minimum number of paid sick days each year for sickness and to attend to family needs.
- **Promoting More Flexible Work Options:** Banning or limiting mandatory overtime (while protecting overtime pay for those who need it) and promoting options for part-time work are critical policies for increasing the ability of employees to better care for their families' needs.
- **Prohibiting Discrimination Based on Family Responsibilities:** Non-discrimination statutes, enacted in only a few states, help protect those with family responsibilities from discrimination.

► Child Care, Pre-K and After-School Programs

Both to strengthen investments in childhood education and to ease the burden on working parents, states are increasingly expanding child care, pre-K and after-school education options that:

- **Improve Child Care Options:** For infants and smaller children, state policies should increase funding for child care and encourage employers to provide workplace-based child care.
- **Expand Pre-K:** With studies showing the economic and social returns from early childhood education, states are increasingly expanding pre-K programs for three- and four-year olds with the goal being to make programs universally available to all parents.
- **Expand After-School Programs:** Providing after-school programs expands learning opportunities and strengthens youth supervision in our communities.
- **Create Quality Care and Career Ladders:** At all levels of care, policymakers should strengthen professional development and improve working conditions for caretakers to maximize quality and social returns from childhood investments.

► Access to Contraception

Progressives help parents plan for children when they are best able to support them and prevent the need for abortion by making conception more available through:

- **Contraceptive Equity:** To assure that women are not burdened with inequitable out-of-pocket expenses, insurers should pay for contraception on the same terms as other prescription drugs.
- **Funding Contraception:** States are expanding coverage of contraception and other family planning services through Medicaid programs or through direct funding of community clinics.
- **Emergency Contraception Availability:** Many states now allow pharmacists to prescribe emergency contraception, require them to provide it to any woman with a prescription, and require emergency rooms to inform sexual assault victims of its availability.

Recent Developments: Balancing Work and Family

- **Paid Family Leave:** Washington became the second state to enact a law providing six weeks of family leave paying up to \$250 per week for new parents, following the precedent set by California in 2004 when its paid leave law went into effect. Oregon, New Jersey and New York all debated family leave policies; the Oregon House approved a bill but it was narrowly defeated in the state Senate.
- **Paid Sick Days:** After San Francisco enacted a city-wide paid sick days law last year, family advocates and their allies are now fighting for enactment of statewide versions. The Connecticut Senate approved a paid sick days bill, becoming the first chamber in the nation to do so, but the bill failed to pass the Connecticut House before the session ended. This year, however, Oregon did follow seven other states in at least allowing those workers who have sick day benefits to also use them to care for a sick child or parent.
- **Prohibiting Mandatory Overtime:** In a bow to both family needs and patient safety, New Hampshire this past session followed a number of other states in prohibiting mandatory overtime for nurses and hospital assistants. Rhode Island's legislature approved a similar bill, only to see it vetoed by their governor, while the New York State Assembly banned mandatory overtime for nurses, though the bill stalled in the state Senate.
- **Child Care and Early Education:** More than 39 states now invest in pre-kindergarten programs and more budgets this year increased investments in early education.
- **Contraceptive Equity:** Following an increasing trend in the states, Connecticut, Oregon and Colorado approved laws requiring all hospitals to inform victims of sexual assault of the availability of emergency contraception.

ON-LINE RESOURCES

Family Leave

Progressive States, *Family Leave*

<http://tinyurl.com/3adlmy>

Labor Project on Working Families

<http://tinyurl.com/2pgqbm>

MomsRising

<http://www.momsrising.org>

Equal Opportunity Institute: *Family Leave*

<http://tinyurl.com/2wfyjy>

Institute for Women's Policy Research

<http://tinyurl.com/2byx6z>

Time to Care/Paid Sick Days

Progressive States, *Open Flexible Work*

<http://tinyurl.com/32km7g>

National Partnership for Women & Families

<http://tinyurl.com/2nhg57>

ACORN, *Paid Sick Days Campaign*

<http://www.acorn.org/index.php?id=10838>

9to5, *Paid Sick Days*

<http://www.9to5.org/downloads/booklet.pdf>

Institute for Women's Policy Research, *No Time to Be Sick*

<http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/B242.pdf>

Center for Law and Social Policy, *Paid Sick Days*

http://www.clasp.org/publications/paid_sick_days.pdf

Child Care, Pre-K & AfterSchool Programs

Progressive States, *Child Care*

<http://tinyurl.com/366jv5>

Progressives States, *Pre-School for All*

<http://tinyurl.com/2k9k9a>

National Women's Law Center

<http://tinyurl.com/256k6v>

Urban Institute, *Tax Credits for Child Care*

<http://tinyurl.com/37bemd>

CLASP, *Child Care & Early Education*

<http://www.clasp.org/publications.php?id=3>

NCSL, *Child Care & Early Education*

<http://tinyurl.com/yry7s6>

pre[k]now

<http://www.preknow.org/>

Starting at 3, *State-by-State Pre-K Policies*

http://www.startingat3.org/state_laws/index.html

Access to Contraception

Center for Reproductive Rights

http://www.reproductiverights.org/st_ec.html

Planned Parenthood, *Birth Control and Prevention*

<http://tinyurl.com/28hsgv>

NCSL, *Emergency Contraception Laws*

<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/health/ECleg.htm>

Advocates for Youth, *Effective Sex Education*

<http://tinyurl.com/28c5et>



Health Care for All

Solving the health care crisis—rising costs for everyone and lack of access for tens of millions of Americans—is a top priority for voters and progressive leaders. A February 2007 *New York Times*/CBS News poll found that 64% of adults believe the government should guarantee health insurance for all U.S. residents. While rightwing politicians, supported by pharmaceutical, insurance and other self-interested corporate lobbies have blocked many reasonable reforms in the past, progressive leaders recognize that as they expand access to health care for families they can build the base of support for health care for all of us. In fact, state leaders are enacting innovative proposals that are models for reforming the system and help extend quality, affordable health care to all our states' residents.

The crisis in the health care system is clear. 45 million Americans have no health care insurance and for those that do have insurance, the costs of co-pays, deductibles and other out-of-pocket expenses increase by the year, making health care costs the culprit of nearly half of all personal bankruptcies. And while two-thirds of working families still get their health insurance through their employer, those responsible employers providing health care find it hard to compete in the marketplace with firms that don't. As irresponsible employers dump health care costs onto individuals and state Medicaid programs, the strain threatens to swamp employer, family and social services budgets across the country.

Progressives are taking important steps to extend affordable coverage to all our states' residents. States are making advances from a combination of subsidized coverage to more children of working families, better options for the unemployed and employees without employer-based coverage, and subsidized lower-cost insurance options for individuals, families and small businesses, even as states are discussing more comprehensive reforms. One thing progressives should resist, however, are movements by the rightwing to use the rhetoric of "reform" and "consumer-driven" health care to undercut quality care for those

currently receiving Medicaid or other subsidized health options in their states.

One key step to health care reform is maintaining the employer responsibility to contribute to employee and family health care costs. Under no scenario can individual, family or state budgets replace the current multi-billion dollar employer contribution to health care costs, so states should ensure employers contribute to employee health care. Proposals may vary, but the core principle is to create a level playing field where responsible employers are not forced to drop health care coverage because they face unfair competition from unscrupulous competitors.

Sustainable health care reform needs aggressive costs savings and measures to improve quality of health care. States are beginning to use their regulatory and bargaining power as large consumers of health care to eliminate inefficiencies and drive down excessive costs by pharmaceutical firms, insurance companies and health care providers. As lower health care costs in Canada and Europe demonstrate, a system with more universal coverage creates opportunities to achieve administrative efficiencies and drive down costs as, in part, special interest groups lose the ability to hide profiteering under the cover of hidden cost-shifting in a faulty patchwork system.

As the health care crisis expands, voter support for dramatic action on health care reform only grows. To highlight the degree of support, that same February 2007 poll found that 60% of adults would pay higher taxes to do so. Of note, nearly 80% said it is more important to provide universal access to health insurance than to extent the Bush tax cuts. And among Hispanics, a key emerging swing vote, a June 2005 Democracy Corps poll found that 87% of those voters were more likely to support a candidate promising that "all Americans have access to health care." While challenging in the details, health care reform is one of the most popular political issues for which progressive leaders can fight.

Key Health Care for All Policies

► **Covering All Kids**

Covering all kids, primarily through the federal-state SCHIP program, is a good first step towards achieving health care for all residents. Options for states include:

- **Improving Access to SCHIP:** States are raising income eligibility for SCHIP to 300% of poverty and higher. To further expand the reach of SCHIP programs, some states are allowing higher income families to purchase the coverage at full cost, often a cheaper alternative than private insurance.
- **Ensuring Funds for Kids Care:** A new standard in health care for kids is making such programs entitlements, thereby guaranteeing annual funding, and removing kids from budget fights.
- **Removing Financial Barriers to Participation:** To ensure financial considerations do not limit access to health care, states can lower premiums and co-pays on SCHIP programs.

► **Quality, Affordable Health Care for All Residents**

The overwhelming majority of Americans agree that the government should ensure access to quality health insurance, which can be done through:

- **Expanding Medicaid:** The most direct way for states to expand access to health care is through the Medicaid program because every state dollar invested is matched by federal dollars.
- **Comprehensive Solutions:** Some states are debating broader based plans, from “single payer” systems to more mixed systems of providing subsidies to the uninsured and under-insured to purchase private insurance options. Any public-private programs need tough regulations to assure that public money goes to health care, not insurance company profits or inefficient administrative practices.
- **Health Care Reform Commissions:** An effective step to creating comprehensive reforms are commissions established to study a state’s health care needs and propose reforms ensuring affordable, quality health care for all.

► **Maintaining Employer Responsibility**

To preserve employer contributions to the health care system, states have begun holding employers responsible for health care costs in a number of ways, including:

- **Equitable Payroll-Based Financing:** Payroll-based financing of health care—fees calculated as a percentage of wages—is one way to ensure that costs are proportional to employee means.
- **Employer Pay-or-Play Requirements:** A less comprehensive approach is requiring employers to spend a certain percentage of payroll on health care or pay the difference to the state to help fund expansion programs.
- **Disclosure Laws:** A limited but telling step is collecting and disclosing the names of employers whose workers are forced to use public health care programs like Medicaid, shaming irresponsible employers and giving the public better information in designing health care reforms.

► **Health Care Cost Savings**

To cut waste and free up funds to cover the uninsured, states have identified reforms that increase efficiency, improve quality, and eliminate health care industry profiteering:

- **Prescription Drug Cost Controls:** States can lower costs through bulk purchasing, forming multi-state purchasing pools, regulating abusive drug company marketing, and creating “preferred drug lists” to ensure use of effective yet less expensive medications.
- **Ensuring High Quality:** State Medicaid programs should audit claims and eliminate providers who burden the system with excessive charges or unnecessary care. “Pay for performance” standards can encourage providers to implement health information technology, promote best medical practices, avoid medical errors, and eliminate waste and racial and ethnic disparities in care.
- **Health Insurance Regulations:** States should require that at least 90-cents of every insurance dollar be spent on direct medical care, rather than on profits, inefficient administration or CEO bonuses. Community Rating and Guaranteed Issue regulations prevent insurers from refusing coverage or charging high premiums to people with preexisting medical conditions or a history of medical use.

Recent Developments: Health Care for All

- **Covering All Kids:** At least 14 states have succeeded in raising eligibility for SCHIP to 300% of poverty or higher, with New York the highest at 400% of poverty. Washington made kids coverage an entitlement to 250% of poverty and Hawaii eliminated premiums in its SCHIP program this year.
- **Quality Affordable Health Care for All:** Following Maine, Vermont and Massachusetts, comprehensive reforms are making headway in Oregon, California, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Wisconsin. Commissions or task forces in at least Colorado, New Mexico, Kansas, Iowa, and New York were created in 2006 and 2007 to shape the health care for all debate in those states in 2008 and 2009. Proposals in Wisconsin and Illinois would limit premiums, or payroll deducted contributions to health care, to a percentage of a participant's income, ensuring affordability by tying expenses directly to a family's resources and ability to pay.
- **Employer Responsibility:** Massachusetts and Vermont in 2006 enacted employer pay-or-play requirements. Although small, these reforms allowed other states to consider more robust requirements, including a 7.5% of payroll requirement being moved in the California legislature. Pennsylvania is considering a similar but smaller requirement. A proposal in Wisconsin would replace all premiums with payroll contributions from employers and employees and individuals not eligible for public programs. Contributions would be calculated as a percentage of wages, ensuring that all employers participate within their means and without conflicting with federal laws, like ERISA.
- **Health Care Cost Savings:** Vermont and Maine enacted major crackdowns on the exploitive marketing practices of Rx manufacturers, tactics which emphasize "glamour" drugs over more effective and often cheaper medications. They have also, along with Iowa, enacted tough regulations of prescription benefit managers and their negotiations with Rx manufacturers. Colorado will no longer allow insurance companies to include health status as a factor when setting premium rates for small business health plans. Insurers will no longer be able to set higher premiums for employees with poor health status.

ON-LINE RESOURCES

Covering All Kids

Progressive States, 2007 May Be Year of the Child
<http://tinyurl.com/ywl4ww>

Progressive States, Illinois: Covering All Kids
<http://tinyurl.com/2b4bes>

Families USA, Medicaid & SCHIP Action Center
<http://tinyurl.com/you8gob>

Georgetown University, Children's Health Coverage
<http://tinyurl.com/yq7g4g>

Quality Affordable Health Care for All

Universal Health Care Action Network
<http://tinyurl.com/ysm3yf>

Herndon Alliance
<http://tinyurl.com/2ezupy>

Community Catalyst
<http://tinyurl.com/25kgjs>

Kaiser Family Foundation, State Health Facts
<http://www.statehealthcarefacts.org>

The Opportunity Agenda, Health Equity
<http://tinyurl.com/2gju2>

Americans for Health Care
<http://www.americansforhealthcare.org/>

AFSCME, Health Care
<http://www.afscme.org/issues/74.cfm>

Employer Health Care Responsibility

Progressive States, A Fair Share from Employers
<http://tinyurl.com/2d8as9>

UC Berkeley Labor Center, Declining Job-Based Health Coverage
<http://tinyurl.com/28pk96>

AFL-CIO, Fair Share Health Care
<http://tinyurl.com/you2x4y>

Health Care Cost Savings

Progressive States, Wringing Costs Out of the Health Care System
<http://tinyurl.com/26q2pt>

Progressive States, Reining in Prescription Drug Costs
<http://tinyurl.com/yrvn9b>

Commonwealth Fund, Quality Improvement and Efficiency
<http://tinyurl.com/yrvn9b>

Center for Health Care Strategies, Pay-for-Performance in Medicaid
<http://tinyurl.com/yp5k6d>

National Legislative Association on Prescription Drug Prices
<http://www.nlarx.com>

Prescription Policy Choices
<http://www.policychoices.org>

The Opportunity Agenda, Health Equity
<http://tinyurl.com/2gju>



Smart Growth and Clean Energy

A cornerstone of progressive policy should be a program to create jobs based on clean energy and to promote smart growth in our communities. Rising gas prices, fears of increasing involvement in unstable Middle East politics, and a public desire to protect the environment all reinforce the appeal of an energy independence policy based on alternative energy sources, energy efficiency and decreasing wasteful sprawl through better transit and housing development policies. Investing in these strategies will not only make America safer and more secure, it will create hundreds of thousands of good quality jobs in communities across the country.

Wasteful energy and development policies have created an environmentally destructive cycle of urban sprawl, long commutes and the fragmentation of community life. Over the last few decades, rightwing activists promoted the myth that a strong environment and good jobs were incompatible-- a strategic tool to pit key progressive constituencies against each other. The result of this divisive strategy was the undermining of both wage standards and environmental planning and the racial and economic segregation between emerging exurbs and older urban communities. But new progressive alliances are beginning to promote an alternative vision of uniting our communities around a vision of smart growth and clean jobs, including access to affordable housing that allows people to live close to where they work.

By encouraging energy independence, smart growth and clean jobs policies not only protect the environment and our national security, but are tremendous job creators for our communities. It makes sense to voters that, instead of shipping wealth overseas to foreign oil producers, the same money could be better spent creating jobs at home. Polling by the Center for American Progress showed that 79% of the public believe that shifting to new, alternative energy production will help America's economy and create jobs. The job creation potential of shifting away from foreign oil sources includes research,

manufacturing, and maintenance jobs in alternative domestic energy industries, such as wind, solar, and biofuels; new construction jobs as we rehab buildings for energy efficiency; new work in better transit systems; and new jobs in manufacturing and services industries reengineered for energy efficiency.

Smart growth and clean jobs policies are already serving to create broad-based coalitions and unite different communities. Unions and environmentalists conflicted in the past have signed up together in initiatives like the Apollo Alliance around these issues. Fishermen and hunters in states like Montana lined up with conservationists against rightwing property rights activists to defend outdoor areas and expand access to streams and open space. Housing advocates are starting to team up with smart growth specialists to address the environmental damage caused by a lack of affordable housing. And inner city parents fighting to replace dirty buses that cause asthma in their kids are increasingly allied with suburban voters campaigning to restrain sprawl and create better suburban transit options.

Politically, these programs are wildly popular with voters and help progressives reach many of the swing voters most up for grabs politically. Polling by the Apollo Alliance shows over 70% of Americans support a drastic increase in government spending on renewable energy and other programs in order to move towards energy independence. 87% of the public see policies to invest in alternative energy sources as a good way to reduce global warming. Moreover, people are willing to pay more for renewable energy: 75% of people polled are willing to pay more for electricity if it were generated by renewable energy sources. And swing voters are more excited about such policies than any other demographic group. The same exurban districts that had traditionally elected rightwing legislators have lately been voting in local referendum to raise taxes to finance smart growth initiatives and increasingly electing more progressive leaders to deal with transit and sprawl problems.

Key Smart Growth and Clean Jobs Policies

► Smart Growth Development

States are taking leadership in smarter development to improve community life, cut energy use, and preserve remaining rural and unspoiled areas with policies that:

- **Promote Better Local Planning:** States are increasingly requiring local governments to develop plans that encourage high-density, contiguous development, promote agricultural, forest and wildlife preservation, and that create incentives to use private undeveloped areas for recreational use.
- **Encourage Transit-Oriented Development:** Development funds should encourage residential, industrial and commercial development near transit hubs and in existing urban areas and first-ring suburbs rather than greenfields.
- **Create Affordable Housing:** Since exurban sprawl is often driven by high housing costs in metropolitan centers, tools like inclusionary zoning, brownfields restoration, and reclaiming vacant properties create more affordable infill development in urban and inner ring suburban areas.
- **Incorporate Broadband Deployment into Planning:** Encourage public investment and ownership of municipal broadband networks to reinforce transit and housing development planning.

► Fuel-Efficient Transportation

Cars are a root cause of the U.S. dependence on foreign oil, so states have taken leadership in policies to cut energy use in our transit systems, including policies to:

- **Improve Transit Options:** States can increase job access and transportation choice by targeting federal and state transportation dollars to create effective regional transit networks such as regional high-speed rail, dedicated bus lanes, local rail transit, better bus routes, and bicycle paths.
- **Promote Low Emission, Fuel-Efficient Cars:** States can help create new markets for fuel efficient vehicles by upgrading state-owned fleets, providing incentives to use hybrid and more efficient cars, implementing a gas tax, and developing a statewide infrastructure for alternative vehicle refueling.
- **Fix Transit Infrastructure:** By prioritizing the repair of existing infrastructure before new highway construction, states lower motorist repair and injury costs and speed transit in existing areas.

► Green Buildings

Energy use by buildings outstrips even energy consumed in transit, so states are increasingly encouraging more energy-efficient building design policies such as:

- **Energy-Efficient Public Buildings:** By mandating green building standards for all public and publicly-financed buildings, states can save both energy and money.
- **Tax Incentives and Revised Building Codes:** Incentives for retrofits to manufacturing plants and updates to state building codes can decrease future energy use in private construction.
- **Appliance Efficiency Standards:** States can drive production of a new generation of household and manufacturing goods by applying tighter appliance efficiency standards to a broader range of products than is currently covered by federal standards.
- **“Smart” Buildings:** Incentives should encourage use of technology to monitor and conserve energy use to better coordinate energy grid demands and prevent unstable fluctuations in energy demand.

► Energy Supply Alternatives

Policy innovations to diversify energy sources and link clean energy and jobs include:

- **Sun, Wind and Bio-Based Power:** States have helped create markets for renewable energy through renewable portfolio standards for energy producers, tighter environmental standards, and tax credit incentives for renewable energy production.
- **Clean Energy Funding:** Through public bonds, pension funds, state-managed investment pools and leveraging federal dollars, states can direct investment dollars into alternative energy production.
- **Promoting Utility Decoupling:** Decoupling breaks the link between sales and revenues in order to eliminate utilities’ incentive to increase sales of electricity to raise their profits.
- **Upgrade Energy Infrastructure:** Make existing power plants as clean as possible, and discourage plants using older, dirtier technology. Adopt interconnection and net metering standards to encourage renewable energy production by a diverse range of in-state producers.

Recent Developments: Smart Growth and Clean Energy

- **Climate Change:** Eighteen states have created Climate Change Commissions or Advisory Groups that look at the impact and costs of climate change and help create state specific climate change strategies. Along with the commissions, states like New Jersey and Washington passed bills to decrease greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 emission levels by 2020.
- **Smart Growth:** California approved almost \$3 billion in bonds to fund new and existing housing and development programs with provisions to encouraging transit-oriented development.
- **Fuel Efficient Transportation:** Maryland this year adopted California emissions standards for cars. California voters last fall approved a proposition that would allow the state to sell \$19.9 billion in general obligation bonds in order to fund state and local transportation improvement projects with the majority of the funds going to congestion reduction and road repair, part of the “fix-it first” idea. Washington created a comprehensive program to develop a statewide transportation development system that, among other issues, looks to decrease per capita vehicle miles traveled.
- **Green Buildings:** This session, Connecticut and South Carolina imposed new requirements that state buildings meet new energy efficiency standards. Nevada amended a previously enacted private sector incentives for green building which had overly generous payments to developers. Pointing to future trends that states could adopt, both Washington, D.C. and the city of Boston amended private sector building codes to flatly require that all new construction meet green energy standards. More states also imposed efficiency standards for appliances and other home products to promote energy savings.
- **Energy Supply Alternatives:** Without doubt, Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS), which require that a certain percentage of electricity purchased by utilities comes from renewable sources, have become a leading tool in encouraging renewable energy development and use. Twenty-four states, plus the District of Columbia, now have a mandatory RPS.

ON-LINE RESOURCES

Smart Growth and Affordable Housing

Progressive States, *Affordable Housing as Smart Growth*
<http://www.progressivestates.org/content/556/affordable-housing-as-smart-growth>

Smart Growth America
<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/>

American Planning Association
<http://tinyurl.com/2nblfx>

PolicyLink, *Affordable Housing*
<http://tinyurl.com/3c7qmx>

Good Jobs First, *Transit-Oriented Development*
<http://www.goodjobsfirst.org/pdf/makingtheconnection.pdf>

APTA: *Transit-Oriented Development*
<http://tinyurl.com/2oukh9>

Fuel-Efficient Transportation

State PIRGS, *Transportation*
<http://www.uspirg.org/issues/transportation>

Surface Transportation Policy Project
<http://tinyurl.com/3649pn>

American Public Transportation Association
http://www.apta.com/research/info/online/ben_overview.cfm

Green Buildings and Energy Efficiency

Progressive States Network, *Green Building*
<http://tinyurl.com/36vlfq>

Alliance to Save Energy: *Energy Efficiency Index*
<http://www.ase.org/content/article/detail/2356>

U.S. Green Building Council
<http://www.usgbc.org/>

Costs and Financial Benefits of Green Buildings
<http://tinyurl.com/24ro3a>

Energy Supply Alternatives

Progressive States, *Promoting Renewable Energy*
<http://tinyurl.com/35sbym>

Apollo Alliance: *The Ten-Point Plan*
<http://tinyurl.com/7xcpk>

Environmental and Energy Study Institute
<http://tinyurl.com/yp7v9h>

State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency
<http://www.dsireusa.org/>

Pew Center, *Global Climate Change*
<http://tinyurl.com/38aesr>

General Resources

National Caucus of Environmental Legislators
www.ncel.net



Tax and Budget Reform

In a debate too often dominated by rightwing tax cut rhetoric, there is a real opening for progressives to demand a fairer, more accountable tax and budget system. State residents are frustrated by governments that they believe tax low- and middle-income residents too much and upper-income people and corporations too little. Hidden economic giveaways to companies receiving tax breaks and government contracts only add to voter distrust that state budgets serve those with money, not the average taxpayer. In response, a range of reforms at the state level are showing the way to creating more transparent tax and budget decisions, transparency that can strengthen voter trust that their tax money will actually go towards the important public services that they do support.

A core goal of progressives has to be tax reform that eases the burden on working families while demanding that the wealthy and corporations pay their fair share. A recent Gallup poll showed that 67% of Americans think upper-income people and corporations are paying “too little” in taxes, while almost no one says that about middle-income or lower-income Americans. This view is a pretty fair complaint by voters, since the wealthy and corporations pay a lower percentage of their income in state and local taxes than do working families. Tax reforms that redistribute the tax burden away from working families are a key part of creating broader political support for new funding for social programs and public investments.

A prime strategy should be promoting truth in budget reforms that track what the tax burden is for different income groups, the extent of corporate loopholes and other tax giveaways, the hidden deals made when contracting out public services, and which companies receive state economic development money and government contracts. Such reforms give the public the tools for a more robust understanding of what really goes on with state money. And once special deals for corporate interests are exposed, it becomes easier to enact reforms that save taxpayers

money and frees up resources for other needed state programs.

More transparency will highlight that tens of billions of dollars each year are lost to these corporate tax loopholes and subsidies that deliver little in return. One of the grossest signs of the problem is that Wal-Mart has managed to squeeze over \$1 billion in government subsidies for opening stores the company was planning to build anyways. Voters clearly are repelled by these corporate deals and loopholes. According to a Center for American Progress poll, the public overwhelmingly (77% to 20%) supports reforms to increase corporate taxes and “close loopholes used by companies to avoid taxes.” Progressives need to establish clear policies to eliminate such wasteful use of taxpayer dollars.

The other side of budget malfeasance is that insider deals often hand fat public contracts to politically connected corporations. All across the country, “pay to play” corruption has led to indictments of public officials selling off government to the highest bidder. And the cost is not only the public trust, but poorly delivered public services, fraud, and the undermining of state economies as companies pay poverty wages and even offshore jobs overseas. Policies that create accountable standards for government contracts therefore prevent corruption and help guarantee that public money is used to promote broader public policy goals.

Key Tax and Budget Reform Policies

► Tax and Budget Transparency

Greater sunshine on tax and budget policies is the first step to a fairer tax system, better public services and the end to special interest corporate deals. Options include:

- **Disclose Who Pays for Taxes:** The first step is a legal requirement, already enacted in a few states, for a tax analysis that measures the impact of all taxes on residents at different income levels.
- **Review Tax Expenditures:** Tax expenditure budgets help leaders evaluate the costs of individual and corporate loopholes cost and whether they are effective in promoting public policy goals.
- **Document All Contracts:** No states fully track which companies receive government contracts, so legislation should require public disclosure of all contracts, what percentage of agency budgets go to contractors, and whether contracted services are delivered in a cost-effective way.
- **Disclose Economic Development Deals:** In addition to budgetary disclosure, the subsidies offered in individual development deals to companies should be publicly disclosed, including electronically on the web, to allow better oversight of their value to taxpayers.

► Making Taxes More Progressive

In order to reform income, corporate, sales and excise taxes and lessen the burden on working families, state leaders can:

- **Promote Fair Income and Estate Taxes:** Creating earned income tax credits and other measures to remove low-wage workers from the income tax rolls, along with promoting high-income tax brackets and estate taxes, can offset the regressive tax burden of sales and other taxes on working families.
- **Reform Property Taxes:** A number of states have enacted ‘circuit breakers’ to limit property taxes to a percentage of income and limited the burden on cash-poor homeowners through other policies.
- **Close Corporate Loopholes:** States are cracking down on corporate tax shelters, including using “combined reporting” to prevent manipulation of reporting by corporate subsidiaries.
- **Stop Rightwing Tax Campaigns:** A top priority has to be blocking tax limitation constitutional initiatives designed to

put budget decisions in a straightjacket and pit different social needs against each other in an induced funding crisis.

► Reforming Government Contracts

The scramble for government contracts often corrupts government and its agencies, so states can take action to assure integrity in the contracting process and guarantee that public contracts strengthen their states’ economies through policies that:

- **Force Contractors to Prove Privatization is Cost-Effective:** The best approaches are those like in Massachusetts which prohibits private contracting of government services unless private companies prove they can perform those functions more efficiently than government workers -- an automatic check on corruption that studies have found saves states millions of dollars.
- **Tighten Contracting Standards:** Where private companies do perform public functions, the tighter the standards for companies bidding on contracts—including requiring decent wages, a record of obeying relevant labor and fraud laws, and a ban on campaign contributions by contractors—the less likely incompetent or corrupt companies will get public money.

► Fixing Failed Tax Subsidies

With hundreds of billions handed out in corporate tax subsidies and development deals, states can better target money by passing legislation to:

- **Sunset Tax Expenditures:** One comprehensive solution is to automatically sunset all tax subsidies every few years unless they are affirmatively renewed by the legislature.
- **Require Job Quality Standards and Other Reforms for Subsidy Recipients:** States are increasingly demanding that subsidy recipients pay a living wage, agree to binding “clawback” commitments to create jobs, and promote environmentally smart job location decisions.
- **Stop Tax Subsidy Bidding Wars:** States are beginning to promote legislation and compacts to prevent subsidy bidding wars that enrich multinationals at the expense of taxpayers.

Recent Developments: Tax and Budget Reform

- **Sunshine on Tax and Budget Policies:** Creating a national model, Oklahoma this year enacted the “Taxpayer Transparency Act”, a law which requires the state to publish on the web virtually all state expenditures, state contracts, tax credits and incentive payments to businesses.
- **Creating a Fairer Tax System:** New Mexico became the latest state to create a state version of the EITC, while Iowa, Kansas, and Illinois expanded payments under their EITC systems, and New Jersey expanded eligibility for theirs. Helping knock low-income families off the tax rolls, Arkansas, Virginia, Hawaii and South Carolina all cut income taxes for those in the lowest brackets.
- **Property and Income Tax Reform:** A number of states enacted property tax cuts this year, although many were poorly targeted, handing out large benefits to rich property owners. The Minnesota legislature approved a model tax reform plan that would have cut property taxes for 90% of property owners and would have been paid for this by increased taxes on the wealthiest in the state. Unfortunately, it was vetoed by their governor,
- **Closing Corporate Loopholes:** In the wake of revelations of abuse of real estate subsidiaries by companies like Wal-Mart, twenty states, most recently West Virginia and New York, have enacted “combined reporting” rules to force companies to list combined profits from multiple subsidiaries.
- **Fixing Tax Subsidies:** In this year’s session, Arizona enacted legislation to end destructive tax competition by eliminating the practice of communities giving huge tax breaks to retail businesses for locating within their municipalities. In the Northeast, discussions have begun on creating a compact to stop tax subsidy bidding wars between states in the region.
- **Reforming Government Contracts:** Following states like Massachusetts that have tightened contracting standards, Connecticut has been debating major contracting reforms to weed out companies that violate the law and to prevent contracting out when public workers can do the work more effectively.

ON-LINE RESOURCES

Tax and Budget Transparency

Progressive States, Disclosing Corporate Tax Dodgers
<http://tinyurl.com/38hntm>

Center on Budget Policy & Priorities, Corporate Tax Disclosure
<http://www.cbpp.org/2-13-07sfp.htm>

AFSCME, Tax Expenditure Budgets
<http://tinyurl.com/35mh7g>

Good Jobs First, Company-Specific Subsidy Disclosure
<http://tinyurl.com/2v5goo>

Citizens for Tax Justice, Corporate Tax Avoidance
<http://www.ctj.org/html/corp0205.htm>

Making Taxes More Progressive

Progressive States, Raising Revenue Through Fair Taxes
<http://tinyurl.com/2f7rsn>

ITEP, Guide to Fair State and Local Taxes
<http://www.itepnet.org/guide.htm>

ITEP, Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis
<http://www.itepnet.org/whopays.htm>

Reforming Government Contracts

Progressive States Network, Stopping Privatization Profiteering
<http://tinyurl.com/2k8b6n>

Progressive States, Ending “Pay to Play” on Government Contracts
<http://tinyurl.com/yt8eyh>

AFSCME, Responsible Contracting
<http://www.afscme.org/private/tools05.htm>

Public Citizen, Pay-to-Play and State Governments
<http://tinyurl.com/l5pta>

AFSCME Privatization Update
<http://www.afscmeinfocenter.org/privatizationupdate/>

Fixing Failed Tax Subsidies

Progressive States, Reforming Failed Tax Subsidies
<http://tinyurl.com/yvk576>

Good Jobs First
<http://www.goodjobsfirst.org/>

Center for Budget Policy Priorities
<http://www.cbpp.org/state/index.html>

AFSCME, Truth in Spending Resources
<http://tinyurl.com/yo27lf>

IETP, Tax Expenditures: Spending By Another Name
<http://www.itepnet.org/pb4exp.pdf>



Clean and Fair Elections

Election reform and eliminating the corruption of money in politics is necessary both to achieve progressive goals and to highlight progressive leaders as reformers of a system with which voters are disgusted. In a post-Bush v. Gore climate of outrage over election abuses where corporate “pay to play” lobbying deals are constantly in the news, there is an opportunity to push forward reforms that guarantee voting rights and promote elections where voter support, not corporate money, determines the election outcome.

At the core of many voters’ frustrations with government is the sense that, too often, politics is for sale. Across the country, 38,000 high-priced lobbyists offering “gifts” to lawmakers swarm state legislatures as corporate campaign contributions grease the wheels and public policy is auctioned to the highest corporate bidder. And for selected legislators, there is the “revolving door” jackpot of a cushy lobbying job when they leave office after serving the industry’s interests. Yet despite this tide of money, a number of progressive state leaders are gaining prominence by demanding reforms.

Public outrage over lobbying corruption will easily die out if progressives don’t address the fundamental task of ending corporate dominance of legislatures and elections and promoting clean elections. Restricting gifts by lobbyists, enforcing full disclosure of lobbying activities, and ending the revolving door between government and corporate lobbies are a good place to start. Ultimately, progressives need to demand public financing of elections to cut out the power of monied interests in our politics and thereby stake out clear differences on voting reform against rightwing opponents. The success of “clean money” policies in Arizona, hardly considered a liberal state, emphasizes the potentially broad appeal of such reforms.

As attempts by the right wing to disenfranchise voters become more sophisticated, progressives must work to ensure that elections are fair and instill confidence by protecting voting rights. The rightwing is cynically seeking to use “voter reform” rhetoric to undermine voting rights for poor and minority communities. Progressives need to challenge these restrictive registration and “voter ID” laws that encourage the intimidation of voters and monitor often shoddy implementation of voter databases—struggles that will determine future legislative battles by determining whose voices will be heard at the ballot box. And progressives can champion redemption for those ex-felons who have served their time by restoring their voting rights. To address blatant attempts to disenfranchise voters, progressives should introduce deceptive practices legislation that aims to criminalize voter intimidation.

Progressives also need to become leading voices in demanding fundamental changes in election procedures to make them simpler and ensure access for all voters. Broad-based reforms such as voting-by-mail, as successfully implemented in Oregon and other jurisdictions, and election-day registration can cut through these disenfranchisement strategies and assure that everyone qualified to vote can do so without fear of intimidation.

Public opinion is strongly on the side of progressive leaders who fight to end the corrupting influence of money in politics and stand up for voting rights. These positions tap the most basic American values of promoting democracy. In Connecticut, a 2005 Zogby poll showed 76% of the public supported public financing of elections in that state, while in Arizona, a local KAET poll showed 66% support for that state’s clean elections system. More generally reflecting American’s profound belief in voting rights, 80% of the public supports restoring the right to vote to ex-felons who are not currently in prison. Fundamentally, championing fair and clean elections gives progressives a strong political advantage in the public debate.

Key Clean and Fair Elections Policies

► Lobbying Reform

While the problem of lobbyist influence is severe, many state governments have been taking steps to improve the situation by policies that:

- **Enforce Disclosure:** The best practices include monthly electronic filings, requiring lobbyists and their employees to report their compensation, independent auditing authorities, and statutory reviews and penalties for late filings of disclosure forms.
- **Ban Gifts:** A number of states have tried to end the most visible sleaze by banning gifts completely.
- **End the Revolving Door:** Addressing one of the most insidious payoffs to legislators and government officials, six states have imposed a two-year moratorium before former legislators or other government officials can become lobbyists.

► Clean Elections

Fundamentally, the only serious way to end the general corruption of politics by money is to stop allowing corporate interests to fund our elections, including policies to:

- **Ban “Pay to Play” Campaign Contributions:** Responding to the corruption of government contracting systems, a number of states have passed laws that bar companies that bid on contracts from making campaign contributions to government officials.
- **Enact Public Financing:** There are variations on public financing of elections, but the most popular currently being promoted requires any candidate to collect a certain number of \$5 contributions to establish the seriousness of his or her candidacy, after which the candidate receives a set amount of public financing on the condition that they accept no additional outside campaign contributions. Candidates outspent by privately financed opponents are usually entitled to a limited amount of matching funds.

► Election Process Reforms

Many of the problems facing voters would be eliminated through simplified voting systems, including:

- **Election Day Registration:** In order to encourage maximum participation, a number of states allow people to combine the process of registration and voting on the same day.
- **Early Voting:** States that give citizens the opportunity to vote in the weeks leading up to election day have seen increased turnout and helped voters avoid burdensome long lines at the polls.
- **Vote by Mail:** “No excuses” permanent absentee voting and vote by mail systems encourages greater participation, cuts the costs of conducting elections, and resolves many voting rights issues.
- **National Popular Vote Reform:** States are moving to create a multi-state compact to elect the President by the national popular vote.
- **Verified Paper Ballots:** Requiring electronic voting machines to produce a voter-verified paper ballot ensures that each vote is being counted correctly.

► Voting Rights

The core progressive principle should be that every American should have the right to vote without intimidation or harassment, guaranteed by:

- **Opposing Restrictive ID Laws:** Progressives should block overly restrictive voter identification requirements that do nothing to address the real types of election fraud that occur, yet threaten the rights of eligible voters.
- **Fair HAVA Implementation:** Progressives must assure that the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) does not lead to voters being wrongly purged from state voting databases; when voters are forced to cast a provisional ballot, their vote should be counted in any race for which they are eligible to vote.
- **Enacting Deceptive Practices Acts:** Individuals who use deception or intimidation to deter voting should be subject to serious fines, criminal penalties and civil actions by aggrieved voters.
- **Restoring Voting Rights to Ex-Felons:** Most states restore the vote after a person’s sentence is finished, some when they are released from prison, and a few never take away voting rights.

Recent Developments: Clean and Fair Elections Policies

- **Lobbying and Ethics Reforms:** Following a burst of ethics legislation in 2006, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Iowa, Maine, New York, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Wisconsin all passed new ethics or lobbying rules this year.
- **Clean elections:** Public financing of elections has helped decrease the power of big money in states like Maine and Arizona that have implemented it. North Carolina's adoption of clean elections for judicial elections resulted in diversifying successful candidates. Connecticut in 2005 also adopted clean elections following the worst ethics scandal in the state's history and is moving forward on implementing it for 2008. New Jersey is in the midst of its second pilot program on clean elections and recently expanded the program.
- **Election Process Reforms:** Election Day Registration was adopted this past year in Iowa, bringing to eight the number of states that allow voters to register and vote on the same day. North Carolina adopted a version of EDR that will allow voters to register and vote on the same day during the early voting period. Colorado recently enacted a law allowing people to register as permanent mail-in voters, easing the voting process, and like EDR, recognizing that voting is a right not a privilege and should be encouraged and made as accessible as possible. Maryland became the first state to enact National Popular Vote. Over thirty states have introduced National Popular Vote with twelve of them passing it through at least one chamber.
- **Voting Rights:** Along the same lines, the move to restore voting rights to ex-felons gained a huge boost this year when Florida Republican Governor Charlie Crist enacted a plan to extend voting rights to ex-felons. The move could allow over 500,000 new eligible voters. In Rhode Island, voting rights for ex-felons were restored through a ballot initiative. The statistics that accompany the move to restore voting rights to ex-felons clearly show that not only is there a large population of ex-felons that are not allowed to vote, but the prohibition is disproportionately affecting communities of color. Through re-enfranchisement, the inequity in voting rights can begin to be dismantled.

ON-LINE RESOURCES

Lobbying and Ethics Reform

Progressive States, *Cleaning Up Corruption in the Statehouses*
<http://tinyurl.com/yshv7z>

Public Integrity Project, *Hired Guns Project*
<http://www.publicintegrity.org/hiredguns/>

National Conference of State Legislators:
Center for Ethics in Government
<http://tinyurl.com/3dsclp>

Clean Elections

Progressive States, *Clean Elections: Good Politics*
<http://tinyurl.com/2sqahj>

Public Campaign, *Clean Money and Clean Elections*
<http://www.publiccampaign.org/>

Common Cause, *Clean Elections*
<http://tinyurl.com/lb76d>

Arizona Clean Elections Institute, Inc.
<http://www.azclean.org/>

State PIRGs: *Democracy Program*
<http://uspirg.org/money-politics>

Election Process Reform

Progressive States Network, *Election Day Registration*
<http://tinyurl.com/2jyep9>

Progressive States, *Voting by Mail*
<http://tinyurl.com/z5uyx>

Demos, *Voters Win with Election Day Registration*
www.demos.org/pubs/voters_win_web.pdf

The Vote by Mail Project
<http://votebymailproject.org/whyvotebymail.html>

National Popular Vote
<http://www.nationalpopularvote.com/>

FairVote
<http://www.fairvote.org>

Voting Rights

Progressive States, *Cleaning Up Election Day Disasters*
<http://tinyurl.com/2ht4wz>

Demos, *Voter Identification: A Threat to Election Integrity*
<http://www.demos.org/page337.cfm>

Right to Vote:
The Impact of Rhode Island's Felon Disenfranchisement
<http://tinyurl.com/2kw35s>

Project Vote, *NVRA Implementation Project*
<http://tinyurl.com/23dbre>

ACLU, *Felon Enfranchisement*
<http://tinyurl.com/29r7wp>



Broadband Buildout and Technology Investments

Why High-Speed Internet Broadband Matters: In a wired world, communities that are networked with broadband are more likely to attract the jobs and industries that can build a 21st century economy. A 2001 Brookings Institution study estimated the widespread adoption of basic broadband could add \$500 billion to the U.S. economy and create 1.2 million new jobs per year—disproportionately in the communities that have strong broadband deployment. State leaders increasingly see universal broadband deployment as a key component of increasing local democratic participation, promoting local economic growth, creating “smart” communities that are healthier and more energy efficient, and closing the widening gap in economic opportunity.

The Need for Action: Unfortunately, where progressive U.S. leaders in the past brought the world the Internet, the broadband ranking of the U.S. has dropped from 4th in the world in 2000 down to 16th in the world in 2006, with Japan, South Korea and most of Europe having broader broadband deployment, higher speeds and lower prices. Unfortunately, the gaps in US broadband access also reflect existing racial and socio-economic gaps, reinforcing a digital divide for communities of color and the poor. State leaders aren’t waiting for the federal government to act and are taking leadership on broadband deployment. Some states, unfortunately, under the influence of big money industry lobbying campaigns, are undermining local efforts at municipally-owned or regulated broadband systems, but others are mapping where broadband access is needed, expanding funding for broadband in their states, setting clear regulatory guidelines against industry redlining, and setting timelines for broadband buildout across their states.

Broadband for Energy, Health Care and Education Savings: One of the ways wiring our homes and offices promises large economic payoffs, along with immense environmental benefits, is by allowing interactive monitoring of and more efficient energy use. By creating “smart buildings” tied to the local power

grid, as a 2002 Department of Energy report highlighted, utility companies won’t have to keep as much wasted reserve power on hand. Similarly, distance medicine and electronically networking our health care system promises tens of billions of dollars in cost savings and quality improvements, just as distance learning can open up new opportunities for improving our educational systems.

Local Investments for Technology-Based Growth: To help spur the job creation that accompanies more wired communities, states are promoting new state-based venture capital funds to jumpstart technology job creation by linking state-controlled financial capital, including public pension funds, with university innovation and local entrepreneurial energy. States are also dedicated some of those investments to “domestic emerging markets” to spur revitalization of communities often starved of needed financial capital. The literally trillions of dollars of financial assets managed by state governments can be a key tool to assuring both technology innovation and economic equity in our states.

Media Justice and Democratic Participation: The digital divide is not just a function of consumer access to technology, but of access to the tools by communities for producing their own content, training in the skills needed to qualify for jobs in the new economy, and thereby full participation in our democracy. States are increasingly funding community technology centers and other programs that provide a chance for equal participation by diverse members of our communities to be producers for as well as consumers of this new media economy.

Key Broadband Buildout and Technology Investments Policies

► Universal and Affordable Broadband

States are working to encourage universal broadband access through a range of policies:

- **Protecting Community Services:** While some states have passed laws that block municipal “wi-fi” and local broadband endeavors, most states have protected such systems. State legislation should also protect local franchise cable fees along with funding and access for public education and government (PEG) stations to any statewide video franchises.
- **Mapping Access:** A first legislative step to universal broadband is mapping who has access, at what speeds, and at what cost to consumers in order to help develop further state strategies.
- **State Broadband Investments:** States have committed billions of dollars collectively to extending broadband access, especially to poor urban and rural areas, but much more is needed to achieve affordable access for all and the full economic promise of the technology.
- **Buildout Regulations:** States should establish buildout requirements that create a clear timeline towards universal access, prohibitions on redlining poorer communities, support for quality high-wage jobs in the telecom industry, and strong consumer protections.

► Promoting Media Justice

Beyond investing in physical infrastructure, states need to invest in education and community media infrastructure to overcome the digital divide:

- **Education and Job Training:** From public schools to community colleges, students need to be taught how to use technology and be connected to technology-related jobs to take advantage of that education.
- **Funding Community Technology Centers:** Strengthening the national network of such centers will amplify the voice of marginalized communities in our democracy and create real-world technology training grounds for the next generation.
- **Supporting Alternative Media:** State money should support alternative online media, especially in communities traditionally less represented in the mainstream media.

► Leveraging Broadband for Energy, Health Care and Broadband Savings

Investments in broadband infrastructure will easily pay for themselves when states use the technology to leverage cost savings across the economy with policies such as:

- **“Smart Buildings”:** State utility regulations can be modified to encourage “real-time” metering of energy use over the Internet, with incentives for consumers to use less energy in peak hours—a method that can save billions of dollars in energy use each year.
- **E-Medicine:** Tens of billions of dollars in health care cost savings can be achieved by encouraging a transition to electronically-networked medical records and creating online access from clinics, hospitals and homes to specialized medical services located far away.
- **Distance Learning:** States are increasingly subsidizing the hardware, training, and high-speed broadband connections that are needed to expand access to advanced classes unavailable for public school students, “virtual field trips” and other advanced learning opportunities.

► Local Technology Investments

State governments increasingly are using public money to leverage local entrepreneurial use of technology infrastructure to create jobs, including:

- **State Venture Capital Funds:** More than thirty-six states run venture capital funds, often in association with universities and state pension funds, to invest in new local energy, life science and high-technology industries that can benefit from expanded broadband infrastructure.
- **“Emerging Domestic Markets” Investments:** To assure that state investments help bridge the digital divide, some state pension fund investment programs and new local venture capital funds target their investments to communities underserved by traditional capital sources.

Recent Developments: Broadband Buildout and Technology Investments

- **Universal and Affordable Broadband:** Under the influence of lobbying by industry players, too many bills passed this last year to allow telecom companies to bypass local franchise rules in favor of “statewide video franchises,” which undermined community control, lacked clear consumer protections, and didn’t have strong buildout mandates. A few states enacted stronger, although still generally inadequate language on buildout, anti-redlining rules, and protection of public education and government (PEG) television stations. While not perfect, Illinois approved legislation with broader approval by consumer, civil rights and local governments because of its stronger public interest provisions. Following up on early models like ConnectKentucky, one of the earliest state efforts to map broadband access, the Washington legislature enacted a mapping proposal in 2007 to identify which neighborhoods across the state don’t have broadband access as a prelude to broader legislation in 2008.
- **Leveraging Broadband for Energy, Health Care and Education Savings:** Illinois, after a successful experiment in Chicago, is pioneering a program to allow e-metering of electricity use and financial incentives for consumers to shift energy consumption to non-peak times, a program that could potentially save consumers \$23 billion per year if implemented nationwide. A number of states enacted new distance learning laws to better integrate technology into public schools. On the e-medicine front, the state of Pennsylvania has committed resources to studying how networking hospitals and physician’s offices through the Internet can improve patient care, while California is committing \$400 million to enhance the ability of doctors to use high-speed Internet to examine patients hundreds of miles away.
- **Local Technology Investments:** While states continued to expand their technology investments, the hottest area were the biosciences, especially stem cell research, as seven states—California, Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, New York and Wisconsin—have begun providing seed money for research and hoped for spin-off industries.

ON-LINE RESOURCES

Universal and Affordable Broadband

Progressive States, *Universal and Affordable Broadband in the States*
<http://tinyurl.com/yw7xcz>

FreePress, *Broadband as a Public Service*
<http://tinyurl.com/yu3c8g>

Communication Workers of America, *SpeedMatters*
<http://tinyurl.com/2398r9>

Media & Democracy Coalition
<http://tinyurl.com/2xa4mw>

New Rules Project, *Information Sector Policies*
<http://www.newrules.org/info/>

U.S. Department of Commerce
Measuring Broadband's Economic Impact
<http://tinyurl.com/2fbgus>

ConnectKentucky
<http://www.connectkentucky.org/>

Energy, Health Care and Education Savings

Progressive States, *Broadband for Economic Growth and Energy Savings*
<http://tinyurl.com/29ngjy>

High-Performance Commercial Buildings Project (HPCBS)
<http://tinyurl.com/2dxucd>

Speed Matters, *Health Care*
<http://tinyurl.com/2t9hb2>

Education Commission of the States: *Distance Learning*
<http://tinyurl.com/2s7uz5>

Local Technology Investments

Progressive States, *Investment Models for Job Creation*
<http://tinyurl.com/yrdbnr>

National Association of Seed and Venture Funds
<http://www.nasvf.org/>

Public Sector Pension Funds and Urban Revitalization
http://www.pensionsatwork.ca/english/pdfs/hebb_public_sector_pensions.pdf

Building Wealth: *Asset-Based Approach to Solving Social and Economic Problems*
<http://tinyurl.com/2mjdg>

Promoting Media Justice

Community Technology Centers' Network
<http://www.ctcnet.org/>

MAG-Net (Media Activist Grassroots Network)
<http://youthmediacouncil.org>

Media Alliance
<http://www.media-alliance.org/>

Reclaim the Media
<http://www.reclaimthedia.org/>



Thank you

This report and the work of the Progressive States Network throughout this past session was made possible by the generous support of individual donors, organizations, and foundations, including the Open Society Institute, the Wallace Global Fund, the Public Welfare Foundation, AFL-CIO, AFSCME, SEIU and the United Steelworkers.

We extend a special thanks to Deborah and Andy Rappaport and Steve Silberstein. Without their support, this report and our work would not have been possible.



About the Progressive States Network

The Progressive States Network was founded in 2005 to drive public policy debates and change the political landscape in the United States, by focusing on attainable, progressive state actions. The Progressive States Network advances this agenda by providing coordinated research and strategic advocacy tools to forward-thinking state policymakers, legislative staff, and non-profit organizations. We function as a meeting space for progressive legislators, activists, and citizens, and serve as a hotbed of information exchange. We track legislation in all 50 states, helping to spark change across the country. We make it easier for people to learn more about how to get good ideas passed into law—and take power into their own hands.

www.progressivestates.org

101 Avenue of the Americas
3rd Floor
New York, NY 10013
TEL: 212.680.3116
FAX: 212.680.3117