



Bipartisan Policy Center
2020-2021
Annual Report

Letter From the President

The idea that America steps up when the chips are down is hard-wired into our self-biography of exceptionalism. While our diversity of interests and complex governing process can make our democracy maddeningly inefficient, it is understood that, in crisis, we come together and get things done. The last year of governing through COVID-19 has challenged the American crisis narrative.

It is unquestionable that we have accomplished great things in the last year. Congress saved the economy and protected tens of millions of Americans from deprivation with several rounds of heroic, bipartisan legislation. Despite careening and chaotic public debate, vaccines were developed in record time and are being administered to 3 million to 4 million Americans every day. Despite all manner of personal hardship and rational fear, Americans cared for one another with remarkable generosity and courage. And despite determined efforts to undermine our elections, the 46th president of the United States took the oath on January 20, 2021.

But contrary to historic expectation, our Congress and country have not come together. In fact, by many measures, we could not be more divided. The unusual combination of accomplishment and division is driving many to advocate for a majoritarian approach to American democracy. In this “winner take all” approach, the premise of collaboration is derided as nostalgic naivete, and policy passion is rewarded over pragmatism or durability. We understand the seduction of one party governing, but do not embrace a future in which narrow majorities are empowered to ignore broad divisions. The Bipartisan Policy Center is not giving up on American democracy—at least not without a fight.



BPC’s immediate goal is to vindicate the ability of Congress to govern across division. Each and every day, BPC expert policy staff and BPC Action’s advocacy team get to work in their kitchens, attics, and basements to help our elected leaders understand and resolve substantive disputes. Contrary to public sentiment, the great majority of our elected officials aspire to be constructive partisans and effective public servants. Unfortunately, the current incentive structures for elected officials reward rigidity over collaboration and partisan expedience over national interest. The good news is that comparably modest, well-timed, strategic interventions can make a real difference in members of Congress’ ability to collaborate and legislate.

One of the most insidious challenges facing American democracy is that our decision-makers simply don’t have the time, expertise, or staff capacity to develop politically viable solutions to complex and divisive issues. BPC’s ability to draw aggressively diverse groups together to reconcile policy differences and advocate for shared solutions fills a key gap in the legislative process. These successful efforts give confidence, energy, and ambition to legislators with authentic collaborative intent. In partnership with BPC Action, our 501(c)(4) government affairs arm, we rely on hard-earned trusting relationships across



the ideological spectrum to get our ideas in front of policy-makers who will engage and grapple with the details. It is rare for Congress or the executive branch to precisely follow BPC task force recommendations, but many of our proposals are the basis of eventual consensus. In addition, the trusted and battle-tested evidence and analysis that underlies our work provides an important foundation for constructive debate on and off Capitol Hill.

Despite the rancor and division in 2020, BPC and BPC Action helped Congress adopt more consequential bipartisan legislation than at any time in recent memory. Some of BPC's key contributions influenced the legislative accomplishments noted below.

Congressional Reform: The House enacted nearly 30 recommendations to increase member interaction, improve technology, staff diversity and retention, and strengthen the Government Accountability Office and Congressional Research Service.

Health Care: Congress delivered crucial funding for vaccine distribution and nutrition assistance, expanded access to telehealth, rescued rural hospitals, and put an end to surprise medical billing.

Child Care: Congress expanded access to quality and affordable child care and helped facilities remain open to provide critical support for essential workers.

Paid Leave: Congress provided 12 weeks of paid parental leave for all federal and defense workers and two weeks of paid sick leave and 10 weeks of paid family leave to workers who otherwise did not have access to these benefits.

Economic Opportunity: Congress strengthened the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit to ensure that losing employment was not compounded by losing access to these key family supports.

Energy/Climate: Congress adopted significant provisions to accelerate development of low and

zero carbon energy technologies. This bipartisan innovation package reflects a compilation of over 40 bills and vindicates the importance of effective committee leadership.

Despite this flurry of bipartisan congressional productivity, the fiercely contested election and differing views on how to revitalize the economy have encouraged many Democrats to view their razor-thin governing majority as a once-in-a-generation opportunity to accomplish longstanding policy goals. While there are "exigent circumstances," rationale for circumventing the legislative process in an emergency, embedding the expectation of one-party rule, is not in our nation's long-term interest. The advocates for a permanent embrace of political expedience argue that our traditional democratic process is broken beyond repair. On our current path of deteriorating norms, misaligned incentives, and self-inflicted wounds, the ability to restore a functional version of American democracy is by no means guaranteed. But the costs of failure are simply too great to accept.

The historic resilience of our democracy rests in part on the idea that there is a fail-safe hidden in our constitutional design that protects our system of government from spinning out of control. Two hundred years ago, Tocqueville described this innate self-healing mechanism as America's capacity to make "repairable mistakes." President Clinton offered a modern expression of this idea in his first inaugural address, stating that, "there is nothing wrong with America that cannot be cured with what is right in America."

Making good on this idea is an animating premise of BPC.



Legislative Accomplishments



Building Momentum: BPC and BPC Action are Shaping the Debate

In a period with a historically low number of legislative achievements, BPC and BPC Action have found pathways to bring new voices from both sides of the aisle. Focusing on advancing bipartisan ideas helped lay the groundwork for movement going into the 117th Congress.

Bolstering Support for Health Care in the Wake of a Crisis

Building on the work of BPC's Rural Health Task Force and ongoing conversations with the administration and Capitol Hill, BPC Action pushed for a dramatic expansion of access to telehealth services to maintain access to quality health care during the pandemic, and policymakers made regulatory and legislative changes to improve telehealth access for the duration of the public health emergency in line with BPC's recommendations. BPC Action is continuing to work with congressional leaders to ensure permanent access to these services beyond the pandemic.

A strong public health infrastructure is critical to America's ability to provide ongoing COVID-19 response and to manage future pandemics. To that end, BPC Action aggressively pushed for and helped secure increased emergency public health funding in the COVID relief packages enacted.



In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, BPC focused on two key health issues that would prove critical for responding to the public health crisis: **the expansion of telehealth** and **investment in public health infrastructure.**



Boosting Clean Energy and the Environment

Last Congress, BPC Action spent significant time cultivating Republican support, culminating in the most comprehensive energy innovation package to be introduced in a decade.

BPC also launched a new initiative that focuses on how farms and forests can advance an effective national climate strategy. As part of this effort, BPC Action is engaging key Republicans in Congress and the Biden administration, helping drive the introduction of bipartisan bills, one of which passed the House in the House energy innovation package (the TREE Act). In addition to this work, BPC Action is collaborating with **Reps. David McKinley (R-WV) and Kurt Schrader (D-OR)** to introduce the first bipartisan clean energy standard bill to this Congress. These initiatives are essential to creating the atmosphere for bipartisan victories in the 117th Congress.

Supporting One of America's Most Critical Industries: Child Care

Early child care must be a critical component of any solution aimed at improving the lives of American families. Given its close work with state early childhood and education administrators, BPC's early childhood team was in the unique position to act as an emissary, relaying the problems states were facing back to congressional staff and offices and encouraging evidence-based solutions. As a result of years of relationship building, BPC acted swiftly and provided unique, critical support for Congress in an unprecedented time of crisis.

As the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and the impacts on the child care industry became apparent, BPC's Early Childhood Initiative quickly identified barriers and solutions for helping the child care industry get through the initial crisis.

BPC and BPC Action have been intimately engaged in shaping COVID relief legislation, ensuring that leadership provides substantial support for child care in negotiations. BPC has also been crucial in bringing Republican senators to the table during these discussions. Working closely with **Sens. Joni Ernst (R-IA), Todd Young (R-IN), and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)**, BPC pulled in Republican support on a bipartisan child care letter to Senate leadership signed by 23 senators, nearly equally split and marking a dramatic shift in conservatives' position on federal funding for child care workers and providers.



Legislative Accomplishments

Strengthening the Legislative Branch

In 2018, following a BPC Action grassroots campaign, the House, in a near unanimous vote, established a new Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress. **Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA)** and **House Rules Chairman Jim McGovern (D-MA)** cited BPC as a key driver for the creation of this committee.

BPC and BPC Action have worked hand-in-hand with the committee and its co-chairs, **Reps. Derek Kilmer (D-WA)** and **Tom Graves (R-GA)**, as it considered and deliberated recommendations to improve the House's ability to govern and legislate. BPC President Jason Grumet and Senior Vice President Bill Hoagland, along with BPC Fellow Don Wolfensberger, testified separately before the committee at hearings respectively focused on bipartisanship and civility, reform of the budget and appropriations process, and past congressional reforms efforts.

The House passed the first set of committee recommendations in spring 2020, and the committee's final report, released in the fall with a cumulative 97 recommendations, pulled heavily from BPC-developed proposals, including ways to increase bipartisanship; make the time members spend in D.C. more effective; improve the budget and appropriations process; and establish a modern Office of Technology Assessment. The Modernization Committee's work makes it the most ambitious, wide-ranging, and successful effort to reform the House since the 1970s.



COVID-19 Response and Recovery



Protecting Americans & Businesses During a Crisis: COVID-19 Legislative Accomplishments

BPC and BPC Action were instrumental in securing key provisions in COVID-related packages enacted into law.

Health Care



Increased funding for public health programs and health care workers, including for more personal protective equipment



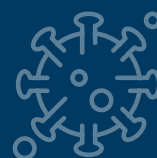
Supplemental and special benefits for chronically ill and senior Medicare Advantage recipients, including meal delivery or medical transportation services, to promote social distancing and prevent unnecessary trips to obtain groceries, household supplies, and prescription and nonprescription medications



Vaccines will be provided without cost sharing to beneficiaries in Medicare, Medicaid, and most private insurance plans



Expanded use of telehealth in Medicare, including allowing the use of audio-only phones for certain telehealth services so those without smartphones can still receive help



COVID-19 Response and Recovery



Elections

\$400 Million – Flexible funding for states to enhance absentee voting or prepare for a different type of socially distant, in-person voting option



Paid Leave

10 weeks of paid family leave and **two weeks** of paid sick leave to workers who previously did not have access to these benefits



Child Care

\$4.25 Billion – For grants and programs to expand quality child care, particularly to low-income working parents, and provide financial assistance and support services to American families



Higher Education

\$6 Billion – For direct emergency funds to cover basic needs for students, including food, housing, transportation, and child care



Housing

\$12+ Billion – To support Americans experiencing homelessness, housing insecurity, rent burdens, and economic vulnerability



Policy Highlights

Working Families Agenda

BPC hosted its 2020 Solutions Summit: Blueprint to Restore Economic Security for Working Families in December. The five-day series of events addressed national conversations on the pandemic response; restoring, strengthening, and modernizing our economy; and how public policy can address income inequality.

Day 1 featured **Govs. Asa Hutchinson (R-AR)** and **Gretchen Whitmer (D-MI)** providing their perspectives on rebuilding the economy for working families, and **former U.S. Rep. John Delaney of Maryland** and **former Maryland Lt. Gov. Michael Steele**.

Day 2 focused on children and families, with **former U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania** and **Dr. Leana Wen**, visiting professor of Health Policy and Management, George Washington University's Milken School of Public Health, and a panel of early childhood education experts.



[BPC's 2020 Solutions Summit](#)

The theme for Day 3 was "Rewarding Work." It featured **CEOs Julie Sweet of Accenture** and **Greg Case of Aon**, along with **former U.S. Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker**. They were followed by a panel of experts discussing the role of paid family leave in boosting workers and their families.

Day 4, titled "Boosting Financial Resiliency for U.S. Workers," was simulcast on Yahoo Finance, with host **Alexis Christoforous, Rep. Kevin Brady (R-TX)**, and **Jean Chatzky, CEO and co-founder of HerMoney**, as featured speakers. They were followed by a panel with sponsor **Prudential Financial's Vice Chair Rob Falzon** and **AARP Executive Vice President and Chief Public Policy Officer Debra Whitman**.

Day 5's closing session on "Addressing Racial and Structural Inequities" featured a panel discussion with **Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution Lonnie Bunch**, **former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Henry Cisneros**, and **former Ohio Gov. John Kasich**. **Dr. Rajiv Shah**, president of The Rockefeller Foundation, and BPC President Jason Grumet provided keynote remarks.

A paper prepared for the Summit lays out a pragmatic, immediately actionable policy agenda that:

- promotes financial resilience and wealth creation
- supports work and expanding opportunity
- helps children and families

[Link to report](#)



Policy Highlights

Public Health and Health Care

Focus Areas: COVID-19 Pandemic Response, Opioid Epidemic, Mental Health/Addiction Crisis

BPC's Future of Health Care Initiative released a set of federal recommendations for Congress and the Biden administration aimed at accelerating and bolstering America's response to the pandemic while addressing racial disparities in health care.

BPC's Behavioral Health Integration Task Force called on President Biden and Congress to advance the integration of primary and mental health and substance use services to close the treatment gap that existed even before the pandemic and that is expected to persist long after. The task force's recommendations would enable primary care clinicians to handle treatment for more of their patients with mild to moderate mental health and substance use conditions by providing them with training, technical assistance, compensation, and better access to behavioral health providers for both consultations and referrals.

In response to the country's growing opioid crisis, BPC's Prevention Initiative released a report with federal policy recommendations aimed at building and sustaining a national addiction treatment system. Over the next year, BPC's new Opioid Crisis Task Force will develop evidence-based recommendations for Congress and the administration.

BPC and BPC Action strongly believe there is a window of opportunity to advance more effective federal policy for combating these crises. With a new administration and a narrowly divided Congress, meaningful and durable bipartisan reforms will greatly enhance the prospect for bipartisan action.

The pandemic has also exacerbated an already overwhelming mental health and substance use crisis in the United States. Over the past year, symptoms of anxiety and depression in adults have increased nearly fourfold; 25% of young adults have seriously considered suicide; and drug overdose deaths have increased 30%.



Policy Highlights



COVID REPORT

BPC's report called for a federally led standardized testing strategy that reduces COVID-19 positivity rates to under 5%; a national vaccination plan that coordinates and supports state efforts, and considers vaccine allocations based on criteria such as priority group, population size, and severity of outbreak, rather than solely on a per capita basis; a public education campaign targeting America's vulnerable communities; real-time data on health care system capacity; a requirement for states and localities to provide race and ethnicity data on COVID-19 testing and vaccinations, cases, hospitalizations, and deaths; and congressional funding to support these actions as well as state and local public health departments.



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH REPORT

Research shows that integrated care enhances access to treatment, improves patient outcomes, and reduces health disparities in communities across the country. The report's recommendations focus on four key areas:

1. Establishing core, minimum standards essential for integration
2. Driving integration in new and existing value-based payment structures in Medicare and Medicaid
3. Expanding, training, and diversifying the workforce for integrated care teams
4. Promoting the use of electronic health records, telehealth, and other technology to support integrated care



OPIOID REPORT

BPC's report tracked federal funding to states in fiscal year 2019 to curb the opioid epidemic, and identified \$7.6 billion in spending from 60 separate federal programs—a 3.2% increase in funding from FY2018. The report also showed that three-quarters of FY2019 funding went to treatment, recovery, and prevention efforts, with the remaining dollars directed to research, interdiction, law enforcement, and other criminal justice activities.



Policy Highlights

Children & Families

The prosperity of the American economy is inextricably linked to the well-being of the American family. Children are uniquely vulnerable to the immediate effects of economic and social insecurity, and the advantages and disadvantages of unequal access to resources, education, and a nurturing environment compound over a lifetime. These issues have taken on greater urgency amid the pandemic-induced economic fallout, particularly among people of color and families in the bottom half of the income distribution.

In response to these compounding crises, BPC provided a series of recommendations aimed at investing in child care and education, and prioritizing the needs and preferences of parents.

Recognizing that America's future success and well-being is inextricably tied to the success and well-being of its youngest citizens, policy initiatives are needed to advance three critical goals:

- Create a more equitable and high quality child care system that meets the needs and preferences of all families—regardless of income, location, race, and ethnicity.
- Establish pathways for improving and supporting child care workers and business owners.
- Support the economic stability of low-income families with young children.

[Bipartisan Child Care Priorities for the 117th Congress and Biden Administration](#)

Key opportunities for bipartisan agreement on child care during the 117th Congress: Increase access to child care; improve facilities and infrastructure; establish pathways to bolster the early childhood workforce; support child care businesses; assess lessons from existing programs; provide equitable and inclusive opportunities.

Democracy

Following the 2020 election cycle, BPC expanded the membership of its elections task force, comprising state and local election officials charged with reforming the election ecosystem to improve the voting experience. The pandemic ushered in an era of election administration transformation unlike any in our nation's history. Election administrators pivoted overnight to protect public health by rapidly expanding absentee voting and implementing new cleaning and social distancing protocols. The 2020 election was the most secure in our nation's history, and it demonstrated that there remains ample room to improve the voting experience.

Today, conversations happening in state legislatures around the country are being continuously undermined by a false dichotomy in which a complete expansion of all voting options is cast as the sole alternative to draconian voting rights restrictions. BPC released a set of recommendations for election reform providing a realistic, bipartisan path forward for states still grappling with the implications of 2020.

BPC and BPC Action have been leading the discussion on reinstating and reforming earmarks. After significant advocacy the last two years—including Hill outreach and meetings, a member-level event, and testimony from Jason Grumet before the House Modernization Committee—BPC Action's recommendations have been incorporated into the framework of the House Modernization Committee's recommendation to reinstate congressionally directed spending in 2020 and new measures from House Democrats in the 117th Congress, in which eight of the 10 BPC Action recommendations have been included.

[Improving the Voting Experience After 2020](#) [The Power of the Purse: The 411 on Earmarks](#)



Policy Highlights

Economy

As the nation looks to revitalize the economy following the pandemic and ensuing recession, it continues to grapple with high unemployment rates as well as racial and gender gaps in the workforce. BPC has outlined opportunities for improving the economy for all people, as well as paid leave policies that would help close the labor force gender gap.

Expanding paid family leave would increase women's labor force attachment, improve their job continuity, and empower them to pursue higher-earning occupations—all helping close the gender pay gap.

Small businesses have also been hard hit, yet BPC recognizes that the government cannot keep giving direct financial support to small businesses—neither fiscally nor mechanically, given the ongoing implementation challenges. BPC will examine several dimensions of small business and entrepreneurship, seeking to identify what needs to be rethought, what needs to be restructured, and where legislative action is possible and feasible.

BPC's recommendations target unemployment insurance reform, racial equity, small businesses and entrepreneurship, and measurement and data.



Energy Innovation

To meet the multiple challenges of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, modernizing infrastructure, and enhancing the role of agriculture and forestry as natural climate solutions, BPC's Energy Project launched a series of task forces aimed at confronting these challenges while supporting a vibrant, competitive economy.

Focusing its attention on modernizing infrastructure and achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, BPC's Energy Project launched the Smarter, Cleaner, Faster Infrastructure Task Force and the Net Zero Business Alliance. The Energy Project is targeting its efforts toward advocating for the modernization of American infrastructure to support a vibrant, globally competitive economy that creates jobs and achieves net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Decarbonizing America and modernizing infrastructure are both critical to combating climate change, growing the economy, and creating jobs.

[Farm and Forest Carbon Solutions Task Force](#)

The Bipartisan Policy Center's Farm and Forest Carbon Solutions Task Force will shape policy recommendations that enhance the role of American agriculture and forestry as valuable natural climate solutions and provide new revenue streams to farmers, ranchers, and foresters. If the U.S. can establish an efficient and workable framework for generating and marketing verifiable land-based carbon credits, farmers and forest owners stand to generate substantial new streams of income while contributing to a climate solution.



Event Highlights



[A Conversation with Janet Yellen and David Malpass](#)



[2020 Solutions Summit: Blueprint to Restore Economic Security for Working Families](#)



[Early Childhood Equity Report Part Two: Addressing Harsh Discipline and its Disproportionate Application](#)



[An AI National Strategy for Congress](#)



[Putting Yourself First: Women's Resources for Pandemic Recovery and Financial Wellness](#)



[Addressing Food Insecurity and Poor Nutrition During COVID-19](#)



[The 2020 Election's Impact on Health Care](#)



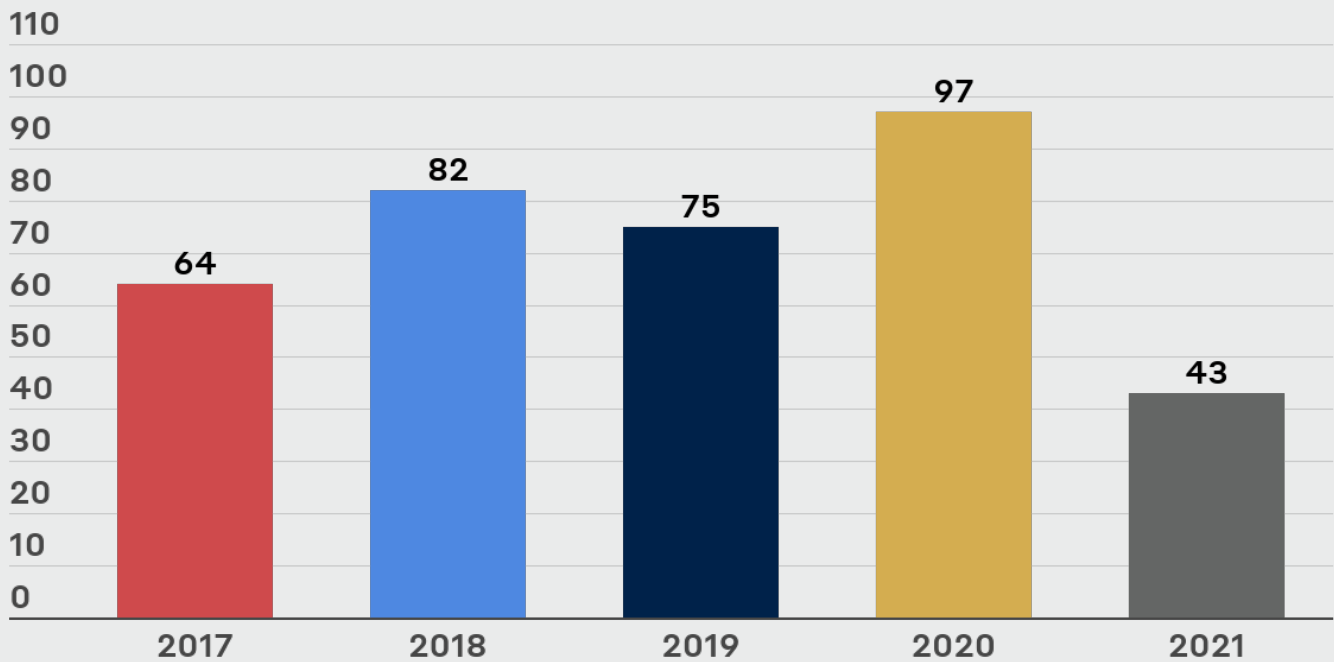
[The 2020 Voting Experience and Goals for Reform](#)



Event Highlights

In the first five months of 2021, more than **17,000 viewers** have tuned in to a BPC live event.

Public Events



* projected events in 2021, 80-100



Partner Spotlight



Prudential



Elevating Financial Security

Prudential Financial is a long-standing corporate partner of the Bipartisan Policy Center and has been a champion and thought partner of our work on financial security, corporate governance, infrastructure, and technology policy. As one of the world's largest financial institutions, Prudential has an integral role in helping Americans grow and protect their wealth through its life insurance, investment management, and retirement-related products and services.

Last year, Prudential supported and participated in a flagship BPC event—the Solutions Summit. Centered around restoring economic security for working families, we partnered with Prudential to present a fresh look at boosting financial resiliency for U.S. workers. The event featured **Prudential and Yahoo Finance Vice Chair Rob Falzon** and **Rep. Kevin Brady (R-TX), Ranking Member of the House Ways and Means Committee**. It brought together policymakers, thought leaders, and practitioners dedicated to expanding workers' accessibility to essential benefits, including insurance, retirement and emergency savings vehicles, and paid family leave.

Through the event—which garnered more than 1 million views—we elevated a policy area ripe for bipartisan collaboration. Prudential's longtime support, topic expertise, and mission to help Americans achieve financial prosperity has been instrumental to BPC and to furthering a bipartisan agenda.



Partner Spotlight



Cultivating Emerging Leaders

Beatriz Illescas–Putzeys Claugus and **Tom Claugus** conduct their philanthropy through their Foundation For A Better World. BPC's success in convening conversations on the Hill between Republican and Democrat lawmakers on key policy issues such as immigration is due in part to the generous support of this philanthropic couple.

Most recently, when BPC partnered with the University of Texas at Austin's LBJ School of Public Policy to create the Bipartisan Policy Center Immigration Policy Fellowship, Beatriz and Tom immediately understood the importance of this extraordinary educational opportunity. The fellowship provides graduate students a unique ability to engage in the national debate on critical immigration issues, participate in unique research, and share evidence-based findings that go on to shape BPC's recommendations and policy proposals in this space.

Beatriz and Tom's Foundation For A Better World not only helped launch the fellowship, but their generous and continued support of BPC's broader mission is more timely and important than ever.



“As an immigrant myself, the opportunity to support BPC's efforts to help advance immigration reform and at the same time provide firsthand experience for students interested in a career in immigration policy is a home run. We are thrilled to help BPC find a practical voice in the immigration debate and also ensure that a graduate student obtains a valuable education and can play a key part in policymaking, research, and practice in the years to come.”

*-Beatriz Illescas–Putzens Claugus &
Tom Claugus*



Partner Spotlight



Going Long on Democracy

As one of the country's first grantmaking foundations, Carnegie Corporation of New York has helped shape U.S. public discourse and policy for more than 100 years. A longtime focus of the Corporation is its Strengthening U.S. Democracy program area, whose mission is clear and inspired: "to foster a fair, diverse, and vibrant democracy that welcomes and offers opportunities to all."

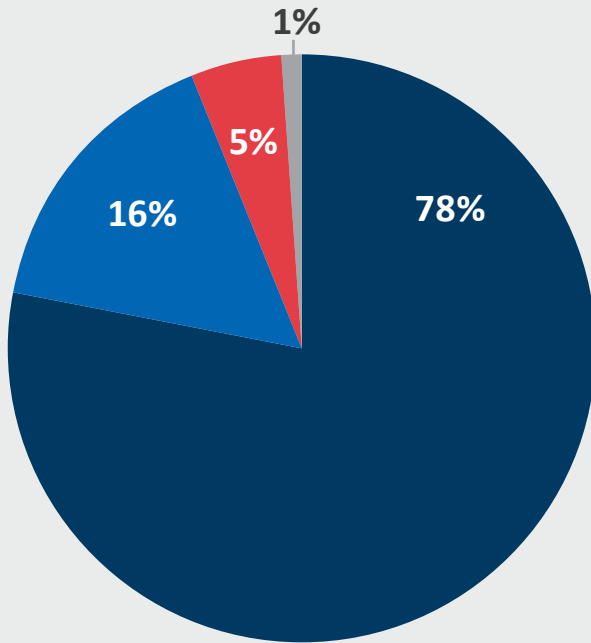
BPC's partnership with the Corporation took on an added dimension this past year. At the start of 2020, we were increasingly concerned about the possibility of contested election results and the resulting implications for American democracy—a notion soon exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic's unprecedented stress on voting processes. Through the support of the Corporation and other philanthropies, BPC was able to quickly engage leaders from both parties, secretaries of state nationwide, and partner organizations to ensure strong counterpoints for any attempts to undermine voter confidence.

Carnegie Corporation of New York has provided BPC with insightful perspectives, generous support, and philanthropic leadership every step of the way. Through our shared commitment to bipartisanship, we are working together to achieve a stronger, more vibrant democracy for all.





For nearly a decade, the Corporation's support of BPC has centered on our Immigration Project. BPC's experts have become a highly sought resource on bipartisan priorities for current border conditions and security, paths to a permanent place in society for undocumented immigrants, and more. Thanks to the Corporation's sustained commitment, the team is able to develop innovative reform efforts and engage a diverse set of stakeholders around meaningful policy fixes.






Financials

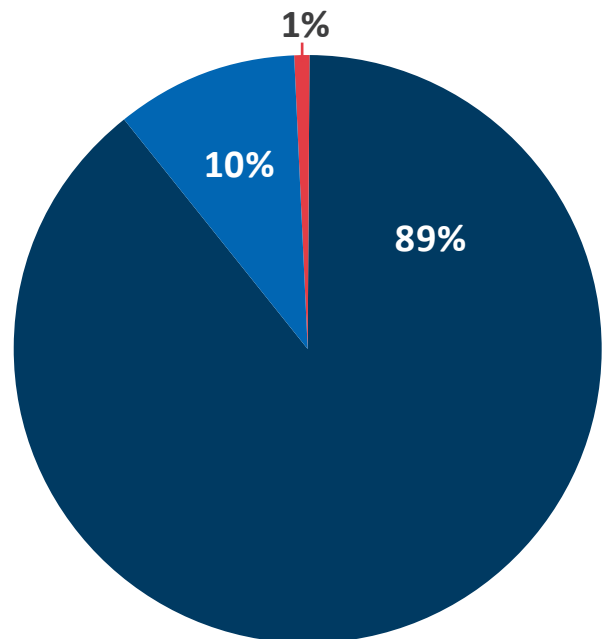


Total Revenue:
\$27.2 M

-  Institutional Foundations
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-  Other

Total Expenses:
\$22.3 M

-  Program
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-  Management & General



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