



## Capital Eye

Volume 14, Number 10 – Spring 2021

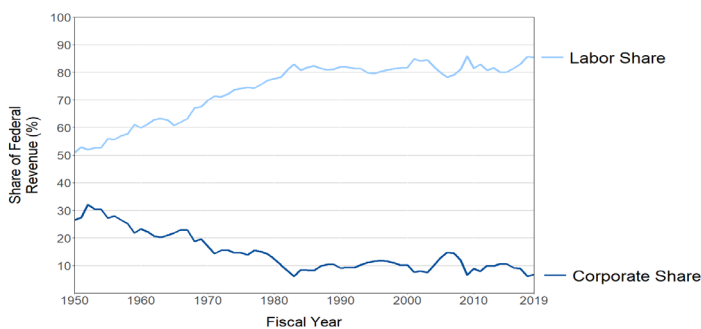
### How Much Income Tax Did You Pay for 2020?

*More Than 10% of Fortune 500 Companies  
Didn't Pay a Penny*

by Gary Zuckett

And many of those 54 Fortune 500 corporations had a 'negative' tax liability for 2020 (and even prior years) meaning they got paid millions of our tax dollars through the loopholes that make our federal tax code look like a hunk of swiss cheese. It burns me up that you, I and other hard-working folks pay our fair share to keep our government functional, but too many multi-billion-dollar companies and millionaires get a free pass!

#### Labor vs Corporate Share of Federal Tax Revenue (1950-2019)



Note: Labor is defined as individual income receipts and social insurance and retirement receipts.  
Data: Office of Management and Budget, Historical Tables

(Chart is from the US Treasury Department report on the new administration's [Made in America Tax Plan](#).)

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## Health Care Update

by Kim Jones and Kat Stoll

The 2021 WV Legislative Session is over, and we are pleased that some of the healthcare bills that we supported were passed. We are happy to share that HB 2266 passed. It expanded Medicaid coverage for mothers from two months postpartum to twelve months. This will ensure better health outcomes for mothers and babies.

HB 2024, which extends telehealth services for people in West Virginia also passed. Living during the pandemic taught us the value of telehealth services, especially for seniors, people with disabilities, folks with transportation issues and those who live in rural areas. The new law expands the use of telemedicine to all medical personnel and sets rules regarding reimbursement. It also permits health care providers licensed in other states to practice in West Virginia using telehealth services with authorization. This will make access to professionals and healthcare much easier and more efficient for so many!



WV has the highest rate of diabetics per capita. We fought hard, with the leadership of Delegate Barbara Fleischauer, to get HB 2708 passed to help West Virginians with diabetes better afford their insulin and supplies. Unfortunately, this bill did not pass. We will continue to work on this important bill throughout the year.

At the federal level, the American Rescue Plan Act, was passed by Congress on March 11th and lowers the cost of health insurance bought on healthcare.gov. In addition, time to sign up for a plan or switch plans on the exchange was extended until August 15th. 17,000 additional West Virginians are now eligible for subsidies, and roughly 3,900 uninsured West Virginians will pay zero premiums for good coverage.

West Virginia gained more than any other state from the increases to premium tax credits for people who  
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## Health Care For All (cont. from PG 1)

buy their own private insurance on [healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov). According to the [HHS Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation](#), the ARP raised the proportion of West Virginians in the marketplace who can buy insurance for **\$50 a month or less** from 36% to 64%. That is the highest increase in the country!

The American Rescue Plan Act provisions that make health insurance more affordable for West Virginians are temporary and will expire after two years. But they could be made permanent by Congress.

We are closely watching other developments in the U.S. Congress, and WV Senator Joe Manchin is key to what passes and what fails. President Biden has proposed several packages of legislation that include health care provisions that we support. Among these are his proposals to: 1) make the American Rescue Plan Act provisions described above permanent; 2) significantly increase funding for Medicaid home- and community-based services for elders and people with disabilities; and 3) regulate the high cost of prescription drugs in Medicare and for all Americans. Stay tuned for opportunities to raise your voice in support!

This summer, Health Care for All will also be focusing our attention on getting input from the public regarding our goals for the 2022 state legislative session. We are working on a survey now that we will be rolling out around the first of July. We will be polling people on what their needs are and how we can craft policy that meets those needs. Please keep an eye out for this and other ways to participate. Your voice matters!

Our overarching mission is to move towards a state and country where everyone has quality, affordable health care coverage. Two examples of issues we will be looking to address in the state legislature are: 1) ways to help West Virginians who lose their Medicaid income eligibility due to an increase in wages or hours or a new job (sometimes called the “Medicaid Cliff”); and 2) how to lower the cost of prescription drugs for West Virginians. We want to know what you think of these issues and what other health issues are important to you.

### Share Your Health Care Story with us!

Help us shape policy for all West Virginians. Please contact Story Collection Coordinator, Mariah Plante, at [Mariah@wvahc.org](mailto:Mariah@wvahc.org).

For more info, visit [www.healthcareforallwv.com](http://www.healthcareforallwv.com). ♦

## Income Tax 2020 (cont. from PG 1)

An April 2nd article in the *New York Times* entitled “[No Federal Taxes for Dozens of Big Profitable Companies](#)” is a real eye-opener on just how rigged our tax system is in favor of millionaires and big corporations. It did not used to be this way. Since the post WWII ‘golden years’ that conservatives are apt to pine for, corporate payments into the federal treasury have [dropped by two thirds](#). *Guess who’s been picking up the tab for that loss in revenue?* You and I have.

This is why we desperately need the relief and fixes built into the ‘Made in America Tax Plan’ which would raise the revenue to pay for the American Jobs Plan and the American Families Plan. Together these proposals constitute the biggest and boldest progressive restructuring of the nation since the days of Roosevelt’s New Deal or Johnson’s Great Society. (See *Eve’s article for more details.*)

These ambitious proposals are strongly opposed by conservatives and even some moderates, so it’s up to us to make sure our federal policymakers hear from us early and often on the need to go bold to repair and grow our economy. Our system was broken and not working for regular people before the pandemic, and half measures that only attempt to put our country back the way it was are not enough to make things right. Let’s all pull together and demand that we, as a state and a nation, Build Back Bolder, fairer, and make a society that works for all of us, not just the wealthy.

We can’t do what we do without YOU! Whether it’s volunteering, or providing that green (\$\$\$) energy that keeps the lights on, this is a team effort. [Please take a minute to fill out the enclosed membership form.](#)

Thank you for your continued support! ♦



# Victory: Voting Restrictions Defeated at the Legislature

*We Must Remain Vigilant,  
Support Federal Democracy Initiatives*

by Julie Archer

First, a bit of good news from the legislative session. After a public hearing drew mostly opposition, House Judiciary Chair Moore Capito (R-Kanawha) said there was not enough time to properly consider all the substantive changes in a bill that would have made it harder for West Virginians to vote. According to MetroNews statehouse reporter Brad McElhinny, Capito seemed have taken [the public hearing](#) comments seriously.

More than 40 speakers gave thoughtful, informed comments about why they were concerned with SB 565. Thanks to everyone who spoke out against this bill, and thank you, Delegate Capito, for hearing the concerns of West Virginia voters.

Several speakers pointed to last year's record-setting election, [which had the highest early and absentee participation in state history](#), and expressed dismay that the Legislature was taking away options from voters instead of moving forward with reforms that would encourage participation and modernize voter registration.

One major concern raised by voters who spoke was the proposed changes to early voting, and the elimination of the most popular days (the Friday and Saturday before Election Day) that have been available to voters for nearly 20 years. These days are popular for a reason, including but not limited to the fact that there's more information available about the candidates closer to Election Day. Eliminating these days because it's suddenly too much work for the county clerks would be like stores closing on Black Friday because the cashiers thought it was too much work to ring up all the purchases. Except in this case, we're talking about a fundamental right.

In addition to the changes to early voting, SB 565 would have let county clerks and the Secretary of State to start the process of removing voters from the rolls after two years (instead of four) if someone hasn't voted; and would have gutted automatic voter registration at the DMV, which has yet to be fully implemented. Although SB 565 didn't pass, it's pos

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## WV is Jammin' for Jobs

by Alexandra Gallo

On March 31, we launched a new coalition: The WV New Jobs Coalition. WV Citizen Action is proud to be a founding member.

The launch was rooted in sharing the national THRIVE Jobs Report (*Transform, Heal, & Revive by Investing in a Vibrant Economy*) and will require the forging of a new governing consensus that legitimizes massive government investments to reorganize different sectors of the economy. THRIVE policies will pro-actively work to mitigate the impact of past and current discriminatory policies on people of color and other marginalized groups.

Understanding that big, national and global change will be driven from the ground up, we are looking to build a national movement operation that is centralized enough to move a federal policy strategy, but nimble and decentralized enough to support state fights and policy work that create momentum for the passage of national policy.

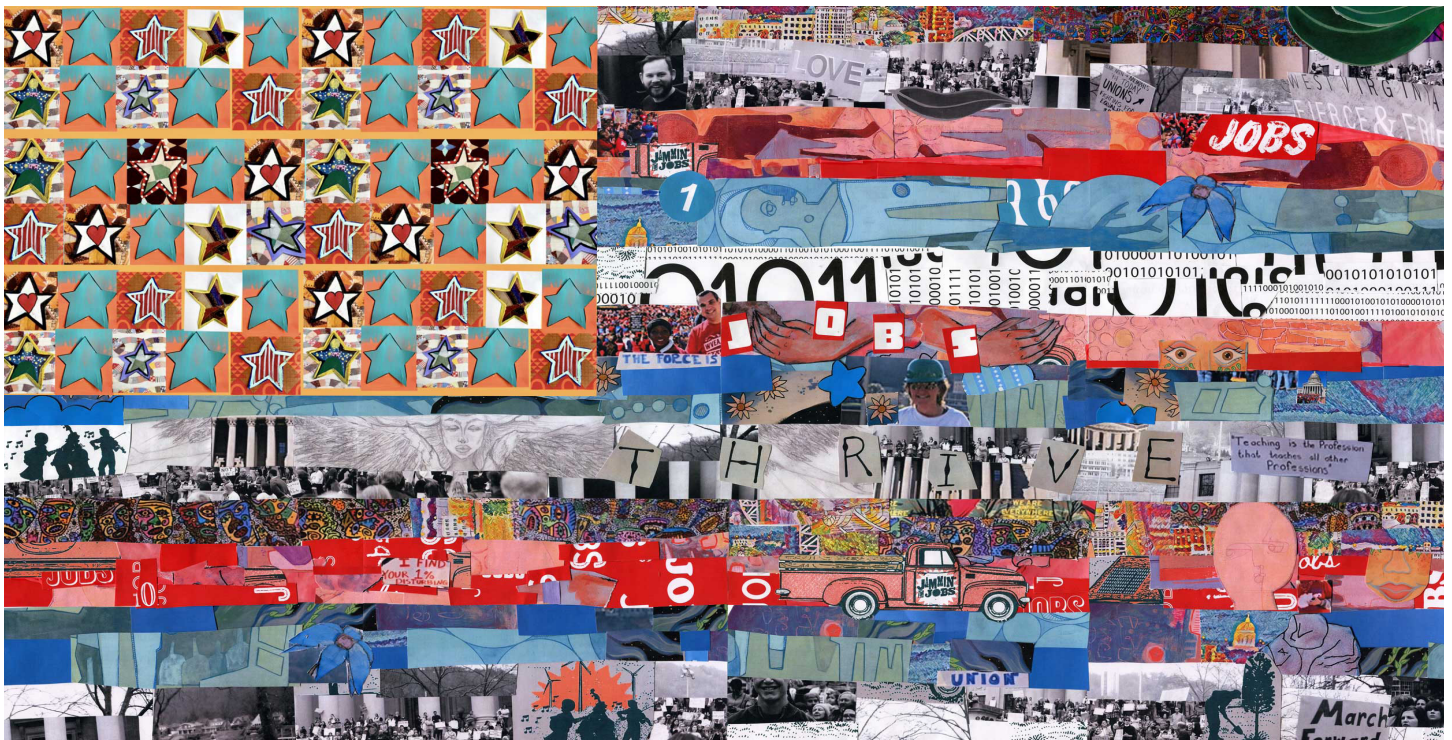
The THRIVE Act would in effect, bring 50,000 good-paying jobs to our state ([www.newjobswv.org/new-jobs-report/](http://www.newjobswv.org/new-jobs-report/)). We are encouraging Senator Manchin and Senator Capito to support and endorse this once in a lifetime legislation, as we work to rebuild our economy, infrastructure, and land. You can read more about the proposal at [thriveagenda.com](http://thriveagenda.com).

On Saturday, April 10th, the West Virginia New Jobs Coalition, with support from Working Families Party, The Frontline and Joy To The People, hosted a 3-city live concert series in Charleston, Morgantown and Martinsburg. This event focused primarily on bringing music, art, and culture into the social justice space to amplify the important message of passing

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### *Jammin' For Jobs (cont. from PG 3)*

the THRIVE Act. We partnered with 7 local musicians and bands, and heard from several impacted speakers and elected officials.

Dozens of artists participated in creating “**The People’s Flag**” (see above), incorporating patchwork art to build 3 different iterations of the flag in each of the event locations. Over 20,000 people watched the live stream and hundreds of West Virginians took direct action by calling their legislators asking they support the THRIVE Act.

For more information, visit [www.newjobswv.org](http://www.newjobswv.org), and join us in action at [facebook.com/newjobswv](https://facebook.com/newjobswv). ♦

### *Victory (cont. from PG 3)*

sible the issues with the bill could be reviewed during the legislature’s interim process over the summer, or that they will be taken up during the special session on redistricting in the fall. We must remain vigilant and ready to fight back when and if this occurs. Much is on the line, and the events that unfolded leading up to and following the election, including the attack on the US Capitol in January, and most recently the offensive onslaught of undemocratic legislation being introduced at the state level to suppress the youth vote and the vote of communities of color, proved that protecting and strengthening our democracy to ensure that everyone can participate, every vote is counted, and everyone’s voice is heard must be a priority.

That’s why we’ve joined with the [Declaration for American Democracy](#) in the movement to pass the For the People Act, [which you may remember from a town hall we held in January](#).

With the fervor around Manchin and our great state, WV Citizen Action has been working with For West Virginia’s Future to build a team to work on this and other federal democracy initiatives and guide national organizations in their efforts in West Virginia: [West Virginians For Democracy](#).



We have hired Mikael Huffman to serve as our Democracy Coordinator for this project, and there are lots of opportunities for organizations and individuals to plug in and be part of this effort to ensure safe and fair elections and help us create a democracy that’s representative of all American’s voices and values. So, if you’re interested in being part of the team please reach out! ♦

# Two Challenges for Fair and Impartial Courts

*WV Moving Forward With Judicial Reorganization, Keeping Courts Out of Impeachment*

by Julie Archer

Two measures we oppose related to our courts were passed by the WV Legislature. One was signed into law by the Governor. The other will go before voters in November of 2022 in the form of a proposed amendment to the state Constitution.

As the legislative session was coming to a close, Governor Justice signed off on the Legislature's plan (SB 275) to establish a new Intermediate Court of Appeals long sought by corporate interests, primarily for civil appeals, as a way to stack the deck against regular West Virginians. The new court is slated to be up and running on July 1, 2022. In the meantime, the Governor will appoint the court's three judges who will then run for 10 year terms in the 2024, 2026, and 2028 elections; and [the Supreme Court has said it's ready to move forward with developing the procedures and rules for how the new court will operate](#).

According to the Institute for Southern Studies, West Virginia [isn't the only state reorganizing its judicial system and revamping or adding new appeal courts](#) for the benefit of special interests.

In addition to creating the new intermediate court, which will review most trial court decisions before they reach the state Supreme Court, SB 275 also makes other significant changes to West Virginia's judicial system, including changes the process of appealing objections to workers compensation claims that attorneys for injured workers, some of whom spoke at a [public hearing on the bill in March](#), say will politicize the process and deny or delay justice for their clients.

These changes aren't the only challenge to fair and impartial courts in West Virginia. The Legislature also passed HJR 2, which proposes to amend the state constitution to [make it so that no court in the state could intervene to protect the right to fair hearing of a public official facing impeachment](#), no matter how frivolous the charge or constitutionally flawed the process.

As I wrote in an [op-ed in the Charleston Gazette-Mail](#), the disaster scenarios write themselves. If the amendment is approved by voters, courts wouldn't be able to intervene if lawmakers impeached an official on

discriminatory grounds, such as their race or sexual orientation.

Supporters of the resolution have responded to these and other very real concerns with little more than hand waving. Yes, they admit, all those things could happen under HJR 2, but the Legislature would never actually abuse its power in such a way. *But why take that risk?*

The drafters of our state constitution realized the importance of separation of powers. When one branch of government has too much power, the entire system can be undermined. It's not enough that lawmakers promise not to abuse their power.

In addition to the impeachment amendment, there will be two other constitutional amendments on the ballot next year. One (SJR 4) would allow churches and religious denominations to incorporate. The other (HJR 3) [would allow lawmakers to lower personal property taxes paid by businesses on inventory, machinery and equipment as well as the taxes people pay on their vehicles](#). In addition to taking power and control from local communities and giving it to the legislature, this could lead to drastic cuts in revenue that currently provides funding for vital services like schools, fire departments, and libraries.

We're still having conversations with partners and allies regarding legal and other strategies for stopping these measures. We'll continue to keep you updated as we learn more, so please stay tuned. ♦

## Kids and Families Need a Bigger Piece of the Budget Pie

by Gary Zuckett

That was the message on that WV-CAG and several of our local, state and national allies took to Senator Manchin and Capito's offices on Tax Day. We partnered with Our Future WV, Rise Up WV and the Center for Community Change to deliver individual dessert pies with a sticker attached asking them to make the temporary increases in both the Child Tax Credit and



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Earned Income Tax Credit that were included in the American Rescue Plan a permanent support for kids and their families. According to the WV Center on Budget & Policy, this temporary bump will lift 38,000 WV kids out of poverty. Let's make it permanent because everyone deserves a slice of the American pie. ♦

## On the Road to Recovery through Building Back Better

by Eve Marcum-Atkinson

WV Citizen Action has joined with Real Recovery Now, and 25+ state organizations in key states, to help share President Biden's Build Back Better vision on jobs, care, infrastructure and climate, a vision that also addresses the reality of systemic racism and gender inequality.

In 2020, then Presidential Candidate Joe Biden put forward his [Build Back Better](#) Plan, a holistic comprehensive approach to stimulating job & economic growth, while also getting to the core of the "old" economy's structural weaknesses and inequalities. His plan promised to create millions of good-paying jobs and give America's working families the tools, choices, and freedom they would need to build back better. Plus, it included a real strategy to deal with both the pandemic & climate change.

Since the inauguration, the new administration and many in Congress have moved forward on a number of President Biden's Build Back Better promises. In his first 100 days, President Biden's three major initiatives have hit the congressional floor: the American Rescue Plan, which has been signed into law, and the proposed [American Jobs Plan and the American Families Plan](#).

[The American Rescue Plan](#) Act, which was signed into law by President Biden on March 11, 2021, was designed to facilitate the United States' recovery from the devastating economic and health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. It included direct stimulus payments of \$1,400, extended unemployment compensation, continuation of the eviction and foreclosure moratoriums, and an increase to the Child Tax Credit while also making it fully refundable. It provided funds for state and local governments to help compensate for lost tax revenues, money for schools from kindergarten through eighth grade to safely reopen amid the pandemic, and subsidized COVID-19 testing and

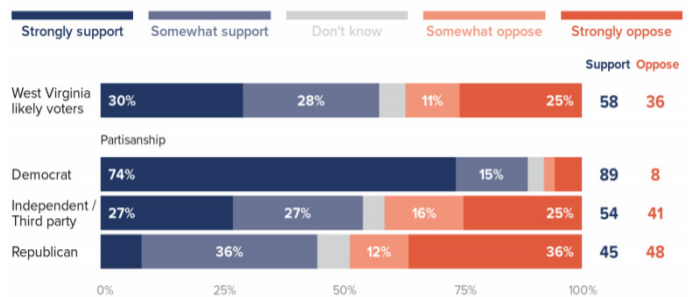
vaccination programs.

[The American Jobs Plan](#), also generally known as Biden's Infrastructure Bill, was introduced in the House on February 5th of this year as the [American Jobs First Act of 2021](#). With a \$2 trillion price tag, it's goal is to rebuild the nation's crumbling infrastructure (with an eye towards climate change resilience), and strengthen manufacturing and supply chains, and fund workforce development. It would also invest in "care" infrastructure, such as long-term care for the elderly and disabled, and a livable wage. Most care-givers and workers do not earn a living wage, and are predominantly women and from Black, brown, or immigrant communities.

A recent survey found that [58% of West Virginians](#) support the American Jobs Plan.

### Voters in West Virginia Support the American Jobs Plan

Voters were provided a description of the American Jobs Plan and then asked if they support or oppose it.



April 30-May 4, 2021 survey of 440 likely voters

DATA FOR PROGRESS

To fund this effort, the [Made in America Tax plan](#) would raise the corporate tax rate to 28%, disincentivize the use of corporate tax havens, raise taxes on multinational corporations to 21%, create a 15% minimum tax on large corporation "book-incomes", end deductions for moving jobs overseas, offer tax credits for bringing jobs back to the United States, eliminate tax credits and subsidies for the fossil fuel industry and remove other loopholes, while calling for increased corporate tax enforcement.

[The American Families Plan](#) would invest in families and education, through \$1 trillion in spending and \$800 billion in tax cuts, in an effort to promote economic prosperity and security. "These are generational investments in our future, in the future of our families and the future of our kids," [said a senior administration official](#). "They pay enormous dividends." The AFP would: invest in universal pre-k for children ages 3 and up; provide subsidies for low & middle income families, child care providers and child care workers; offer two years of free community college

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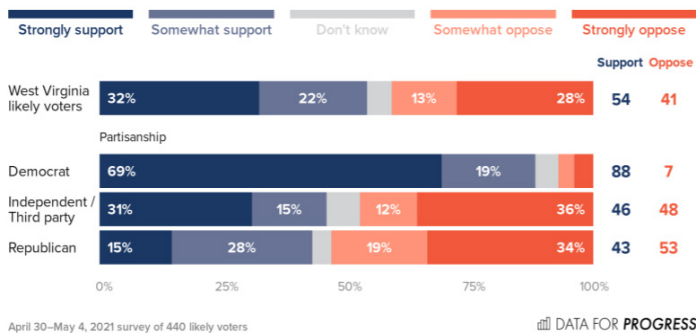
for all; fund a national paid family and medical leave program; extend the expanded Child Tax Credit; make permanent the increases in both Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, the Earned Income Tax Credit, and the recently expanded premium subsidies under the Affordable Care Act; offer scholarships for teachers; increase Pell Grants; and expand nutrition programs. This would raise millions of children and their families out of poverty.

[54% of West Virginians](#) support the American Families Plan.

The AFP would be fully paid for over 15 years through

### Voters in West Virginia Support the American Families Plan

Voters were provided a description of the American Families Plan and then asked if they support or oppose it.



implementing tax changes that ask the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share. These tax changes include: raising the tax rate for the top bracket back to 39.6%; taxing capital gains as regular income for households making more than \$1 million, thus paying the same 39.6% rate on capital gains and dividends; and would close loopholes that allow millionaire taxpayers to avoid paying taxes on certain gains. It also includes \$80 billion for the IRS over 10 years to increase enforcement and crack down on tax evasion among the richest, which would allow the IRS to collect an additional \$700 billion over 10 years. Although a majority of West Virginians support both proposals, Senator Manchin is still withholding his support from the AFP and the AJP.

Please [Contact Senators Manchin and Capito](#) to ask them to Support the American Families Plan, the American Jobs Plan, and the Made in American Tax Plan. (Action Link: [p2a.co/c37DpFe](https://p2a.co/c37DpFe))

Senator Manchin was the 47th sponsor of the [Protect the Right to Organize Act](#) (PRO Act), which passed the House in March and would begin to level a playing field unfairly tilted toward big business and management. Pro-union elements are in the AJP. We applaud

Senator Manchin for showing his support for organized laborers. ♦

## Volunteer for Democracy!

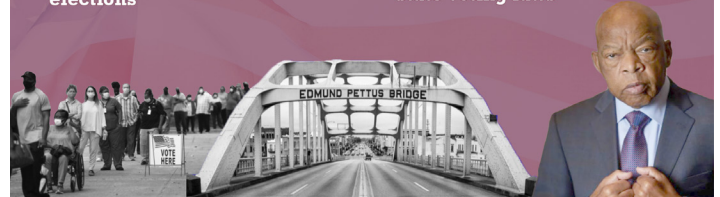
### Sen. Manchin - We Need Both!

#### For The People Act

- Expands access to the ballot
- Overrides voting restrictions being proposed by the states
- Ends partisan gerrymandering
- Stops billionaires from buying elections

#### John Lewis Voting Rights Act

- Restores the full power of the Voting Rights Act of 1965
- Prevents racial discrimination in voting
- Monitors and sets criteria for state voting laws



By Gary Zuckett

This is an exciting time with a new administration and several game-changing proposals in play. Right now is a great time to weigh in and voice your support for the American Jobs Plan, the American Families Plan, the Made in America Tax plan, the For the People, and the John Lewis Voting Rights Act. There are lots of ways to do this: write a letter to the editor, distribute postcards, make calls and send texts to voters, knock on doors in your neighborhood. We can help you engage at whatever level you feel comfortable. Reach out to our Communications Coordinator, Eve Marcum-Atkinson, at [eve@wvcag.org](mailto:eve@wvcag.org), to give us an idea of your interests and we'll get in touch. ♦

## How We Helped Defeat Elimination of WV's Personal Income Tax

by Alexandra Gallo

Our coalition partners truly shined over this legislative session by coming together with a one another, to share their stories and put pressure on elected officials to make better choices for West Virginians. Together, we sent thousands of text messages and made thousands of phone calls, delivering a strong message to those in positions of power about the devastating impact that eliminating the personal income tax would have on our most vulnerable. The Governor hasn't given up, so this fight isn't over.

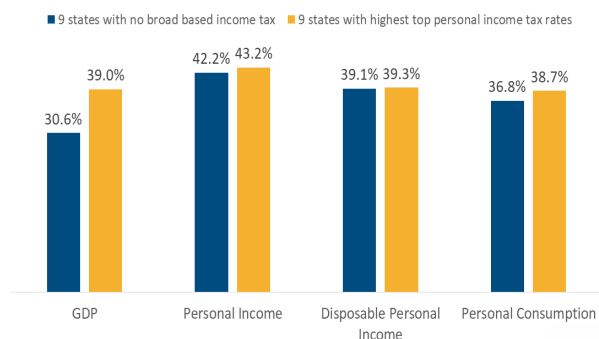
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From Sean O'Leary at the WV Center on Budget and Policy: "We've covered Governor Justice and legislative leadership's goal of eliminating the state's personal income tax from several angles over the past few weeks, showing that [states without income taxes aren't growing any faster than states with the highest income taxes](#), that eliminating the income tax [would overwhelmingly benefit the wealthy](#), and that replacing the income tax with higher sales taxes would likely be a [net tax increase for all but the wealthiest West Virginians](#), while still blowing a huge hole in the budget, making major budget cuts unavoidable. Governor Justice approved the FY 2022 budget [passed by the legislature at the end of session](#). While

#### Economic Growth In States with No Income Tax Trails Growth in High Tax States

Economic growth in states, per capita, 2009-2019



Source: WVCBP analysis of Bureau of Economic Analysis and Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy data. State averages are unweighted.

WVPOLICY.ORG



the fate of the budget was up in the air for most of the session as the legislature attempted to [eliminate the income tax](#), by the time the session came to a close, only a few bills had passed that required offsetting changes to the budget. Despite the governor [proposing a "flat" budget](#) with little new investment, the legislature made a number of cuts throughout the budget, leaving \$72.7 million unappropriated. While most of these cuts are expected to be restored using the anticipated surplus at the end of FY 2021, [the cuts will be built into future base budgets](#)". ♦

## A Look Back at the WV Legislative Session

by Gary Zuckett & Julie Archer

The 2021 WV legislative session now seems like ancient history, albeit a rather dark page as far as sessions go. We had some wins which could be counted on one hand. As with any session, killing off terrible bills took up a major chunk of everyone's effort and there were successes on that front.

Right up front, we want to thank all of you who took time to weigh in and take action in response to our (and others') Action Alerts! Your voice carries weight with those who need your vote at the ballot box, so please keep it up and stay active now in the federal fight!

### Build Back Bolder

Before we get into the dumpster fire that was the 2021 Session, we want to emphasize the need for everyone to continue their advocacy. We suggest making a pivot to the vast potential good that our new administration is working up for our state and nation. West Virginians have a critical role in how big and bold this 21st century New Deal rolls out.



Conservatives opposed the original New Deal, too calling it, guess what? Socialism! Conservatives opposed Medicaid and Medicare, passed during President Johnson's New Society efforts, too.

Again, the cry of Socialism was thrown up as a roadblock. Their opposition essentially derailed Johnson from completing the third part of his New Society – providing a 'middle care' program, a public health plan for everyone else not covered by the first two. Right now, President Biden needs EVERY vote in his party's caucus to rebuild a country and economy devastated by COVID and decades of unfettered toxic capitalism. Our senior senator, Joe Manchin, and one of the most conservative of the Democrats, is our assignment.

Senator Manchin needs to hear from ALL of us, early and often. He came through for us and the nation earlier with his vote for the **American Rescue Plan**.

Start by sending him a [Thank You](#), then call him in support of the evolved the infrastructure effort, the **American Jobs Plan**, which includes substantial investments in our **Care Economy**. The next day, call him on providing direct support to children and families through the **American Families Plan**. Then call in for the **THRIVE agenda** that would create 50,000 jobs in WV, clean up the mess left by more than a century of dependence on extractive industries, and usher in

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a new, clean energy economy. Take a break over the weekend and start over next Monday.

Isn't it refreshing to be making so many calls FOR economic progress, justice, democracy, and the planet?

Joe Manchin's DC number is **202-224-3954**. Add him to your contacts and speed dial him every day. He needs to hear from YOU as a concerned constituent. You can be sure he is getting opposition calls to everything. YOU can make a huge difference in this effort by helping Senator Manchin do the right thing. Be sure to mention the name of your town or county of residence so they'll know you're not calling from California or New York!

### Deep Dive Into 2021 Session

Below is a dive into the good, bad and just plain ugly of the session. Remember you can look up the text of bills, and roll call votes on final passage and some amendments, at [www.wvlegislature.gov](http://www.wvlegislature.gov) by clicking on bill status and entering the number. You can also read a [status review of 2021 bills](#) (good and bad) by topic [on our blog](#), and there were excellent wrap up articles at [Mountain State Spotlight](#) and in the [Charleston Gazette-Mail](#).

You can practically count all the **good bills that passed** on one hand. These include:

- **HB 2266 – Expands Medicaid coverage** for post-partum new moms to one year!
- **HB 2094 - Restorative justice for juveniles** - recognizes the positive impact restorative justice can have for our kids and our communities by ensuring that this process will be an option in any juvenile case if all parties agree.
- **HB 2927 - Caregivers as Candidates** - would help political candidates with caregiving responsibilities run for office by adding caregiving expenses to the list of allowable campaign expenses.
- **HB 3310 - Energy Freedom bill** authorizing power purchase agreements (PPAs) which enables 'third party contracts' for solar installations on homes, businesses, churches & non-profits where the owners just sign an agreement to buy the energy produced on their roof instead of going thousands of dollars into debt to buy the equipment.
- **HB 2667 - Creating a cost savings program** for state buildings through energy efficiency.

However, **defeating bad bills is also a victory**. Bills we were glad to see expire include:

- **HB 3300 - Personal income tax elimination/**

**phase out** – over 5,000 of your contacts to lawmakers, tracked by the WV Center on Budget and Policy, helped tank this terrible bill!

• **HB 2598 - Shrinking the Aboveground Storage Tank Act**, which would have exempted hundreds of tanks owned and operated by the oil and gas industry that are closest to water intakes. Again, the WV Rivers Coalition and the WV Environmental Council tracked thousands of your comments to legislators – well done!

• **SB 565 - WV's very own voter suppression bill** - would have eliminated the most popular days of early voting, gutted automatic voter registration, and started the process of removing non-voters from rolls after two years (instead of four). The House Judiciary did not take up after a public hearing where so many of you testified!

• **SB 569 - Restricting damages used for medical monitoring** - House rejected 62-38. On the last day of the session a motion to reconsider the bill and recall it from the Senate was also rejected.

• **HB 2257 - Drug War Extension** - Would have added up to 10 years of post-parole supervision for people with drug offenses after they completed their underlying sentence. Violations would result in additional incarceration of up to 10 years. The bill was not taken up by the Senate Judiciary Committee citing lack of time at the end of session.

• **SB 303 - Labor and Consumer Marketing Regulatory Limitation Act**. Would have stripped local governments of their ability to pass laws concerning the environment, employment and workers' rights issues, public health and beyond.

• **Bad Gun Bills** - Various bills allowing concealed guns in public schools, on college campuses, and in and on the grounds of the Capitol, including SB 246, SB 570, HB 2364, HB 3022.

Bad bills that **underwent significant changes** addressing concerns from advocates:

• **HB 2017** - The Senate turned what started as a **400-page rewrite of the state's criminal code** into a two-page bill that asks the West Virginia Sentencing Commission to review the House version as part of its work reviewing state sentencing guidelines.

• **HB 2363 - so-called "Best Interests of the Child Protection Act of 2021"** - The Senate Judiciary Committee amended the bill to preserve the best interests of children in custody disputes while addressing some concerns shared by advocates for the original House version.

### Bad Bills Signed into Law

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- Allowing polluters to discharge more toxic chemicals into our water (HB 2382),
- Creating an unnecessary intermediate court of appeals (SB 275),
- Expanding charter schools (HB 2012),
- Establishing a voucher program for students who are home schooled or attend private school (HB 2013),
- Reducing contractor licensing and licensure of various skilled trades (HB 2006 & HB 2008)
- Transgender athlete ban (HB 3293) -This bill discriminates based on transgender status and sex in violation of the US Constitution and Title IX of the Civil Rights Act. Governor Justice signed the bill despite strong opposition from leaders in women's sports, civil rights advocates, and the medical and business communities.
- [Establishing license application process for needle exchange programs](#) (SB 334) - The bill contradicts the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's best practices, and comes in the midst of an HIV outbreak in West Virginia's capital city.
- [Drug screening of applicants for cash assistance/TANF](#) (SB 387)
- [Requiring doctors to give medically incorrect information to patients seeking abortion care](#) (HB 2982).

### Wrapping it up and Counting on You!

We are turning our focus to the awesome potential benefits of the Biden administration's next proposals. Your input over the next 60 to 90 days is critical to pushing our country to Build Back Bolder.

The For the People Act will roll back many states' new attempts at voter suppression. The THRIVE agenda will create tens of thousands of new jobs in WV by helping us 'Build Back Better' and greener.

**Keep those calls going into Sen. Manchin's office.** He needs to know we support Building Back Bolder! ♦

## We Need Your Voice & Support

*Demand Democracy:  
Help Pass the For the People Act*

*by Julie Archer*

To advance bold change in our democracy, we need bold solutions. The For the People Act (HR1/S1) is a once-in-a-generation democracy reform package to clean up our political system, expand and protect voting rights, end gerrymandering, and counter the power of big money in politics.



The John Lewis Voting Rights Act (HR4) would restore and update the full protections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 — the most effective civil rights legislation in the history of the United States.

On Saturday, May 8, WV Citizen Action co-hosted an event in Charleston as part of the John Lewis Day of Action. These are the remarks I made as one of the speakers at the event:

*Good afternoon! It is an honor to be here with Rev. English, community leaders, and our partners and allies to stand in support of the For the People Act, the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, and DC Statehood. With legislatures in 47 states, trying to make it harder to vote, it's critical that the Senate pass these reforms to thwart these attacks and protect every American's right and freedom to vote.*

*However, these attacks on voting rights aren't the only threat to our democracy. Our coalition formed because we recognized the negative impact money in politics was having on all of our issues, and our ability to address problems and challenges facing the state. Over the years, we made some progress at both the state and federal level towards strengthening our disclosure laws and countering the influence of special interests.*

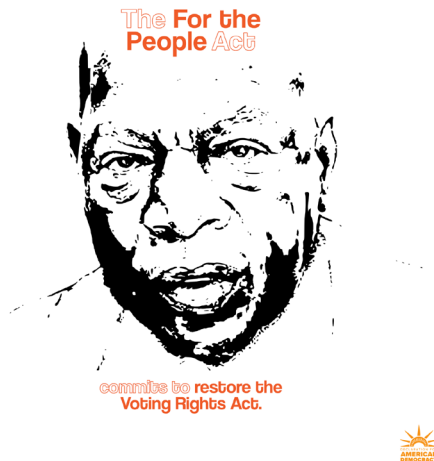
*But since then we've had the Citizens United decision, which undermined much of that progress. Now the circumstances are much more dire and our democracy is in desperate need of repair.*

*The decision severely hindered the government's ability to regulate political expenditures and tossed out restrictions on corporate spending, enabling third party organizations to spend unlimited amounts on*



political campaigns. The result has been less disclosure and more secret money or 'dark money' in our elections, making it harder than ever, and sometimes impossible, to know who is really paying for political ads, leaving us uninformed about who's trying to influence our votes and the votes of our elected officials.

Fortunately, the For the People Act is a path forward that can help reduce the influence of big money in politics, empower average citizens and make democracy healthy again. By shining a light on dark money, making voting simpler, safer and fairer; and holding public officials accountable, The For the People Act will help us fight back against moneyed interests, remove barriers so that regular people won't be shut out of the political process, and move us towards a government that's more representative, accountable, and responsive to the needs of to all of us. This is a real opportunity to not only transform our democracy, but also to help us start making progress on other pressing issues facing West Virginia and the nation.



As Eli said, all of us have the ability to shape American going forward, and we have a responsibility to make our voices heard. So we hope you will join us in calling on Senators Manchin and Capito to work together to expand and protect voting rights, and help us create a democracy that's representative of all American's voices and values by supporting the For the People Act.

See and hear from all the day's speakers at Facebook [@wvfordemocracy](https://www.facebook.com/wvfordemocracy).

## How YOU Can Get Into Some GOOD TROUBLE

### 1. Contact Senators Manchin and Capito TODAY!

Let them know you support the For the People Act to guarantee every American's freedom to vote and make democracy work for everyone.

**Senator Manchin** – 202-224-3954

**Senator Capito** – 202-224-6472

### 2. Write a letter to the editor to show that West

Virginians support the For the People Act. Use this tool by Common Cause to write a personalized letter to your local newspaper(s). [commoncause.org/S1LTE](https://commoncause.org/S1LTE)

**3. Tell your story!** Help build power for the pro-democracy movement in West Virginia by telling your story of why the For the People Act is important to you. If you missed the recent storytelling training we hosted with the Declaration for American Democracy you can watch the recording at [facebook.com/wvfordemocracy](https://facebook.com/wvfordemocracy). ♦

## Greeting the First Lady



by Gary Zuckett

With only 24 hours notice that Jill Biden was going to visit Capitol High School, WV-CAG helped organize a contingent of supporters of the President's agenda to line the street across from the school to greet the First Lady. We outnumbered the nay-sayers down the street and sent a positive message that West Virginians support making things better for average folks instead of millionaires. The weather was perfect and the crowd was energized by having the progressive policies of the new administration to get behind. Senator Manchin accompanied the First Lady and they both saw the crowd's positive signage. Keep those calls going!

Senators Manchin and Capito both need to know West Virginians support Building Back Bolder. ♦

WV Citizen Action Group  
1500 Dixie Street  
Charleston, WV 25311



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