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Subject: The Leaflet: Happy New Year from The Heartland Institute!

Happy New Year from The Heartland Institute!

As the end of 2018 approaches, The Heartland Institute is reflecting on the state-based reforms that took place over the past year. While there is much work ahead for policymakers in 2019, there were many successful reforms that Heartland was happy to assist with.

In 2018, the [Wisconsin Legislature passed sweeping welfare reform](#). Gov. Scott Walker (R) signed welfare reform bills that increased the number of hours able-bodied adults must work or enroll in job training, from 20 hours to 30 hours per week, to receive benefits. The package included reforms that mandate drug testing for public housing assistance, prohibit food stamps and other Medicaid benefits based on the value of one's home, create an earned income tax credit pilot program and "Medical Assistance Savings Accounts," and implement asset testing.

Many of these important reforms were suggested in The Heartland Institute's [2015 Welfare Reform Report Card](#) and the fourth edition of [The Patriot's Toolbox](#). Heartland also provided [testimony](#) before Wisconsin's legislature prior to the passage of the legislation, in which a Heartland expert explained the tremendous benefits of these free-market reforms.

States also approved numerous health care reform measures in 2018. For example, seven states—Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, and Wisconsin—introduced common sense work requirements into their Medicaid programs. Under these reforms, able-bodied adults must seek employment, volunteer, or work at least 20 hours per week in order to remain enrolled in Medicaid.

Work requirements don't only save states huge amounts of money, they also dramatically increase the living standards of individuals enrolled in Medicaid. A recent study by the nonpartisan [Buckeye Institute](#) found that work requirements increase the earnings of Medicaid recipients by up to \$323,000 over their lifetime. And when these requirements move individuals off the program, they raise their incomes by nearly \$1 million.

[Energy issues dominated the November midterm elections](#), with voters in several states casting ballots in favor of energy and natural gas development. For example, Colorado rejected [an initiative](#) that would have substantially restricted new oil and gas development on private and state lands. Arizona voters opposed billionaire Tom Steyer's attempt to [require 50 percent of Arizona's electricity to be generated by renewable sources by 2030](#). Voters in Washington State rejected [a proposed tax on carbon dioxide](#). Heartland

provided analysis on all efforts, as well as targeted op-eds highlighting the dangers posed by these and other, similar alarmist proposals.

There are still a lot of reform efforts left to be accomplished in 2019 and beyond, and Heartland's Government Relations Department would love to assist you! We can provide [research and analysis](#) and draft [Policy Tip Sheets](#) on pertinent legislation you introduce. Heartland also has nearly 500 policy experts that can testify in your legislative chambers, and we regularly welcome legislators and policymakers as guests on our [Heartland Daily Podcast](#), which is downloaded three million times per year. Heartland can help you co-write an opinion article that could be placed in a state newspaper or with a national news source. Finally, Heartland is available to host events related to our various issue areas, including budget and taxes, education, energy and environment, health care, and constitutional reform.

Should you need any assistance this year, please do not hesitate to contact your "study-buddy" think tank, The Heartland Institute.

Happy New Year, and we wish you all the best in 2019!

What We're Working On

Budget & Tax

[Budget and Tax Issues in the Coming Legislative Session](#)

(Guest: Joe Barnett)

In this episode of the *Heartland Daily Podcast*, Joe Barnett, the new managing editor of *Budget & Tax News*, explains how states will take the lead in legislative reforms following the November elections. Issues states must address to ensure continued economic growth include reducing the tax burden and reforming the tax structure, eliminating unnecessary regulations, and controlling education and health care costs while taking steps to improve outcomes.

In the December issue of *Budget & Tax News*, Owen Macaulay reports on the Congressional Budget Office's "Monthly Budget Review for September 2018," which estimates the federal budget has grown by \$116 billion since FY 2017 and likely to exceed \$1 trillion per year by 2020. Chris Edwards, director of tax policy studies at the Cato Institute, points to government spending which consists of of handouts to various groups of people and is harmful to the economy.

[Budget & Tax News](#)

[Environment & Climate News](#)

[Health Care News](#)

Health Care

[Thirty-Eight States Joined Obamacare Lawsuit](#)

Thirty-seven states joined Texas in its federal lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). On December 14, 2018, a federal court in Texas ruled Obamacare's individual mandate is, in fact, unconstitutional because the Supreme Court's established justification for the mandate—that it's a legal use of Congress's taxing authority—no longer applies because the individual mandate penalty was reduced to \$0 in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of

Energy & Environment**U.S. Air Quality Has Dramatically Improved as Fossil-Fuel Use Has Substantially Increased**

In this *Research & Commentary*, Policy Analyst Tim Benson examines a new report from the Texas Public Policy Foundation (TPPF) showing significant U.S. air quality improvement over the past 50 years, a period in which fossil-fuel use has substantially increased. Benson urges legislators to refer to TPPF's findings and "not force Americans to switch from fossil fuels to higher-cost, intermittent, 'renewable' electricity sources, such as wind or solar."

Education**School Choice in the Wake of Two State Supreme Court Rulings (Guest: Lennie Jarratt)**

Lennie Jarratt, the project manager for the Center for Transforming Education at The Heartland Institute, joins the *Heartland Daily Podcast* to discuss recent court rulings in Montana and New Mexico and their implications for school choice reforms. The Montana Supreme Court ruled in *Espinoza v. Montana* that the state's tax-credit scholarship program is unconstitutional, and in New Mexico, the state's Supreme Court ruled in *Moses v. Ruszkowski* that students attending religiously affiliated schools cannot be denied state-approved education materials.

From Our Free Market Friends**The New Jersey Pension Crisis**

The Mercatus Center at George Mason University has published a new working paper, titled *The New Jersey Pension Crisis*. According to the paper's authors, New Jersey has some of the "highest debts, lowest credit ratings, highest tax rates, lowest citizen satisfaction rates, and highest out-migrate rates of any state." The authors note that the Garden State is unable to fund its pension system and they point to the fact that the state's "dedication of lottery revenues ... will only serve to hide" the state's pension underfunding.



The Heartland Institute

The Heartland Institute, founded in 1984, is a national non-profit organization dedicated to discovering, developing, and promoting free-market solutions to economic and social problems.

Our Websites

- The Heartland Institute
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