

YEO Frontline News

June 2007

Energy: Examining Progressive Change For a Fuel Dependant World

A Country in Crisis

A recent New York Times article reviewed convincing new reasons that many legislators are leaning towards proposals backed by the coal industry to subsidize the construction of coal-to-liquid production plants across the country. As several Congressional leaders draft legislation to reduce pollutants linked to global warming, a powerful lobbying effort has arisen to push for coal-friendly legislation.

But it's more than lobbying. State legislators are eager to pass "energy independence" bills quickly to get the country out of the gasoline crisis, possibly putting environmental energy solutions at risk.

"Coal supporters argue that coal-based fuels in this country are more American than gasoline and potentially greener than ethanol," according to the article. However, environmental groups warn that "[c]oal-based diesel fuels would at best do little to slow global warming and at worst produce almost twice as much of the greenhouse gases tied to global warming as petroleum."

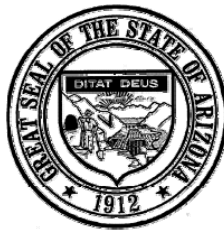
Legislators must ask themselves, are they putting energy independence ahead of energy conservation?

For more information on this debate, see the New York Times article at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/29/business/29coal.html?hp>.

PHOENIX- AZ U.S. CONGRESSWOMAN GABRIELLE GIFFORDS

Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords launched a major solar power initiative, in an apparent effort to make that one of her key issues in Congress. Arizona has the abundant sunshine needed for solar energy and state leaders want to turn solar power into an economic engine for the state. As the world looks to renewable energy to cut greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on foreign oil, Southern Arizona can cash in on that trend, Giffords said. "It's a win, win, win, concerning economic development, high-paying jobs and how we deal with our continued growth," she said.

<http://www.tucsoncitizen.com/daily/local/49801.php>



SAN ANTONIO- TX COUNCILMAN ROLAND GUTIERREZ

Councilman Roland Gutierrez initiated a pilot program last year to offer incentives for people to buy hybrid cars and improve the city's air quality. The city of San Antonio will continue the program allowing drivers of hybrid vehicles free parking at any of the city's 2,010 parking meters. Since its inception, 170 hybrids have been registered for the program.

<http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/metro/stories/MYSA051107.hybrid.e-n.58d7c2a1.html>



TALLAHASSEE- FL COUNTY COMMISSIONER JOHN DAILEY

National Bike-to-Work Day allowed several Tallahassee city and county commissioners the opportunity to promote alternate transportation methods in order to conserve energy. Leon County Commissioner John Dailey rode in one group of bicyclists, along with Tallahassee Police Sgt. Dave Ferrell and Randy Hanna, chairman of the Tallahassee Area Chamber of Commerce. The purpose, Hanna said, was "to have fun, enjoy the beautiful morning and encourage the use of bikes as alternative transportation."

<http://www.tallahassee.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070519/NEWS01/705190328/1010/NEWS01>



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Renewable Energy

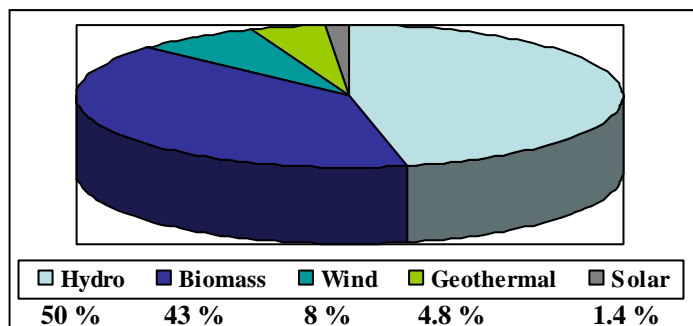
Renewable energy produces few or no hazardous emissions or pollutants, and have minimal impact on fragile ecosystems. There are five main types of renewable energy: hydro, biomass, geothermal, solar and wind.



While each of these can be used to generate electricity, only hydro and biomass currently provide a significant amount of power [see chart below] - but that will change in the coming decades. In addition to the obvious environmental benefits, "green power" could have major economic advantages as well:

- It decreases our dependence on foreign oil imports and the resulting price fluctuations.
- It reduces the need for costly emissions controls.
- It provides new energy markets and creates new jobs.

The financial impact could be significant in the Midwest. Switchgrass and other biomass materials provide an alternative crop option, animal waste and crop residues can be sold and reused, and the construction of wind farms or other green power facilities creates jobs and boost rural economies.



To view the source or for more information, go to http://www.powerhousetv.com/stellent2/groups/public/documents/pub/phtv_eb_re_000312.hcsp.

Facts about Renewable Energy

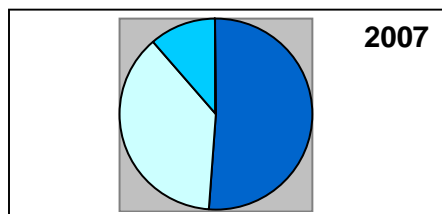
- In 1998, only 7.5 percent of our nation's energy came from renewable resources, even though the amount of renewable energy available was more than 250 times U.S. energy consumption.
- Water is currently the most commonly used renewable energy resource, providing enough power to meet the needs of 28.3 million consumers.
- Biomass currently supplies about four percent of the energy produced in the U.S., and could potentially provide almost 20 percent.
- Energy crops, like switchgrass or fast-growing trees, could provide more than 5,000 megawatts of electricity annually by the year 2010, supporting more than 170,000 jobs and diversifying local farming operations.
- Wind farms currently produce enough electricity to meet the needs of more than 600,000 families.
- More than 10,000 homes in the United States are powered entirely by solar energy.
- Replacing an electric water heater with a solar model can reduce water heat costs by 50 to 80 percent every year - and over the 20-year life of the equipment, more than 50 tons of carbon dioxide emissions will be displaced.
- Silicon from one ton of sand, used in photovoltaic cells, could produce as much electricity as burning 500,000 tons of coal.
- Geothermal energy currently provides more than 2,700 megawatts of electricity nationwide - the equivalent of three nuclear power plants, or enough to power more than 3.5 million homes.
- A geothermal power plant emits no nitrogen oxides, very few sulfur dioxides and 1,000 to 2,000 times less carbon dioxide than a fossil fuel plant.

To view the source or for more information, go to http://www.powerhousetv.com/stellent2/groups/public/documents/pub/phtv_eb_000320.hcsp.

IS GLOBAL WARMING HAVING AN IMPACT?

In a CBS News/New York Times poll, both Democrats and Republicans agree that global warming is a serious problem, but Democrats are far more inclined to say it should a high priority for government.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2007/04/26/opinion/polls/main2731709.shtml>

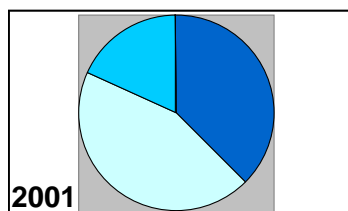


Asked in 2007:

Yes, now	Will in the future	Won't have an impact
49%	36%	11%

Asked the same question in June of 2001:

Yes, now	Will in the future	Won't have an impact
35%	41%	17%



Right Wing Watch

Race Still Matters: YEOs Fight Anti-Affirmative Action Efforts

Anti-affirmative action zealot Ward Connerly, who led successful campaigns to ban race- and gender-based consideration in college admissions, government contracts and hiring in California, Washington, and Michigan, is gearing up to bring the ban to five NEW states in 2008.

Connerly has announced similar campaigns in Missouri, Colorado, Arizona, South Dakota and Oklahoma aimed at the 2008 ballot.

The San Francisco Chronicle reported that Connerly said states would be chosen based on their knowledge and interest in the issue, the political and business communities' support for the ban, the potential opposition, and the fundraising potential in the state.

"You want to go someplace where you don't have to spend every waking moment getting them up to speed," he said. "There is no one matrix of issues that makes for an ideal state, we are just trying to find out as we look at the different states what are our possibilities for success."

Arizona State Representative Krysten Sinema is leading the charge against the anti-affirmative action amendment on the 2008 ballot in Arizona.

"Arizonans have a track record of voting down these gimmicky initiatives that hurt our state. We are looking forward to defeating Mr. Connerly's latest attempt to divide our state and make political hay out of a non-issue," said Rep. Sinema, who led the successful campaign to defeat the gay marriage ban on the 2006 ballot in Arizona.

In Wisconsin, a Special Committee Affirmative Action Policy was formed to review the state's affirmative action policy in college admissions, state hiring and contracting. Rep. Tamara Grigsby, a member of the committee, went head to head with Connerly in a committee hearing late last year where he was invited to speak. Rep. Grigsby and her colleagues maintain that affirmative action is necessary to undo decades of racial discrimination even after the civil rights movement.

"I think it is just silly to imply that race doesn't matter when it clearly is a factor in everything," Rep. Grigsby said during the hearing.

Seven bills are being examined in Wisconsin, ranging from a constitutional amendment similar to Proposition 209 to a measure to strengthen affirmative action policies. But with less than a week to the last hearing of the special committee, none of the committee members had seen any of the bill drafts.

This Right Wing Watch was provided by People For the American Way.

TIPS: PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL

Ways to Save Energy at the Workplace

The first step in having your constituents save energy is to take action in your own office! What are the best and quickest ways to save energy? Taking a few proactive steps to reduce energy usage can conserve natural resources, lower energy costs and save money. Here are a few ways that you can reduce energy consumption while continuing to provide a comfortable environment for employees.



1. Reduce lighting where possible and take advantage of natural daylight. Turning lights off or dimming them during the day allows for lower energy costs and a more comfortable environment. Also, remove excess lighting, and turn off signage and other lights not necessary for security and safety.
2. Install occupancy sensors. These inexpensive devices can reduce lighting costs by up to 40 percent by turning off lights in unoccupied areas.
3. Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs), which can last up to 10 times longer. CFLs provide the same amount of [light] lumens as standard incandescent bulbs, but use up to 75 percent less energy.
4. Replace incandescent lights in exit signs with LED fixtures, which can reduce costs of these signs by up to 95 percent.
5. Adjust the thermostat down in the winter and up in the summer, and shut it off when not in use. Even a few degrees can significantly reduce heating and air conditioning costs.
6. Install programmable thermostats or time clocks to automatically control temperature settings on heating and air conditioning equipment.
7. Turn off or set office equipment to power down when not in use. Turning off one computer and monitor nightly and on weekends can save up to \$80 a year. And setting PCs, monitors and copiers to use sleep mode when not in use can help cut energy costs by up to 50 percent.
8. Lower the thermostat on your water heater. 120° F is sufficient for many common uses. A 10° F reduction can save up to 5 percent on water heating costs.
9. Invest in energy-efficient equipment. When upgrading or adding new equipment, look for the ENERGY STAR® symbol, which indicates the equipment meets federal standards for energy efficiency.

Source: http://www.sdge.com/business/ee_tips.shtml

Special Features?

If you have interesting policy or experiences to share with your fellow YEOs, please contact Raquel Simon at rsimon@pfaw.org to arrange to write a special feature.

Innovative YEOs IN THE NEWS

FIXING "BRAIN DRAIN"

STATE REP. ELESHA GAYMAN - SIOUX CITY, IOWA

Emphasizing the need to stop an exodus of young people from Iowa, Governor Chet Culver signed into law a bill that will create a 15-member commission of young professionals to advise state government. The bill's sponsor was State Representative Elesha Gayman (below at right), who said retaining a young, talented workforce was an important issue when she ran for the Legislature.



More than 250 Iowans have applied to be on the Generation Iowa Commission, which will advise the governor and state agencies on ways to keep young professionals in Iowa. The commission will work within the Department of Economic Development, with the goal of retaining and attracting young adults in both urban and rural areas.

Rep. Gayman came up with the idea for the commission after watching her friends move out of Iowa after college. The 28-year-old was excited to see so many Iowans interested in serving on the commission. "I think it shows the willingness of a generation to start taking some responsibility and start making Iowa their state," she said.

<http://www.siouxcityjournal.com/articles/2007/04/06/news/legislature/00752ef92519691b862572b5000f2cd5.txt>
<http://desmoinesregister.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070519/NEWS/70519042/1001/LIFE02>

SAVING THE 'RIVER OF GRASS'

STATE SENATOR DAVE ARONBERG- GREENACRES- FL

Florida State Senator Dave Aronberg, chair of the Joint Legislative Committee on Everglades Oversight, was sent to Congress to lobby the federal government to live up to its promise to fund half of the Everglades restoration. For the first time since 2000, Congress passed crucial water resource appropriations bills that will provide more than \$1 billion to help restore the acclaimed "River of Grass." In addition, the Florida Legislature increased their financial commitment to the Everglades to the tune of \$200 million.

<http://www.senatordave.com/displaynews.php?article=aaau&dir=newsarticles/2007/two>
<http://www.senatordave.com/displaynews.php?article=aaas&dir=newsarticles/2007/two>

PUTTING FOOD ON THE TABLE

CITY COUNCILMAN ERIC GIOIA - NEW YORK, NY

U.S. CONGRESSMAN TIM RYAN- OHIO

In the nation's first "food stamp challenge," anti-poverty advocates, politicians and clergy feed themselves for a week on the federal amount given to needy people for food. They are calling on Congress to pump about \$20 billion more into the federal food stamp program over five years.

New York City Councilman Eric Gioia lived for one week on \$28 for groceries - the average food stamp allotment for an individual - as part of a national push to increase the federal subsidies. "The goal is to raise awareness about how difficult it is for so many New Yorkers to put food on their table," Gioia said. Budgeting \$1.30 a meal, Gioia planned to load up his cart with peanut butter, beans and "the cheapest bread I can find" at the local supermarket, he said. "Often the cheapest food isn't the healthiest," he warned.



http://www.nydailynews.com/news/2007/05/10/2007-05-10_queens_pol_tries_to_live_on_28_bucks.html

U.S. Congressman Tim Ryan also participated in the seven-day Food Stamp Challenge, an effort aimed at raising awareness of the hunger problem faced by 38 million Americans. The Food Stamp Program provides more than 25 million people living at or below the poverty line with a means to afford basic food items. "I'm taking this challenge because of the one million Ohioans who live day-to-day, unsure whether they'll have the money to buy groceries and still be able to pay the electric bill," Ryan said. The average eligible Ohio family receives \$617 per month, breaking down to \$1.06 per person for every meal. The Food Stamp Challenge duplicates these figures, allotting each participant \$3 worth of food every day for one week.

http://www.vindy.com/content/local_regional/306930204451002.php



Innovative YEOS CONTINUED

BUILDING A DISTRICT

COUNCILWOMAN MADISON NGUYEN- SAN JOSE, CA

San Jose is home to the highest Vietnamese population in the United States and City Councilwoman Madison Nguyen (shown below, at left) feels it's time to recognize that fact with a Vietnamese business district. Nguyen wants to erect two monuments and put up lamppost banners marking the proposed district along a one-mile stretch of Story Road between U.S. Highway 101 and Senter Road.

The hope is that the area would serve as a cultural seat for a large Vietnamese population that, according to Nguyen, has 85,000 residents. The district would also ideally serve as a destination taking advantage of the cultural diversity of both San Jose and the Vietnamese population.



The Vietnamese language signs of the strip malls along Story Road have acted, to some extent, as a deterrent for non-Vietnamese speaking people and Nguyen understands that. Nguyen hopes that the district designation will encourage outsiders to seek Vietnamese food and culture there, as they do in San Francisco's Chinatown.

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Nguyen was the first Vietnamese American elected to the San Jose city council in 2005.

http://cbs5.com/local/local_story_134225233.html

YEO Network Updates

May Election Results

The following YEOs were re-elected during the month of May:

Mayor Justin Taylor of Carbondale, Penn. was re-elected on May 15, 2007 to another four-year term.

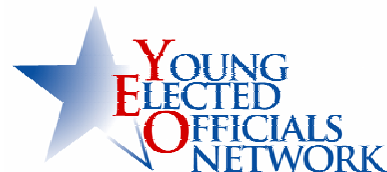
Councilwoman Amy Flowers won re-election to the Athens, Ohio City Council as an At-Large member on May 7, 2007.

Pittsburgh **Mayor Luke Ravenstahl** won his primary unopposed and will face re-election to a four-year term in November of 2007.

El Paso, Texas **City Representative Eddie Holguin** was re-elected on May 12 to another term with 57 percent of the vote.

El Paso, Texas **City Representative Beto O'Rourke** was also re-elected on May 12 to another term with 70 percent of the vote.

Congratulations to all of the YEOs who were re-elected during the month of May. If you have any upcoming election announcements you want us to know about, please contact Joshua Hicks at jhicks@pfaw.org



ANNOUNCEMENTS

BILLINGS- MT

State Rep. Kevin Furey

Kevin Furey, 24, was recently called to active duty with the Army and reported for 144 days of training at Fort Sill, Okla. He is a member of the Army Reserve and was commissioned a second lieutenant last year. In 2003, he served an eight-month tour of duty in Iraq.



GREENVILLE- MS

Mayor Heather Hudson

Members of the National Conference of Black Mayors recently elected Mayor Heather Hudson of Greenville as the organization's 2nd Vice President for the 2007-2008 term.



"I am honored to continue service in such a meaningful organization," said Hudson. "NCBM's work impacts communities throughout the nation, and what I love about it is that people can really see and feel what we do."

Making Changes in Maine

Special Feature by Maine State Representative Chris Barstow

Maine's legislative session in Maine has been very busy this year on many fronts. In addition to the issues that all of my colleagues are dealing with - tax fairness for all and access to affordable, quality health care - I have introduced several pieces of legislation with diverse policy goals that may be useful in your state.



Maine recently enacted legislation I sponsored to help young adults gain access to affordable health insurance. The new law calls for health insurance companies to offer employers and their employees the option of extending coverage to dependent children up to age 25. The bill garnered support from Gov. John Baldacci's Office of Health Policy and Finance, and passed unanimously in the Maine State Legislature.

Young people tend to be healthier, so keeping them insured is an important part of controlling health insurance costs for all citizens. While researching this proposal, I learned that this new policy could extend health insurance coverage to 18,000 Maine residents who are currently uninsured.

Maine is among several states heading in this direction. New Jersey recently passed similar legislation that went a little farther, extending coverage to adult children younger than 30.

I have also introduced legislation to supplement my area's public transportation needs, while also supporting the environment and reducing the burden put on existing roads.

This policy would use the local university's existing student bus service between my hometown campus of Gorham and the campus in Portland, and expand it for citizen use. State funding would be allocated to add buses and staff, with the goal of having the bus service running by September of this year.

My constituents have expressed great support for these initiatives. I hope they will be useful to you as well. If you are interested in other legislation under consideration in Maine, please visit <http://janus.state.me.us/legis/LawMakerWeb/advancedsearch.asp>, or contact me through my website www.chrisbarstow.com.

It can be challenging and rewarding to be an elected official, let alone a young elected official. For all the obstacles and stereotypes we sometimes face because of our age, we can take pride in knowing the great service we provide, the fresh perspectives we possess, and the energy and enthusiasm we bring to our work. I applaud all of you.

- Rep. Chris Barstow
Maine House of Representatives, District 129
(207) 839-2095

UPCOMING EVENTS

National Association of Counties: 2007 Annual Conference
July 13-17, 2007
<http://www.naco.org/>
Richmond, VA

Yearly Kos Convention
August 2-5, 2007
<http://www.yearlykosconvention.org/>
Chicago, IL

The Council of State Governments:
Southern Legislative Council Annual Meeting
July 14-18, 2007
<http://www.slcatlanta.org>
Williamsburg, VA

National Conference of State Legislators: Annual Conference
August 5 - 9, 2007
<http://www.ncsl.org>
Boston, MA

National Conference of Insurance Legislators
July 19-22, 2007
<http://www.ncoil.org>
Seattle, WA

The Council of State Governments: Eastern Conference
August 12 - 15, 2007
<http://www.csgeast.org>
Quebec City, Quebec

National Council of La Raza: 2007 Annual Conference
July 21-24, 2007
<http://www.nclr.org>
Miami, FL

The Council of State Governments: Midwestern Legislative Conference
August 26 - 29, 2007
<http://www.csgmidwest.org>
Traverse City, MI

POLICY CORNER

Zero-Energy Capable Homes

Council Member Jennifer Kim
Austin, Texas

Target level of Government: City / Municipality
Policy Category: Energy Conservation

Synopsis

In August of 2006, the City of Austin began an initiative to require all new single-family homes built within city limits to be zero energy capable by 2015. This ambitious goal will require all new homes to be net-zero energy efficient by the addition of on-site energy generation, such as solar photovoltaic panels.

The series of city code updates will increase the energy efficiency of newly-constructed homes by 60 percent compared to homes built to code today. Improved energy efficiency will not only help energy conservation and the environment, but also help with rising energy bills for residents.

Resources

For more information on this City of Austin initiative, please visit AustinEnergy.com.

The Austin City Council appointed a taskforce to develop a strategy that will be piloted through Austin Energy's nationally recognized Green Building Program. Please feel free to contact Austin Energy's Public Information Office for more information about this taskforce at 512-322-6514.

In October 2006, Council Member Kim received support from the National League of Cities regarding the zero energy capable homes initiative and passed a resolution including it in the NLC's National Municipal Policy.

Support within the Austin community came from environmentalists and those concerned with energy conservation. The initiative also received support from many individuals within the affordable housing community who recognized the importance of lessening the burden of energy costs on family incomes.

Clean School Bus Act of 2007

Marc Alessi
Wading River, New York

Target level of Government: State Wide
Policy Category: Alternate Energy
Possible Allies: Environmental Advocates, Bio-Diesel Industry, Schools and Parents

Synopsis

This legislation would require all school buses in New York to use a 20 percent blend of bio-diesel fuel within a year. It's designed to increase the use of alternate fuels, promote American farming and production of energy, decrease pollution, and decrease the exposure of school-aged children to unhealthy pollutants. It would affect school districts, school bus operators and gasoline providers to school districts.

Resources

NY State Assembly Website
<http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/?ad=001&submit=Go>

Support for this type of policy will come from bio-diesel manufacturers, producers and distributors. Also, environmental advocates and those concerned with the health of their children will rally behind this.



Job Announcements

Deputy Director of Public Policy

People For the American Way

Washington, DC

People For the American Way is a constitutional liberties organization with one million members and activists. The Public Policy department lobbies Congress and the Executive Branch on behalf of the organization to affect public policy at the national level. The Deputy Director assists the Director with supervision of the department, participates in lobbying activities and other legislative activities on behalf of People For the American Way, and provides research and other support for the department.

<http://www.idealists.org/en/job/221084-272>

Continued on Back Page

Job Announcements

Continued

Activism List Growth Manager

Care 2

Redwood City, California

Care2 is looking to hire a versatile new Activism List Growth Manager to join its 8-person campaign team based in Redwood City, California. Reporting to the Campaign Director, the List Growth Manager will be responsible for accelerating the growth of Care2's activist e-alert campaign lists. The List Growth Manager will be responsible for increasing the growth rate of Care2's campaign lists, increasing retention of subscribers and increasing their rate of response to Care2's action campaigns.

<http://www.idealists.org/en/job/220826-290>

Union Organizer/Contract Administrator

The Committee of Interns and Residents (CIR/SEIU)

Albuquerque, New Mexico

The largest resident physicians' union in the United States is looking to fill an organizer/contract administrator position in Albuquerque, New Mexico. CIR is a nation-wide, progressive, rank and file healthcare union which represents 12,000 resident physician members in private and public hospitals. Founded in 1957, CIR has a tradition of fighting both for the workplace rights of resident physicians and for universal access to quality healthcare. CIR is a national affiliate of the Service Employees International Union.

<http://www.idealists.org/en/job/218223-152>

Professional Organizers

Clean Water Action

Baltimore, Maryland

Clean Water Action is a national citizens' organization working for clean, safe and affordable water, prevention of health-threatening pollution, creation of environmentally-safe jobs and businesses, and empowerment of people to make democracy work. They have a 30-year record of success in winning campaigns for clean air, clean water, and better health in Maryland.

<http://www.idealists.org/en/job/209238-252>

Tax and Budget Specialist

Progressive States Network

New York, NY

Progressive States is seeking a policy specialist with expertise in issues of tax and budget policy, specifically to promote issues of reforming tax subsidies, ending "pay-to-play" contracting and privatization and more intelligently using tax policy for economic growth. The agenda in this area ranges from "sunsetting" bad corporate tax subsidy policies to establishing accountable development mandates on those receiving public monies to promoting a fairer, more equitable tax policy. Since Progressive States is dedicated to breaking down single issue politics in favor of a shared multi-issue agenda, any candidate for this position should be prepared to promote these tax and budget issues in the context of alliances with labor, civil rights, environmental and affordable housing organizations.

jobs@progressivestates.org



YOUNG ELECTED OFFICIALS NETWORK STAFF

Young Elected Officials Network

A program of People For the American Way Foundation

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