



WVCA members participated in the #CareOverCost Direct Action outside Elevance Health in Indianapolis (pg4).

Looking Ahead to 2023

By Gary Zuckett

First the bright spot: **All of those terrible amendments were defeated!** Thanks to all who took time to share information and educate others on the dangerous triple power grab that the Republican majority foisted on voters for approval. Voters weren't having any of them! Of course it was extremely helpful to have Baby Dog flying around the state along with her owner telling voters to vote no on Amendment 2, the inventory and equipment tax break primarily for big, out-of-state corporations.

Even though voters soundly rejected these terrible policy proposals, a majority of WV voters again defied national trends by taking Trump's admonition to heart and voting Red all down the ballot. This new (not so) supermajority in our state legislature will be a real challenge in the next several sessions. That won't stop us from working to advance some common sense policies like Community Solar and a Medicaid buy-in so folks don't lose health insurance just because they get a raise that pushes them over the income limit. These are not partisan issues and some have had bipartisan support in previous sessions.

Expect another fight within the Republican caucus over the best way to give away our state's operating revenue in the form of tax breaks for the rich rather than fully fund state agencies and keep them staffed. Perhaps if we paid our correctional officers an adequate salary, the Governor could rescind the state of emergency he's declared in order to send our National Guard troops into our jails and prisons to



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You Are the Citizen in Citizen Action!

At the end of the year, we need to look back on the actions and activities of 2022, take some time off to reflect, rest, and recharge, and then lean into the legislative session and next year's campaigns. To effectively do this we need YOU, our members and supporters, to both stay active, renew your membership and/or make a tax-deductible donation to our Education Fund. You'll find the membership renewal/donation form on the back page of this newsletter. Fill it out and send it in, OR donate online at wvcag.org/membership or wvcaef.org/donation-info.



2022 Awards Picnic pg 10

Looking Cont.

serve as substitute guards?

Expect Baby Dog to soon be traveling the state again soon, this time to lobby for the elimination of the state income tax. We all know that her owner will garner the most benefit from such a terrible policy move.

Many allies at the statehouse will not return for January's session. I won't name them all but want to thank them all for their efforts to make people and planet centered policies to move WV into the new energy economy and expand access to affordable health care for all.

Thankfully, the 'Red Wave' was a trickle nationally. And, Thank YOU, Georgia, for sending Senator Warnock back to represent you! It was a step back with the announcement by Senator Sinema she was leaving the Democratic Party. However Democrats will still have a 50-49 majority in the Senate that will give committees more freedom to move progressive legislation to the floor. Unfortunately, with a divided Congress, only bills with bipartisan support will get to the President's desk.

The IRA is Coming Our Way

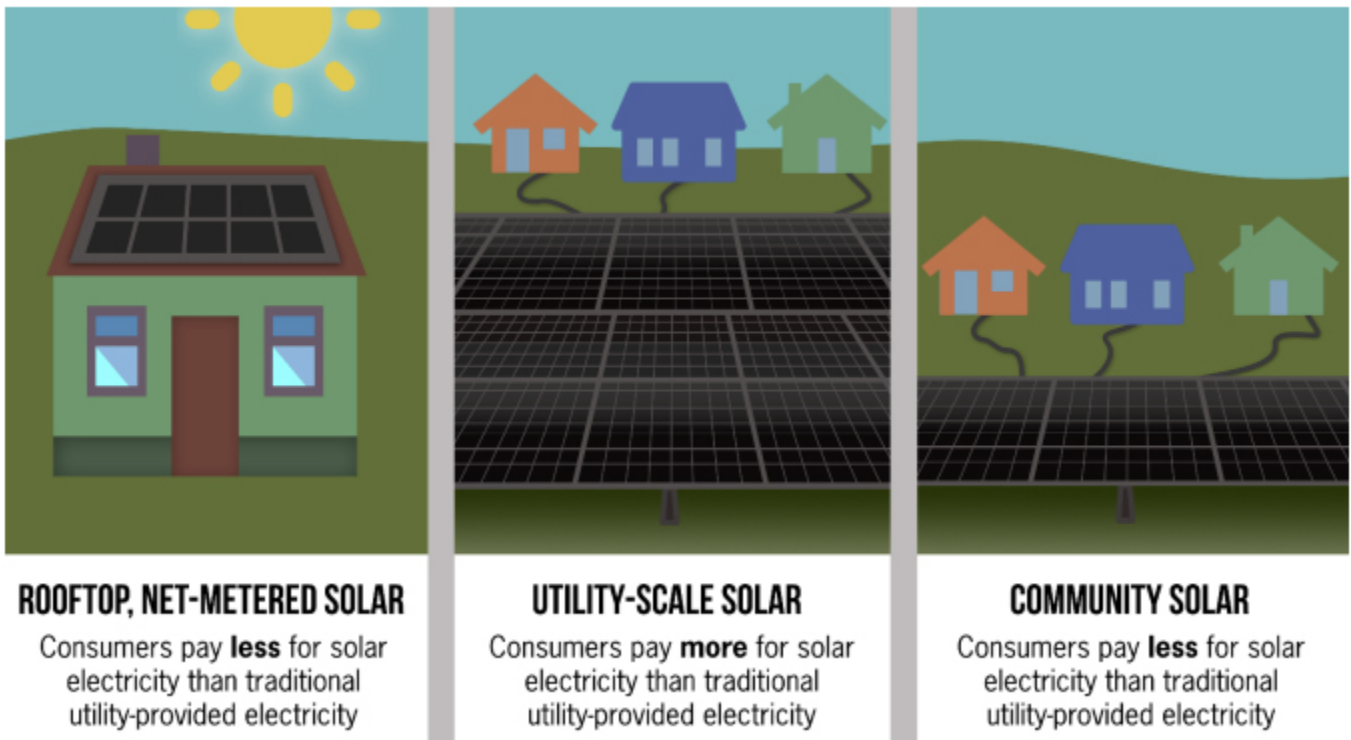
This bill could be called the CRA, the Climate Reduction Act, because it's the biggest investment in addressing climate change in our nation's history. It has layers of support for investments in energy efficiency, increased

tax credits for solar and wind, and sets in motion market incentives that can finally move our country much closer to its international goals on carbon reduction. Our WV communities are among those that qualify for additional tax credits targeting 'energy' and 'low income' communities that can potentially cover half the cost of solar installations. Perry Bryant has distilled the Climate/Energy portions of this Act into a paper we posted on our web page here (tinyurl.com/IRA-Climate). Our allies at the BlueGreen Alliance also have a handy web page (tinyurl.com/BGA-IRA) with information and resources on both the IRA and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law now being implemented by the Biden administration.

WV for Energy Freedom - Act Now to Stop Escalation of Your Electric Bill!

Citizen Action is one of the founding members of West Virginians for Energy Freedom (WV4EF), a coalition with WV Solar United Neighbors, Energy Efficient WV, and the WV Chapter of the Sierra Club. As a coalition, we worked together at the legislature for passage of Power Purchase Agreements in 2021, and during the 2023 session we'll be pushing for Community Solar to reign in energy costs, create jobs, and promote energy freedom in WV.

In addition to its policy work at the Legislature, WV4EF is working to stop the continuous hikes in our electric rates due to the Public Service Commission's refusal to diversify our energy mix and allow West Virginians to benefit from



Community Solar in WV would provide an alternative that recent legislation has failed to address, giving consumers more choices and helping them save money on their electricity.

renewable and more cost-effective sources. Over 85% of our electricity in WV is from coal. Only nuclear is a more expensive way to generate power at this point.

Even the independent PSC Consumer Advocate's office is saying that Mon Power should buy the coal-fired Pleasants Power Plant - and they're supposed to be the ones protecting us consumers from higher than necessary energy costs! Go to www.energyfreedomwv.org/pleasants-action and tell them not to force us to pay for a pricey, noncompetitive power plant when electricity is cheaper on the open market through our regional grid! §

Visit energyfreedomwv.org to learn how community solar can save WV families millions of dollars per year through lower energy bills.

COMMUNITY SOLAR

would bring investments, jobs and savings to West Virginia

REPORT states that enabling Community Solar programs will control energy costs, spur market competition, create jobs, and save ratepayers millions



Democracy Wins at the Ballot Box

By Julie Archer

The defeat of Amendment 1 and the other dangerous changes proposed to our state's constitution are a huge victory for West Virginia voters. Amendment 1 would have opened the door to blatant abuses of power by an out-of-control legislature and eroded the checks and balances between the three branches of government. When voters go to the ballot box to pick their leaders, their voices should be heard and respected. Under the changes proposed in Amendment 1, an extremist state legislature could have removed any public servant – and overturned the will of the people – without due process.

The defeat of these constitutional power grabs was a win for democracy at the state level, but Election Day generally was a big win for democracy across the country. For



Morgantown Climate Candidate Forum.

example, [voters rejected Trump-backed election deniers in several key states](#), defeating Republican candidates for governor, attorney general and secretary of state who have spread doubts about the 2020 election.

There were also several high points in the ballot measure results with voters in several states supporting the expansion of voting rights and election integrity, attempting to reign in dark money political expenditures, and rejecting measures to erect barriers to the ballot box. The Fulcrum has a run down of these ballot measures and the changes they will make to how democracy is practiced here: <https://thefulcrum.us/Government/State/election-results-2022>

Although the results down ballot in West Virginia were not what we'd hoped for, we're proud of West Virginia voters for coming together and defending their right to



ACLU and friends hosting a booth at the Halloween Party to the Polls event at Five Corners

Democracy Cont.

democracy and all of the work that went into stopping these dangerous power grabs by the legislature, not to mention all of the amazing organizing to Get Out the Vote for candidates who share our values, will fight to defend our personal freedoms, and want to make West Virginia a better, more welcoming place for everyone. For the WV CAG team this included:

- Hosting climate and health care focused candidate forums educate voters about the candidates' views to the urgent healthcare issues facing West Virginians, and discuss the future of West Virginia as it relates to energy, jobs, and justice with a focus on climate change. (These are archived on the *Voter Engagement* playlist on our YouTube channel. Check it out and subscribe to unlock features that would help us reach more people and key constituencies: youtube.com/@wvcitizenaction)
- Partnering with the WV Civic Engagement Table to reach out to newly registered and low-propensity voters to share voting information and encourage them to get out and vote in the 2022 election. We contacted more than 100,000 voters, including 14,000 first-time voters, and had more than 1,600 conversations.
- Hosting Get Out the Vote events in our communities with our partners and allies. One of our favorites was a Halloween Party to the Polls at Five Corners on

Charleston's West Side with Halloween treats, food by Dem 2 Brothers, fun & games with Fun Fitness Kids Club, and early voting at the new Black Diamond Girl Scout location! Volunteers knocked on 150 doors in the surrounding neighborhood to share voting information and more than 200 individuals participated in the event. We had a spook-tacular time!

- Partnering with the Black Voter Impact Initiative to host Rock the Vote events at local high schools to register students to vote and provide opportunities to meet the candidates and learn about the issues on the ballot.

None of this would have been possible without our incredible allies and partners, and our phenomenal members and volunteers. Thank YOU! §



Rock The Vote event hosted by the Black Voter Impact Initiative and friends at South Charleston High School.

Health Care: A Year in Review

By Kim Jones and Eve Marcum-Atkinson

The Health Care For All WV coalition has been quite busy this year. Together, we hosted a Citizen Civic Engagement Training as a lead-up to the 2022 WV legislative session, to educate the public on state policies and [proposed bills](#) that would affect their access to affordable health care; [collected stories](#) from real West Virginians about their healthcare struggles; assisted with promoting the Affordable Care Act open enrollment period, and the premium tax credit extensions available through the Inflation Reduction Act; celebrated the birthday of [Medicare & Medicaid](#); participated in West Virginians for Affordable Healthcare's two-day [Virtual Medicaid Summit](#), and hosted [candidate forums](#) centered on health care and health equity.

Virtual candidate forums were held in Cabell, Wood, Monongalia, collaborating with Betty Barrett and Janice Gossett from the League of Women Voters. We were pleased to work with Dr. Shanequa Smith and the [Black Voter Impact Initiative](#) on our first in-person forum since COVID in Kanawha County. We felt it was important to address health equity and social determinants of health, and asked for input from the public and lawmakers on ways to move forward towards a more equitable healthcare system in WV. Thank you to all of the sponsors of that event and to Grace Bible Church in Charleston for hosting.

Through our work with People's Action's [Make Meds Affordable](#) campaign, we encouraged people to take action to lower prescription drug costs via email, phone call, and peaceful protest. On Oct. 6th, we participated in a [peaceful protest](#) outside of the DC Health and Human Services building, asking Secretary Becerra to consider using executive orders and March-In-Rights to increase competition and lower drug prices. We had been sending him



WVCAG members at DC protest outside HHS..

weekly petition emails for a couple months at this point, and delivered all the signatures to their offices on the day of the protest. A week later, President Biden [signed an executive order](#) to empower the HHS to explore all options to lower prescription drug costs for middle class families.

Last month, we also participated in People's Action's #CareOverCost protest at Elevance Health's headquarters in Indianapolis and demanded they provide the care their policyholders were promised.

Our MMA work grew to include creating an educational webinar series, hosted in partnership with Physicians for a National Health Plan of WV and Rise Up WV. More webinars are to come in 2023! Our last webinar was on the topic of [Pharmacy Benefit Managers](#) and how, without proper regulation and oversight, they have caused huge increases in the cost of care and medications, and even strangled locally-owned pharmacies into closing their doors. You can **TAKE ACTION** on this issue at tinyurl.com/PMBTAct22.

West Virginia has the [highest death rate](#) of any state in the country from diabetes. For the third year, our coalition and allies worked on making insulin and diabetes supplies more affordable for the average West Virginian. In 2020, we started working on the unjust and debilitating cost of insulin for the people in our state by getting a copay cap of \$100 passed in the Legislature. This is still too much per month for the average family, so we have worked the past two years on bills to lower the cap to \$35 for those with insurance, and lower the cost of the many expensive supplies that diabetics need to stay healthy.

We have spent these three years trying to educate legislators and the public on how crushing and life-threatening the cost of diabetes medicines and supplies are to families, and have been so grateful for the bipartisan support our bills received. Sadly, in the last hour of the session, it was decided in the Senate to add an unrelated healthcare amendment to our bill. It was then rejected by the House. We are hoping in the 2023 session that our legislature will

make the right decision to protect people in our state from unnecessary illness, emergency or deaths related to unaffordable diabetes medicine and supplies.

On a related note, after over a year of working on what was Build Back Better, which later became the Inflation Reduction Act, we are so excited and grateful that the package passed in August with much-needed help for diabetics around the country. Medicare recipients now will not have to pay more than \$35 a month for insulin. We need this for every diabetic now!

In the upcoming legislative session, we will also be continuing our work on a Medicaid buy-in program. Last year, we received bipartisan sponsorship from members of the House and Senate in support of this important plan to keep people from losing their Medicaid health insurance because they go over the very low income eligibility. The Medicaid eligibility cliff keeps people from seeking better jobs, more hours, raises, or getting a second job. No matter how many hours you get, if your job doesn't offer affordable insurance, you have a lot more to lose by making a little more money, by losing your vital health coverage. We can change this with your help.

For the second year in a row, we hosted Marshall University Social Work students as policy interns during the 2022 legislative session. We educated the students on the importance of advocacy in social work, how to connect with lawmakers, educate the public, follow and support important bills. We consider it an honor to empower social work students, because of their importance in meeting the needs of our most vulnerable people in so many different settings. We want them to come away more comfortable and empowered about their knowledge to affect important policy change.

If you would like to work with us to make the changes WV needs, please like/follow us at facebook.com/healthcareforallwv or contact us at hcfawv@wvahc.org. §

TAKE ACTION at tinyurl.com/PMBTAct22.

Envisioning West Virginia: WV New Jobs Coalition's Visioning Project

By Brandi Reece, Project Coordinator

The Visioning Project continues into its third month and it's ready to hit full-stride. I came on board in October and took a few weeks to learn more about the project and getting to know our Visioning Fellows. By then the election, some rather wet weather and the holidays were upon us, so November was a bit of a chaotic month for us. I'm happy to say we are back on task now and the project looks as if it will enter Phase 2 after the new year. So what's been happening in the interim you might ask? Well, I'll tell you.

A good deal of time has been spent hanging the flyers we created with the QR code in various counties. While the project is concentrated in Boone, Logan, Kanawha, Fayette, Raleigh, Mercer and Summers, we have flyers in Monroe, Greenbrier, Mango, Wyoming, McDowell and Nicholas as well. We routinely drive around the target counties to place flyers in new locations and to replenish flyers as needed.

Our fellows and I have been holding community meetings, six so far, and one on one interviews with folks. Amber has been an absolute rockstar with the community meetings. I'll be spending a lot of time over the Christmas holidays plugging data into the Google form from our paper interviews. In the interest of efficiency, we've moved to mostly digital interviews for one on ones and long distance interviews. We hope to also attend some holiday events in December.

In October, we did some canvassing at two Halloween events - the Witches Ride and the Monster Mash. Brandi Gunnoe was in full regalia in her witches costume for the occasion. We love her enthusiasm! In November, we coordinated multi-county efforts to make sure individuals had rides to and from the polls.

We rounded out the month of November by sending Gary Zuckett and myself to the Green New Deal national net-



work conference in Chicago, where we learned from and collaborated with like minded coalitions from across the United States. This was an excellent networking opportunity and we came away with many new ideas, among them building a cross coalition shared volunteer base and door to door interview canvassing with more targeted questions in Phase 2. These questions will be developed from Phase 1 results.

New things on the forefront for the Visioning Project include the new WVNJC Tik-Tok account (@newjobswv), which will soon start featuring relevant videos and the



Brandi Gunnoe and friend at Witches Ride event.



Green New Deal Conference group photo.

addition of a Tik-Tok promoter to the Visioning Project Team. Thanks to Brandi Gunnoe and Zach Shrewsbury for this idea. We are very excited to expand our social media presence. You can also expect our Twitter account to have more frequent posts in the near future.

Other new components to the Visioning project include community meetings held via Zoom (please let us know if you are interested in partnering on one of these), video interviews with clips featured on social media and entire interviews featured via YouTube.

If you are willing to be interviewed to share your vision for WV, please email me at brandireece@newjobs.org. We

also have door hangers coming and will be giving away two \$50 gift cards to two random survey participants. Additionally, expect to see op-eds in the media regarding issues the project is focusing on.

That's all for this time! Stay safe, stay warm and live a life you love! And if you live in West Virginia, haven't done so yet and are so inclined, please consider scanning the code in our flyer, or visiting envision.newjobswv.org, and completing a Vision Project questionnaire. Thank you!

If you are interested in volunteering with our project, visit volunteer.newjobswv.org. §

Keeping Elections Fair and Free

By Julie Archer

Mountaineers are always free. This is the official motto of West Virginia, a state defined by our pioneering spirit as much as our humble dedication to our communities. It doesn't take much to see that West Virginians don't take kindly to politicians telling us what to think, or telling us that some voices matter more than others. But that could all change if a fringe legal theory wins the day and the U.S. Supreme Court sides with North Carolina legislators in a case called [Moore v. Harper](#).

West Virginians pride ourselves on making sure that every resident has an equal voice and equal say over who makes decisions that affect our families and communities. Moore v. Harper would do away with that and potentially upend elections nationwide. Those backing the case base their argument on the so-called independent state legislature theory – a fringe idea recently brought up by a small group of politicians who are trying to avoid fair voting maps and election outcomes. If this lawsuit succeeds, when it comes to federal elections, legislators would be free to manipu-



late our elections, and state courts couldn't stop them.

In our system of government, judges are supposed to be the referees who ensure elected officials play by the rules. If the U.S. Supreme Court sides with a handful of extremist politicians who want to block state courts from enforcing much-needed checks and balances, there'll be no one left to defend our right to vote. Not to mention that we elect our judges here in West Virginia; so, when politicians look to erode the power of our courts, they're effectively rejecting the will of Mountain State voters.

This isn't about being a conservative or a liberal, a Republican or a Democrat. This is the culmination of a decades-long power grab designed to put politics over people. That's why the heads of state supreme courts from all 50 states, including West Virginia, signed an [amicus brief](#) urging the U.S. Supreme Court to reject the argument suggested by Moore v. Harper. Other legal experts like former Judge J. Michael Luttig, long known as one of the most conservative members of the federal judiciary, have also opposed this attempted power grab. Luttig recently wrote that the half-baked theory behind the lawsuit was "[antithetical to the Framers' intent, and to the text, fundamental design, and architecture of the Constitution.](#)"

Fair Maps

Fair Courts

Fair Votes

Free Cont.

West Virginians are no strangers to power grabs or attacks on our courts. Last month, we voted to defeat a dangerous constitutional amendment that would have made it so that no court in the state could intervene to protect the right to a fair hearing of a public official facing impeachment, no matter how frivolous the charge or constitutionally flawed the process. We stood up for our courts and our Constitution then, and we'll do it again now.

We need to make sure that the dangerous ideologies at play in Moore v. Harper never threaten our country's values. Our elected officials, at every level of government, work for us – and that's how it should be. Anyone in favor of silencing our voices and undermining our votes doesn't deserve to represent our communities. As such, we must

hold accountable any [elected official who would back such a blatant and dangerous attack](#) on our courts and our checks and balances.

West Virginians fight for our freedoms, and we don't stand for attacks on the rights that we hold dear. When extremist politicians want near-total control of our elections, we know exactly what to tell them. That's why West Virginians need to come together to make sure that this extremist theory is never allowed into the mainstream. Our votes and rights depend on it.

Julie Archer is Project Manager at WV Citizen Action Group and Coordinator of WV Citizens for Clean Elections. A version of this article was published as an op-ed in the [Charleston Gazette-Mail](#) on Dec. 2. §

'People Over Politics Panel' Highlights Dangers of Moore v. Harper

WV & NC Activists and Legal Experts Discuss Potential for Election Chaos

On December 7, the U.S. Supreme Court heard [Moore v. Harper](#), a redistricting case where North Carolina lawmakers argue state legislatures should have near absolute power to run federal elections without checks and balances from the courts. Moore could make it easier for politicians to restrict the vote, draw rigged maps, and cast doubt on election results.

The following day, the [Greenbrier Chapter of the NAACP](#) (Branch #3227) and [Race Matters WV](#) hosted a virtual forum to educate West Virginians about the dangers the case poses and its potential to throw our elections into chaos.

Former WV Secretary of State, [Natalie Tennant](#), who is currently serving as a Harvard Kennedy School Institute of Politics Resident Fellow, served as the moderator. Faith leaders, community activists and legal experts from West Virginia and North Carolina provided background on the case, discussed its significance, and its impacts for voting rights and fair courts.

You can view a recording of the virtual forum at: facebook.com/racemattersingreenbriervalley

Panelists:

- Rev. Darick Biondi, Coordinator, WV Faith Table
- Atiba Ellis, Professor of Law, Marquette University
- Billy Corriher (NC), State Courts Manager, People's Parity Project
- Tyler Daye, Policy and Civic Engagement Manager, Common Cause North Carolina
- Ethan Herenstein, Counsel, Democracy Program, Brennan Center for Justice

Resources to Learn More and Take Action:

- Mountain State Spotlight article on Independent State Legislature Theory - <https://mountainstatespotlight.org/2022/09/12/wv-election-legal-theory-supreme-court/>
- Brennan Center for Justice Moore v. Harper Explainer - <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/moore-v-harper-explained>
- Video Explainer - <https://youtu.be/RdPZCMpP3u4> - Watch and Share!
- Common Cause NC and Southern Coalition for Social Justice (SCSJ) Moore v. Harper website - <https://www.mooreharper.org/>
- Advocate's Guide and Educational Toolkit - Take Action! <https://www.canva.com/design/DAFKPkFtC5Q/23D--tUndqD0RiutstZosg/view> §

WV Environmental Council 2023 Legislative Priorities

By Lucia Valentine

The 2023 Regular Legislative Session runs January 11 – March 11 2023. The West Virginia Environmental Council's list of legislative priorities includes bills we support and those we want to stop on a range of energy, clean water and public lands and elections policies.

Remember, you aren't alone as you meet with your elected officials. Our partners at WV Rivers Coalition recently held a training on "Advocating Close to Home" to help citizen advocates learn how to call or set up a meeting with legislators and know what to say when you meet with them or their staff. Watch a recording of the webinar and access the links shared during the presentation on www.wvrivers.org/advocate.

Energy:

- *Community Solar* – Promote access to affordable renewable energy through a solar facility subscription service where customers can purchase an interest in a solar facility and use credits against their electric utility costs.
- *Orphaned Gas Well Responsibility* – Require bonds to be set before drilling begins to cover plugging costs for gas wells that are abandoned or orphaned.
- *Adequate funding for inspectors for the WV DEP Office of Oil and Gas* – Support a tiered annual fee to create consistent annual funding to hire more inspectors and properly manage wells.
- *Mineland Reclamation* – Monitor the implementa-

tion of 2022's SB 1 which allocates taxpayer funds to provide bonds for high-risk coal operations.

- *Advanced Nuclear* – Monitor 2022's bill to repeal the state's ban on nuclear power, while opposing expansion of this energy source if no safe long-term storage is available.
- *Hydrogen Hub/CCS* – Monitor legislative developments and oppose any proposal that increases carbon emissions through use of fossil fuels.



Join us for a day of citizen lobbying on WVEC's legislative priorities. Participation is free. The WVEC team will help you set up meetings with your legislators and find your way around the Capitol. Email info@wvecouncil.org.

Priorities Cont.

Clean Water:

- *Aboveground Storage Tank Legislation* – Prevent further rollback of legislation passed after the 2014 chemical spill in Charleston. Recently defeated bills would have relaxed inspection requirements on oil and gas tanks located within zones of critical concern.
- *Safe Drinking Water* – Provide adequate public health protections from toxins threatening our drinking water supplies, specifically a group of chemicals known as “PFAS” or forever chemicals.
- *Water Quality Standards/Triennial Review* – Provide outreach and education at legislative public meetings

as the Legislature and WV DEP develop water quality standard rules.

Additional Priorities:

- *Public Lands* – Defeat proposals to open up public lands to Off-Road Vehicles and other legislation that would degrade WV’s state parks and forests.
- *Clean Elections/Voter Protection legislation* – Monitor harmful rollbacks to voter registration, early voting, and safe and secure elections.

Lucia is on the 2023 WVEC lobby team. Contact her at lucivaalentine10@gmail.com with questions, concerns, or ideas. Sign up for action alerts and legislative updates from WVEC at www.wvecouncil.org. §

2022 Awards Picnic

By Julie Archer

Thank you all so much for your continued support! You make what we do possible.

We had a great time on Thursday, Sept. 15th at Little Creek Park for our 2022 Awards Picnic. The temperature was delicious, as was the food, the games were fun, and the music was just lovely. All remaining food was donated to the Madison House and the Fulton House in Madison, WV.



Below is more about our outstanding awardees through excerpts from the awards presentations. You can view a video of the music and awards ceremony on YouTube (@wvcitizenaction) or Facebook (@WVCAG).

Don Marsh & Paul Nyden Public Service Award: [Crystal Good & Emily Thompson](#)

WV CAG Board member, Sally Roberts Wilson said, “I am honored today to be able to present the Don Marsh & Paul Nyden Public Service Award to two of the most joyfully and soulfully committed individuals to the furtherance of justice and equity in our state, our country and our world:

Crystal Good, an Affrilachian artist, social advocate, digital media entrepreneur, founder, publisher and Editor of [Black By God](#) the West Virginian, and the fiercely committed reproductive and social equity advocate, Emily Thompson, Director of Organizing for [Planned Parenthood Votes South Atlantic](#).”

Although Sally first met Crystal in the halls of the State Capitol, she said, “*Crystal’s creativity and love for writing have taken her into other avenues of important civic engagement work and that is in the Fourth Estate with her commitment to continuing the important legacy of Black journalism and newspapers in America. Her commitment to reporting and lifting up stories about, by and for the African American community is part of a legacy that has preserved important parts of our rich collective history that would otherwise have been unreported, falsely co-opted or corrupted, buried and forgotten. She has helped to move the content to the mediums of the 21st Century and will ensure that this rich history continues. And, that we are made aware of the contributions, so generally overlooked, unappreciated and marginalized, of the people in our communities who are doing such important work today.*”



Of Emily, Sally said, “What really impressed me was her

steadfast commitment to inclusion, racial equity and support of the LGBTQ community and especially the Trans community. And, like Crystal she was everywhere – in the halls of the legislature working to improve the lives of children in foster care, to provide coverage for post-partum health care, menstrual equity for school children and those in prison and of course defending reproductive freedoms, and also in the streets canvassing and working to elect those who would fight for the cause of reproductive justice. She is unstoppable.

What is equally remarkable is that she has often done this work without the explicit support of other progressive organizations who have tended to shy away from the controversial subject of abortion. She has had to do this work under threats and duress and with a fearlessness that true leaders possess. She has had the wonderful support of those in her organization and the reproductive community but often was in a position apart from the support that others in the general progressive community could count on. It did not stop her or make her give up. In the words of a great Senator, "She Persisted – and still she persists."

**Thomas A. Knight Excalibur Award:
Takeiya Smith**

Our Project Manager, Julie Archer, had the honor of presenting the Thomas A. Knight Excalibur Award to Takeiya Smith, founder and Executive Director of [Young WV Forward](#), for her leadership and commitment to racial, social and economic justice, and working to improve the quality of life for all West Virginians.

"Over the last 7 years, Takeiya has collaborated with community members, advocates, and allies to address racial justice matters in West Virginia ranging from equity on campuses, the school to prison pipeline, disparities in policing, economic justice and combating voter suppression. She is leading a youth and Black led movement empowering students to mobilize in their own communities to make change in the systems impacting our daily lives. ...

"Takeiya's accomplishments are too numerous to mention here, and it speaks volumes that she has already been recognized many times for her work and accomplishments including being the recipient of the [2020-21 Beacon Award](#) for her movement building work informing, supporting, and connecting



youth to social action and advocacy to address racial issues and make our communities, campuses and systems more equitable, compassionate and just. Most recently, WV Living Magazine named her a [2022 West Virginia Wonder Woman](#). ...

"I know that Takeiya has many years ahead of her, and that she will continue to inspire and be a source of strength and wisdom to those she has worked with, mentored, and become friends with through her organizing and advocacy."

**Si Galperin In Defense of Democracy Award:
Natalie Tennant**

Julie also presented the Si Galperin In Defense of Democracy Award to "an outstanding ally and friend," Natalie Tennant. Julie noted the interest Natalie took in the work we were doing with our partners and allies in the WV Citizens for Clean Elections coalition to increase transparency and accountability in WV elections, and to give everyday West Virginians a great voice in the political process as a candidate for Secretary of State; as well as her deep commitment to public service, one of the things Natalie and Si had in common.

"... Natalie has stood with us through major fights opposing voter ID legislation and multiple attempts to bring more money and less transparency into WV elections..."

"[Throughout 2021], Natalie always answered the call anytime we asked her to speak or participate in events as we worked to pass federal legislation to clean up our political



system, end gerrymandering, counter the power of big money in politics, and expand and protect voting rights. Even though she is a prominent figure used to the limelight, she didn't need to be front and center. She was glad just to show

up, hold signs and banners, and stand shoulder to shoulder with us in the fight.

"With the serious and ongoing threats to our democracy, we are extremely grateful that Natalie continues to lend her voice and speak out about the critical need to safeguard our elections from subversion and sabotage, and protect the freedom to vote for all Americans"

For more about our Awardees and to see a complete list of event sponsors, visit www.wvcag.org. §

WV Citizen Action Group
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Sustainer: ___\$250 Public Citizen: ___\$500

Enclosed is \$_____ made payable to **WV Citizen Action (WV CAG)** (not tax deductible).

Enclosed is \$_____ made payable to **WV Citizen Action Education Fund (WV-CAEF)** (tax deductible).

Please mail checks to:

WVCAG *or* WVCAEF | 1500 Dixie Street | Charleston, WV 25311

You can also donate online at

wvcag.org *or* wvcaef.org.

*Please consider setting up an
automatic monthly recurring donation.*

Thank you for your support!

