

COMMONWEALTH POLICY

Reinforcing the Commonwealth's Founding Principles - Renewing the Commonwealth's Future Promise

UNDERSTANDING THE WORK OF CPC



For many people, public policy is a topic they try not to sleep through in a junior high civics class or a college political science class. We can all admit some tried harder than others! Our goal in this newsletter is to help you understand the public policy work the Commonwealth Policy Center is striving to achieve for Kentucky.

Public policy is important because it affects our lives today and it shapes the future. Our society is influenced by the decisions voters, lawmakers and state leaders made in the past and the way those decisions are being implemented today.

Public policy is also important because it reflects the worldview of voters, lawmakers and state leaders. The worldview of policy makers affects every person under their authority. Legislators can improve the lives of those they represent, but citizens also play an important role for creating a better society.

The Commonwealth Policy Center understands these important principles. We're working to instill conservative values across Kentucky. We believe the Judeo-Christian worldview has benefited the United States and the Commonwealth of Kentucky for more than 200 years and we're working to shore up those important principles for future generations.

In 2012, Richard Nelson collaborated with conservative business and political leaders and asked to consider starting a unique public policy group in Kentucky. They

were convinced a drastic change was needed. They believed the political leadership that had been in place in Kentucky was preventing the flourishing of the citizens of the Commonwealth.

The vision they cast was large. It was a God-sized task. Five years later, the evidence of God's blessing and favor is obvious in the work of CPC. The group's early days saw a number of providential markers and we continue to see God's hand in our work today.

Relationships have been invaluable in the work accomplished by CPC. Hundreds of Kentuckians have helped to accomplish the work needed and have given generously financially along the way.

The board members of CPC have been faithful to contribute to the important work of seeing change come to Kentucky. They have invested their wisdom and character as we have worked with political candidates and policy issues across the Commonwealth.

During our first five years, we've tried to make kindness a primary aim. We strongly believe that every person is created in God's image and is worthy of dignity and respect. We try to reflect this in everything we do. We believe this is one of the reasons we've gained influence and opportunity all across the Commonwealth. We're grateful for the role we've played in strengthening Kentucky and are looking forward to the future.

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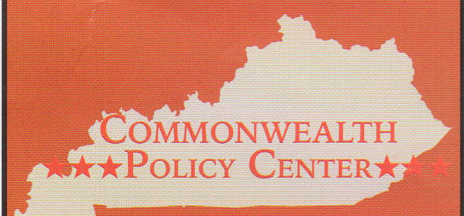
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The Commonwealth Policy Center is a non-profit public policy group helping Kentuckians value life, protect natural marriage, defend religious liberty, and promote fiscal integrity.

Focusing on the Work of the Comr

Raising Up Conservative Candidates

While CPC is known across Kentucky for a number of reasons, it may be best known for recruiting and training conservative candidates.

Candidate Trainings occur in the winter and late spring of election years in various locations across the state. They give people access to information and resources they need to help engage in a successful campaign.

The event features well known leaders from across Kentucky. They cover topics such as how to assemble a successful campaign, fundraising, media engagement, messaging, and more.

Since the first candidate training in 2013, 267 people attended nine training events. Attendees are now serving in local, state and constitutional offices.

Rep. Melinda Gibbons Prunty (R-Belton) said of CPC's training, "The Candidate

ing. Looking back on the event he said, "This past year, I was honored to be asked by Richard Nelson to help lead a class of new candidates through the realities of political campaigns. The experience helping these great new candidates helped me realize just how vital the Commonwealth Policy Center is to spreading the conservative and common sense message throughout Kentucky."

Even though there is a conservative majority in Frankfort now, we know that we're only one election away from that being reversed. CPC is committed to stay in the trenches working to recruit, train, and empower candidates that will stand for Kentucky's values.

The next candidate training is set for Saturday, January 27, 2018, in Frankfort. Registration is open at our website.



Robin Engel, Robby Mills, and Richard Nelson (L to R) lead a candidate training event in Henderson, KY, in February 2015.

training I attended laid a great foundation for knowing how to get started and different aspects of a campaign to address."

House Majority Whip Kevin Bratcher (R-Louisville) recently helped lead a train-

Engaging the Media



Chad Young of WKCT radio in Bowling Green talks with us about the impact and prevention of fake news.

When you turn on the television or radio, or pick up your favorite newspaper, the lines between reporting and commentary have never been more skewed. The news media plays a key role across Kentucky as people depend on television, radio, newspapers, and websites to provide important information.

Richard Nelson and Brandon Porter are working to help people think through today's tough issues. They're working to help people sort out fact from opinion in the stories that most affect Kentucky.

The Commonwealth Minute, a daily radio commentary heard on 45 stations, provides perspective on issues that affect Kentuckians as Richard Nelson delivers careful and thoughtful analysis.

The Commonwealth Matters is a half hour weekly program that features interviews with state leaders and reaction on important and relevant issues

from Brandon Porter and Richard Nelson. The program is aired in Bowling Green, Owensboro, Paducah, Mayfield, Ashland, Prestonsburg and Hazard.

Richard Nelson has been a guest on KET's Kentucky Tonight numerous times. He's also appeared on programs on Christian television stations all across Kentucky and is a regular host on WNKJ in Hopkinsville and a monthly guest on WRUS in Russellville.

Brandon Porter is a regular contributor to WCVK, a Christian radio station in Bowling Green, as they consider social issues

from a Biblical perspective.

Nelson and Porter have both been published in newspapers across the state and on the Kentucky Baptist Convention's news site, KentuckyToday.com.

In 2017, the Louisville *Courier-Journal* began running Nelson's column's. His pieces have been picked up by the *USA Today*. He's been published in the *Lexington Herald-Leader* and the *Cincinnati Enquirer* on a regular basis.



"We need a columnist whose political analysis is cogent and articulate. You game?"

Strengthening Churches Across Kentucky

CPC is thankful for the work of the local church and believes it is essential for the local community, the Commonwealth and the nation to flourish. Since our inception, we have worked alongside church and ministry leaders to equip church members to deal with current public policy issues.

We've helped hundreds of churches across Kentucky to better understand how they can enter the public arena to uphold Biblical principles in a gracious way. We've provided model governing document resources and have held town hall meetings in churches as they dealt with various issues in their community. We've also helped them organize speakers and events to influence city, county, and state officials.

In 2016, CPC was invited to partner with Gov. Matt Bevin's office to host a Pastor Appreciation Event at the Governor's Mansion. Many pastors said it was the first time

they had ever been invited to attend an event that included a sitting governor.

CPC works on behalf of Christians in Kentucky. Dr. Hershael York of Buck Run Baptist Church in Frankfort said, "Kentuckians of faith are blessed that we have the Commonwealth Policy Center not only to inform us, but also to stand guard and

defend our most precious rights and to affect change consistent with our beliefs."

Richard Nelson of CPC says, "Religious liberty is the cornerstone of our Commonwealth. It allows us to stand for the Biblical views of life and marriage and we want to do everything possible to help protect it."



Pastors and many of their spouses from across Kentucky gathered at the Governor's Mansion in October 2016, as CPC hosted a Pastor Appreciation Event with Governor Matt Bevin.

Providing Perspective

When a state legislator heads to Frankfort, it is challenging to keep promises to voters and to maintain the perspective of those that sent them to Frankfort.

The Commonwealth Policy Center understands the challenge legislators face and we work to help them stand firm in their commitments and values.

We work alongside legislators by providing research and insight they can use as they prepare legislation, attend committee hearings, and work on the floor of the Kentucky General Assembly.

In 2017, Richard Nelson was able to testify in two of the committee meetings as key right-to-life legislation was moving through the General Assembly.

Thankfully, both bills passed and were signed into law by Gov. Bevin before the conclusion of the 2017 session. Fact Sheets provided by the Commonwealth Policy Center were distributed to all of the members of the Kentucky House and Senate prior to the vote on the legislation.



Dr. Albert Mohler, President of Southern Seminary speaks to state leaders at the Governor's Mansion on February 14, 2017.

In February 2017, Gov. Matt Bevin invited CPC to host state leaders at the Governor's Mansion to hear from Dr. Albert Mohler. Mohler spoke to state legislators, Cabinet Secretaries, and other state leaders about the importance of remembering their Christian worldview as they work for human flourishing through government.

CPC also helped defeat Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) ordinances proposed earlier this year in Bowling Green, Georgetown and Shelbyville.

CPC Candidate Training Event

- Running a Successful Campaign from Start to Finish
- Fundraising
- Working with the Media
- Messaging
- Much More!

Registration - \$100
(includes lunch)

Register at
CommonwealthTraining.org
Limited Seating!

Saturday,
January 27, 2018
7:30am
Frankfort Country Club

The Early Days of the Commonwealth Policy Center

Have you ever wondered how CPC got its start? It had to do with a vision, a timely phone call, and series of events that led Richard Nelson to embark on a journey that led to the creation of the Commonwealth Policy Center. "I didn't know exactly what I was getting into," Nelson said. "But I understood perfectly the great need to shore up the pillars of society—life, marriage and religious freedom. I knew we needed to help principled men and women get elected to serve in Frankfort and to work with them in this endeavor."

Nelson served as a field representative with the state affiliate of Focus on the Family for nearly 14 years and was elected to serve as a Trigg County magistrate in 2010. Shortly after the election, he was talking with a friend who directed a conservative political action committee. Nelson shared that he was pleased to serve in public office but felt a deep desire to have even greater political impact, particularly to help other conservatives get elected. The friend blurted

out, "I've been praying for someone to step up and take on this role and you'd be the perfect person to do this!" That chance conversation sparked the formation of CPC.

After a series of meetings with key people and events that could have only been Providential, CPC incorporated as a 501c4 nonprofit in March of 2012. A group of doctors, businessmen, farmers and elected officials from across Kentucky comprised the original board to guide the fledgling organization.

The goal was to help elect a conservative, principled majority to serve in the Kentucky state House. After recruiting, training, and endorsing candidates over three election cycles, that goal was achieved last November. Conservatives won 64 seats and now hold a supermajority.

CPC has one daily and two weekly radio programs heard on 50 stations. They have developed relationships across Kentucky with major news media, elected officials and ministry leaders. State

Auditor Mike Harmon said "The people of this state and this nation are better by your efforts." Gov. Bevin called "CPC an asset to the Commonwealth of Kentucky." Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Director said Nelson "has been a great help to people and churches all across the state who want to see our values preserved."

"God had his hand in this from the beginning," Nelson said. "He's the one that gave me the vision. He orchestrated a key phone call and put the right team together to bring about the change Kentucky desperately needed. It's really a privilege for me to do this work and I give God all the thanks and praise."

Commonwealth Policy

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COMMONWEALTH
★★POLICY CENTER★★

Friend of the Commonwealth

We're helping conservative candidates get into office,
providing clear perspective to the media,
and working with churches across Kentucky.

Would you help us by being a
Friend of the Commonwealth?

Regularly pray for us by name
Partner by giving \$25 per month

CommonwealthFriend.org
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The Relief Effort for Kentucky's Foster Care Kids

By Richard Nelson
Richard@CommonwealthPolicy.org

If Hurricane Harvey's record rainfall doused the fiery political climate, then the images of rescue workers saving children have softened embittered hearts in our politically divisive age. One evocative photo depicts a disaster relief worker slogging through muddied Houston waters carrying an Asian woman who is cradling her infant.

Yet as Harvey leaves the battered Southeast Texas coast for disaster relief workers, there is another crisis involving children and it's looming in the shadows of every Kentucky community. There is no hurricane. There is no 24/7 news coverage. It's a tragedy nonetheless. I'm talking about the 8,572 children cast adrift in Kentucky's foster care system and left without permanent families.

Just a few days ago, boats were going door to door in Houston neighborhoods rescuing entire families, but who exactly will come to the rescue of Kentucky's kids who don't have permanent homes to begin with? Nearly 2000 are available for adoption right now. That's just under 17 kids per county.

I recently talked with Kentucky's newly appointed Adoption Czar Dan Dumas, who is spearheading major change in a system that many see as dysfunctional. Dumas said that after immersing himself into the foster care system, he's seeing more than he may have bargained for. "I've cried more in the last 80 days than I have in the last 51 years," Dumas said.

Dumas is witnessing kids coming into the system traumatized and abused, but even more troubling is knowing they're coming into a broken system, one apparently stuck in status quo mode while kids languish, and wait. "It's a really difficult space," Dumas said. "It's a very hard thing to deal with." He says that there needs to be a new sense of urgency to find them homes.

The Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) is responsible for Kentucky's children in foster care but bureaucracy, secrecy, and protection of its own image stand in their way. Last year, the agency was slapped with a \$1 million fine for obstructing an open records request into the high-profile death of a Western Kentucky girl. Kentucky Court of Appeals Judge Irv Maze wrote an opinion castigating the

agency's "culture of secrecy" and "systematic and categorical disregard for the rule of law." It was a wake-up call.

Mistakes are costly, especially when they involve the most vulnerable among us. But another cost accrues when we fail to aggressively place children in permanent homes. Each child in foster care costs the state of Kentucky an average of \$53,000 per year. While human life cannot be quantified merely in dollars and cents, Kentuckians pay over \$450 million a year in foster care.

Dumas, a former executive at Southern Seminary and recruited by Gov. Bevin to fix the foster care system, received harsh criticism

for his \$240,000/year no-bid contract approved by a legislative committee on June 13. Incentives may allow for even greater pay, but if those goals are reached and more kids find permanent homes, Kentucky taxpayers may be getting their monies worth. For example, if the 2000 foster children available for adoption were permanently placed, it would save Kentucky taxpayers more than \$100 million per year.

Dumas said his goal is to make the "adoption and foster care system faster, safer, more affordable, and more accessible." Kentucky Youth Advocates Director Terry Brooks praised the appointment. So did Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Director Paul Chitwood.

Not everyone can become a foster or adoptive parent but there are other ways to help according to Dumas. Mentors are needed. So are respite-care providers and life-skills teachers. People can also donate to any of the 101 licensed foster care facility nonprofits that care for children.

"Our backs are against the wall... No one person can fix the problem. But together we can." Dumas said. "We need to join hearts, join hands. It's a collective effort."

Sounds a little bit like the efforts in Houston doesn't it? An added benefit is that focussing on kids who are less fortunate turns down the political heat that puts us at odds with one another; in the end we're improving the lives of Kentucky children by fixing foster care.

This column appeared in the September 8, 2017 online edition of the *USA Today* and September 9, 2017 edition of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*.



All that is necessary
for evil to triumph
is for good men
to do nothing.

- Sir Edmund Burke

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How to Love Your LGBT Neighbors without Losing Your Convictions

Featured Speakers:

Dr. Glenn Stanton, Focus on the Family
Andrew Walker, Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission
Richard Nelson, Commonwealth Policy Center

Hosted by:
The Commonwealth Policy Center
CommonwealthPolicyCenter.org

Monday, November 6
Ashland Avenue
Baptist Church
483 West Reynold Rd.
Lexington, KY 40503
7:00pm

Tuesday, November 7
Eastwood Baptist Church
South Campus
9444 Scottsville Rd.
Alvaton, KY 42122
7:00pm

Wednesday, November 8
Highview Baptist Church
Fegenbush Campus
7711 Fegenbush Lane
Louisville, KY 40228
6:30pm