



ABOUT THE PEW CENTER ON THE STATES

The Pew Center on the States is a new division of The Pew Charitable Trusts. By conducting nonpartisan research and analysis, educating the public and federal and state policy makers, bringing together diverse stakeholders, and encouraging pragmatic, consensus-based solutions, the Center identifies and advances effective public policy approaches to critical issues facing states.

For more information, visit www.pewtrusts.org or e-mail pcs@pewtrusts.org.

ABOUT THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS

The Pew Charitable Trusts is driven by the power of knowledge to solve today's most challenging problems. Pew applies a rigorous, analytical approach to improve public policy, inform the public and stimulate civic life. We partner with a diverse range of donors, public and private organizations and concerned citizens who share our commitment to fact-based solutions and goal-driven investments to improve society.

For more information about The Pew Charitable Trusts, visit www.pewtrusts.org.

THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS

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The logo for the Pew Center on the States, featuring the words "PEW CENTER" in a light blue sans-serif font above "on THE STATES" in a darker blue sans-serif font. The text is framed by two horizontal blue bars.

A DIVISION OF THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS



FOSTERING
INNOVATION,
CONSENSUS AND
EFFECTIVENESS
IN STATE POLICY

IT MATTERS WHERE YOU LIVE



In the November 2004 general elections, 74% of **Oregon's** eligible voters went to the polls — the third-highest participation rate in the country. **Oklahoma's** rate — 62.3% — ranked 37th in the nation.



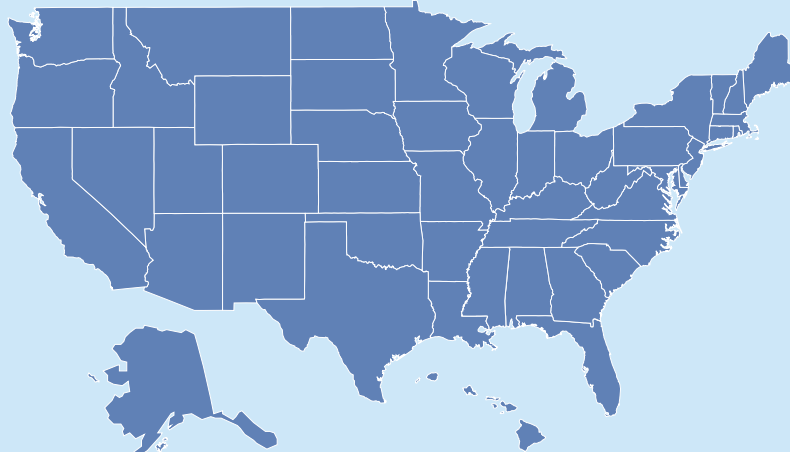
Wyoming ranks 1st in federal aid to state and local governments (about \$3,918 per capita); **Virginia** ranks 49th (about \$942 per capita).



South Dakota ranks 23rd in percentage of population with a high school diploma (87.5%); **Minnesota** ranks 1st (92.3%).



Nevada ranks 2nd highest in release of toxic chemicals. **California** ranks 46th.



New Mexico and **Alabama** are among the 10 states with the most citizens in poverty. 16.5% of New Mexicans and 16.9% of Alabamians live at or below the poverty level.



Tennessee's foreign-born population increased by about 36% between 2000 and 2004. **New York** state's foreign-born population grew by just roughly 3% during the same period.



In **Minnesota**, over 90% of non-elderly residents have health insurance. That's the highest rate in the nation. **Texas** has the lowest rate: 72.4% of its non-elderly residents are insured.



Massachusetts spends the most per prisoner: \$80,238 per year. **Mississippi**, at \$10,094 per year, spends the least.



Between 2000 and 2005, home prices in **Rhode Island** rose by more than 100%. During the same period, **Utah's** home prices increased 21.75%.



Voluntary preschool is free to all 4 year olds in **Georgia**; **Indiana** does not offer state-funded preschool.

Sources: Congressional Quarterly's State Fact Finder 2005; U.S. Census Bureau; National Institute for Early Education Research

State policy makers spend far less time in the limelight than members of Congress. Yet their decisions on a range of critical issues — from education reform and health care to homeland security and the environment — deeply affect the lives of all Americans. State lawmakers are often more willing than their federal counterparts to cross party lines and take risks to develop innovative solutions to difficult problems. Many state decision-makers are tackling important issues by forging common ground and looking across their borders to see how other states are managing similar challenges.



The Pew Center on the States advances effective policy approaches to critical issues facing states. The Center conducts nonpartisan research, brings together diverse perspectives, analyzes states' experiences to determine what works and what does not and collaborates with other funders and organizations to encourage nonpartisan, pragmatic solutions.

THE CENTER'S APPROACH

GATHERING INFORMATION

The Center gathers data across states on factors that affect policy, from budget and economic trends to states' policy climates. This baseline research helps states, the Trusts and its partners better understand a range of potential state policy issues that affects the public. It also is used to generate a series of Web-based indicators and reports that highlight—and in some cases, grade—variation across states in areas of key concern to policy makers and the public.

GUIDING INNOVATION

As problems become serious, states begin to explore policy options, tackling issues in different ways. The Center identifies

challenges affecting multiple states and places where innovation is emerging. Using various tools—from research to meetings that bring diverse stakeholders together—the Center highlights the different policy directions in play in the states, assesses their impact and identifies approaches that have been most effective.

ADVANCING POLICY SOLUTIONS

We start with the facts—but we do not stop there. When solid evidence indicates that a policy approach is both effective and feasible, the Center enhances public education and advocacy efforts funded by the Trusts and others to help states move change forward.

THE CENTER'S ACTIVITIES

- ★ Original research and analysis, including cross-state assessments
- ★ Management of commissioned research, ensuring timely and policy-relevant information
- ★ Publications, including policy briefing papers that highlight proven approaches to particular challenges and raise the national profile of issues affecting multiple states
- ★ Public opinion assessments on state policy issues on which the Trusts and its partners are working
- ★ Policy forums that bring together policy makers, experts and other stakeholders, showcase diverse perspectives, share information and help forge consensus
- ★ Communications—ensuring effective dissemination and outreach to state decision-makers, media, influential stakeholders and the public
- ★ Technical assistance

AMONG THE TRUSTS' CURRENT STATE-FOCUSED EFFORTS

EARLY EDUCATION

The Trusts has invested more than \$48 million since 2001 to create the research base and informed debate that foster policies providing access to high-quality, voluntary early education for all three- and four-year-olds in America. Our partners work nationally and in more than a dozen states to encourage support for preschool for all. Two major organizations operate at the core of our work: The National Institute for Early Education Research and Pre-K Now. www.nieer.org; www.preknow.org

K-12 EDUCATION

Since 1994, the Trusts has supported *Quality Counts*, an annual report card published in *Education Week* that grades all 50 states on K-12 educational standards and accountability, efforts to improve teacher quality, school climate and resource equity. www.edweek.org

ELECTION REFORM

Electionline.org informs the public, federal, state and local policy makers and election officials on trends, important issues and best practices in election reform. Electionline.org tracks and analyzes states' progress in implementing the Help America Vote Act, a bipartisan federal law. www.electionline.org

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

The Trusts has been involved in a range of work to build a credible and effective campaign finance system to increase citizens' confidence and engagement in the electoral process. At the state level, the Trusts supports research and analysis of state campaign finance policies that seek to enhance competitiveness and expand the role of small donors in campaigns. www.pewtrusts.org

DEATH PENALTY REFORM

The Justice Project Education Fund educates the public and policy makers about the need for reforms to ensure fairness and accuracy in states' administration of capital punishment. Key reforms include DNA testing, adequate legal representation and procedural safeguards, such as rules governing police interrogations. www.pewtrusts.org

GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

The Government Performance Project seeks to help states improve how they manage their money, people, information and infrastructure — areas critical to converting sound public policy into practice. Its next 50-state report card will be published in February 2008 in *Governing* magazine. www.pewtrusts.org

PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS

This initiative supports research and public and policy maker education to help states make data-driven decisions in sentencing and corrections policy that increase public safety, reduce spending and hold offenders accountable. www.pewtrusts.org

FOSTER CARE

As part of its national foster care initiative, the Trusts supports activities to promote the recommendations by the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care calling for judicial leadership and improved state court oversight of children in foster care. www.pewfostercare.org

CLIMATE CHANGE

State and regional programs can begin reducing emissions, serve as models for federal policy, and build critical support among policy makers, opinion leaders and the public for action. The Trusts has invested in state and regional strategies to implement climate initiatives in specific states and regions. www.pewtrusts.org

STRENGTHENING PUBLIC HEALTH PREPAREDNESS

Working with the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP) at the University of Minnesota, the Trusts is helping state and local governments enhance their ability to respond quickly and effectively in a public health emergency. www.pewtrusts.org