
COMMONWEALTH
★ ★ POLICY CENTER ★ ★

EST. 2012

ANNUAL REPORT

2023

REINFORCING THE COMMONWEALTH'S FOUNDING PRINCIPLES.

RENEWING THE COMMONWEALTH'S FUTURE PROMISE.

WWW.COMMONWEALTHPOLICYCENTER.ORG

WHO WE ARE

The Commonwealth Policy Center (CPC) is dedicated to preserving the bedrock values of life, religious liberty, marriage, and fiscal responsibility in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. We affirm as stated in the Kentucky Constitution that our civil, political, and religious liberties come from God.

CPC educates the general public, works for sound public policies, and influences elections on behalf of conservative candidates.



RICHARD NELSON
Executive Director / Founder



JENNY BENNETT
Executive Administrator



COLE CUZICK
Political Outreach Director



CHRISTOPHER PARR
Research Assistant



ALEX RICHEY
Executive Assistant



JUSTIN WARRINER
Community Outreach Field Rep.

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Just prior to writing this year-end report, I recorded my daily radio commentaries, and reported about California's extreme gender ideology push which requires toy stores to have gender-neutral aisles for gender confused children. If a toy store fails to do this, they will face fines beginning in January. Of course, this violates business owners' rights. It also flies in the face of biological, sociological, and moral reality.

I share this not to alarm you, but as a point of reference as to what happens to society when its left without a moral reference point, a place where God is left out. While Kentucky is not California, this mentality is pervasive in our culture. It also underscores why CPC does the work it's doing. We are working to honor God in public policy in a way that protects children, families, and points to the moral compass that any healthy society should embrace. Here's a brief synopsis of several major projects CPC undertook in 2023.

Pushing Back Against the LGBTQ Agenda

We were successful in helping to pass SB 150, the comprehensive bill that kept gender ideology out of our public schools and also protected young people from gender mutilation surgeries and dangerous hormones. We held workshops across the state to equip parents of public school, students, and teachers to better understand what's going on and how to effectively respond. I was able to speak on this issue on KET's Kentucky Tonight, where we effectively advanced our position.

Christian Nationalism Conference

CPC is in a position to bring some of the top thinkers and speakers together to address pressing issues of the day. This was the case in September when we hosted a conference on the issue of Christian nationalism. Andrew Walker, John Wilsey, and Colin Smothers addressed the Stephen Wolfe version of Christian nationalism. You can watch it on CPC's YouTube channel. This is likely to emerge as a top issue in the 2024 presidential election.

The Commonwealth Matters

Several interesting guests joined me on The Commonwealth Matters this year, including Betsy DeVos, Carl Trueman, and Riley Gaines. I recently interviewed Rosaria Butterfield who wrote *Five Lies of our Anti-Christian Age*. She talked about how many of the lies of our age have infiltrated the

church and have been promoted by prominent evangelicals. I encourage you to take a listen on your podcast app, and if you haven't already, please subscribe to The Commonwealth Matters.

Legislator Events

CPC has strong relationships with legislators across the state. We held a press conference on the Capitol steps in late October to address Gov. Andy Beshear's abortion exception push and the pro abortion ad that he ran. We briefed several legislators on how to address the abortion exception issue from a principled perspective. We plan to host several more briefings in the 2024 session.

Election Involvement

CPC heavily engaged the constitutional office races this year. Five of six of our endorsed candidates won. We raised nearly \$350,000 and produced voter guides, television ads, text messages, and a door knocking campaign throughout the state. It was an ambitious campaign, and we know it moved the needle. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough to help Daniel Cameron get into the governorship.

Candidate Training

CPC is planning our next candidate training event February 2-3 in Frankfort. If you know anybody who's interested in running for office, please send them to our website to register. This is an important aspect of our work, as we need to raise up leaders to represent conservative values in our state and local government.

As I reflect on all of the major activities and overall good that CPC has accomplished this past year, I am reminded that the greatest good for us came to earth 2000 years ago, when God the Son became incarnate and came to rescue us and restore us. Jesus is our hope not just in the Christmas season, but He's our hope every day of the year. And that's good news worth dwelling on!

Together we are making a difference for a stronger, healthier, and more prosperous commonwealth. To that end, I thank each of you for your support and standing with us this year. May God bless you.

Very sincerely yours,



Richard Nelson
Executive Director / Founder

WORKSHOPS

We Equipped Parents to Push Back Against the LGBT Agenda in Public Schools



Clint Elliott speaking at our LaGrange workshop on July 29th.

CPC hosted five workshops across the state to help Christians think and respond biblically to the LGBTQ push in public schools. Nearly 400 parents, teachers, and administrators in Bowling Green, Owensboro, Prestonsburg, LaGrange, and Lexington told us how this workshop greatly benefited them. Participants left energized and equipped with the knowledge and resources to become more involved in their children's schools and school board.

Clint Elliott, a lawyer and executive director of the Justice Defense Fund, discussed the legal rights of public school teachers and staff and how to tactfully respond to controversial issues. Former Anderson County high school principal Randy Adams shared how to maintain conscience rights, respectfully communicate concerns with public school administrators, and treat students in a positive way. Richard Nelson and Cole Cuzick spoke on the current political climate and recent legislation that addressed LGBT issues in education.



Richard Nelson speaking at our Prestonsburg workshop on June 17th.

CONFERENCE ON CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM

We Took a Look at the Historical, Biblical, and Ethical Aspects of This Popular and Problematic Movement

On September 15th, we partnered with the Kenwood Institute to host a conference on Christian Nationalism at Kenwood Baptist Church. Our speakers were Dr. John Wilsey (Professor of Church History at Southern Seminary), Dr. Colin Smothers (Director of the Kenwood Institute), and Dr. Andrew Walker (Associate Professor of Christian Ethics And Public Theology at Southern Seminary). Wilsey's talk was titled: "Nostalgia, Cynicism, and Virtue: Christianity, History, and the Nation." He spoke about having a proper understanding of the past while avoiding cynicism and nostalgia. He also spoke about the history of Christian Nationalism.



Richard Nelson speaking on the necessity of the conference.

Smothers' talk was titled: "Towards a Biblical Account of the Origins of Church and State." In this talk, Smothers explained that both the Church and the State were established by God but given two different purposes. Walker's talk was titled: "Something is Rotten in Finland: On the Ethical Perils of Church-State Establishment." He discussed the perils of formalizing church-state relations, which allows the state to co-opt the Church to accomplish its ends, resulting in greater harm for all. We ended the night with a Q&A moderated by Richard Nelson, where the speakers fleshed out what it looks like to be a Christian-influenced Nation rather than a Christian Nation.



Q&A Segment of the Christian Nationalism Conference.

RADIO PROGRAMS

The Commonwealth Minute & The Commonwealth Matters

The Commonwealth Matters

Every week, CPC Executive Director Richard Nelson hosts a 30-minute conversation with Kentucky leaders and other experts from around the country to inform and equip Kentuckians about the important political and cultural issues which shape our commonwealth. The Commonwealth Matters is released as both a podcast and a radio show heard on stations across the state. Guests included Dr. Thomas Kidd, who shared the history behind the first Thanksgiving. Scott Klusendorf, a nationally renowned pro-life leader, shared strategies to defend innocent life.



*Former US Secretary of Education
Betsy DeVos joined us on August 30th.*



Roasaria Butterfield joined us on December 6th.

We've also hosted former AG Daniel Cameron, State Sen. Robby Mills, Riley Gaines, Pastor Bob Russell, and Sec. of Education Betsy DeVos. Would you please consider subscribing to The Commonwealth Matters on your favorite podcast platform? And, if you find the show to be a helpful and encouraging resource in our confusing culture, please tell your friends!

The Commonwealth Minute

Many people do not receive trustworthy news and do not know how to think through the issues. CPC fulfills that need by producing a 1-minute radio program called The Commonwealth Minute that provides commentary on the latest local and national news facing Kentuckians. This program is heard on over 40 radio stations across Kentucky, and is posted everyday on our Facebook and Twitter.

LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS

We Had Great Impact and Success on Crucial Legislation

CPC had great success this past legislative session, which ran from January to March. In the 30 working days, we strongly advocated for SB 5, SB 150, and HB 594. SB 5 gave parents recourse to remove inappropriate material in public schools. SB 150 was a sweeping omnibus bill that protects Kentucky's children from the harmful effects of the LGBT agenda. The law protects Kentucky school kids from controversial LGBT indoctrination in K-12 public school classrooms, makes clear that bathroom and locker room policy corresponds to biological sex, and prohibits gender transitions of minors. The bill initially passed both chambers and the Republican super-majority was able to override Gov. Beshear's veto. Our advocacy for SB 150 included working directly with legislators to ensure its passage, writing and publishing an op-ed in *Kentucky Today*, appearing on KET's *Kentucky Tonight*, leading a petition drive to encourage the legislature and to override Beshear's veto.



Nelson on KET Tonight discussing SB 150 on June 19th.



Nelson testifies before the Senate VMAPP Committee on SB 115 on March 2.

HB 594 also passed the legislature, which bans the predatory gambling devices known as gray machines. Unfortunately, sports gambling was legalized (HB 551) and a bill restricting sexually explicit performances in public areas to protect children failed to pass (SB 115). Executive Director Richard Nelson appeared on *Kentucky Tonight* in a debate with Sen. Damon Thayer on sports gambling and published an op-ed opposing the bill in *Kentucky Today*. Nelson also testified before the Senate Veterans Affairs and Public Protection to demonstrate the necessity of SB 115. We will continue our fight in ensuring the pillars of society are protected in Kentucky.

TAKING THE LEAD ON LIFE

We Took a Leadership Role in Responding to Gov. Beshear's Distorted Abortion Narrative

Gov. Beshear's campaign ran a TV ad with a young woman who was raped as a teenager and says she would've been forced to have the baby if abortion wasn't an option, though she eventually had a miscarriage. Through TV and social media ads, CPC helped Brittanie Bogard share her story of her mom valuing her life even though she was raped. Brittanie is a testimony that beautiful life can come from an unfortunate beginning. Her life was worth protecting.



Brittanie Bogard TV Ad

In 2021 Gov. Beshear vetoed the Born-Alive Infant because, he said, "[surviving an abortion] is something that never happens." However, Robin Sertell survived an attempted abortion and shared her story in a press conference we coordinated on October 19th and in a video ad that aired across the state. Both Brittanie and Robin humanize the difficult cases of conception.



Robin Sertell speaks at legislative press conference in front of the capitol on Oct. 19th.

After the 2023 elections, some Republicans see abortion as a losing issue and are advocating for exceptions in Kentucky's pro-life laws. CPC is leading the charge in this next legislative session to defend our strong laws and protect all unborn life, regardless of the circumstances of conception. We held a legislative briefing with the pro-life caucus on the consequences of implementing exceptions in our office on December 11th.



Pro-Life Legislative Briefing at the CPC Office on Dec. 11th.

EQUIPPING KENTUCKIANS TO VOTE

We Reached Thousands of Kentucky Voters with Election Resources

CPC was busy this election season as we distributed candidate questionnaires to every candidate for constitutional office, prepared voter guides for every race (both primary and general elections), created advertisements for social media and state-wide newspapers, created video advertisements, and coordinated door knocking and phone banking campaigns. Every resource we produced hit a Kentucky voter and helped them make an informed decision on Election Day.



CPC's founding board members, including State Sen. Robby Mills, who was the Republican Lt. Governor Candidate, at a fundraising event on August 4th.

★★ WHO WILL REPRESENT YOUR VALUES? ★★



Andy Beshear (D)

Kentucky Governor's Race

The information below was compiled from official actions and a candidate questionnaire distributed by the Commonwealth Policy Center, a nonprofit, nonpartisan Kentucky organization.



Daniel Cameron (R)

NO	Protect Human Life	YES
NO	Protect Religious Freedom	YES
NO	Educational Freedom	YES
YES	Forced Gender Preferred Pronouns	NO
YES	Transgender Bathrooms and Sports	NO
YES	Sex "Reassignment" Surgery for Minors	NO
NO	Parental Rights	YES
NO	Work Requirements for Medicaid	YES
MIXED	Lower Taxes	YES

CPC's 2023 Gubernatorial Voter Guide

- 102 weekly newspapers ran our voter guide advertisement twice
- 136,500 voter guides were mailed
- 683,500 text messages were sent
- 143,000 voters saw our pro-life ad on streaming services
- 22,605 doors were knocked
- 7,470 calls were made
- 329,000 voters saw our social media ads

WAYS TO HELP US WITH OUR MISSION

Pray, Give, and Follow

The Commonwealth Policy Center receives no government funding or backing from a single industry. In fact, we are supported by concerned Kentuckians just like you! You can come alongside CPC and help us achieve our mission in three ways: pray, give, and follow us on social media.

Ways to Pray for CPC:

- Pray that CPC remains faithful to its mission
- Pray that CPC continues to make strides in shoring up the pillars of society in Kentucky
- Pray that CPC and our staff are protected from the enemy
- Pray that Kentuckians are generous to CPC so that we can accomplish our mission



Riley Gaines speaks at a CP PAC Fundraising Event in Bowling Green on September 27th.



We cannot do this important work without financial support. We wisely steward the resources we receive so that we can faithfully perform our work of ensuring family values are protected in Kentucky for the next generation. You can donate by scanning the QR Code or go to CommonwealthPolicyCenter.org/donate

Follow Us On Our Social Media Platforms!



@Commonwealthpolicy



@CPC4KY



@commonwealthpolicycenter915

WAYS TO HELP US WITH OUR MISSION

Give Through QCDs and Estate Planning

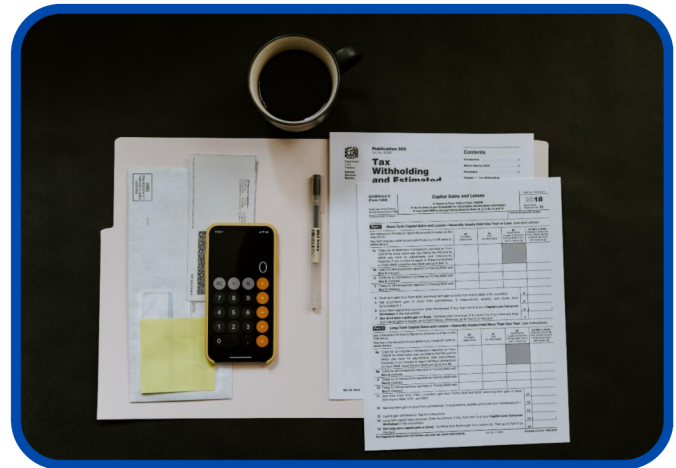
Qualified Charitable Distributions

Does tax-free charitable giving sound impossible? Maybe not. If you're 70 1/2 or older and own an individual retirement account (IRA), the IRS permits tax-free transfers directly to the Commonwealth Policy Foundation (CPF) or other eligible charitable (501c3) organizations through Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD). The entire QCD amount goes to CPF, is not registered as income to the donor, is tax-free and satisfies part or all the the annual Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) up to \$100,000. This can benefit both you and the CPC mission!

Recent tax law changes have encouraged more tax filers to use the standard deduction, thus eliminating the tax deductibility of charitable donations. QCDs provide a tax-free pathway to continue or enhance charitable support of the Commonwealth Policy Foundation while using the standard deduction option. The QCD comes directly from your retirement account custodian to CPF, the donor does not take ownership of the distribution. Most IRA custodial institutions provide simple guidelines for setting up the QCD process. Although the SECURE act delayed Required Minimum Distributions until age 72, QCD's can still be utilized as soon as one turns 70 1/2.

Estate Planning

CPC is entering its 12th year this spring, which reminds us how quickly the time has gone. Our goal is to leave behind a legacy of God-honoring leadership and public policies that promote human flourishing. Perhaps you've reflected and asked what you're leaving behind. Maybe you've asked who will fight for your grandchildren and their children? Have you considered including CPC in your legacy and estate plan? If so, we'd be glad to talk with you further about this. Please contact richard@commonwealthpolicy.org.



CPC BOARD MEMBERS



Leighan Dickerson
Board President

Paul Herrell
Board Treasurer

Marty Bozarth

Jeff Davis

Andy French

Angela Minter

Brian Schuette

COMMONWEALTH ★★POLICY CENTER★★ Candidate Training

Friday, February 2
*Tackling the
Tough Issues*

Saturday, February 3
*How to Run a
Successful Campaign*

\$150 per Person | Student Rate: \$25

*Register at
CommonwealthPolicyCenter.org*

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