



POLICY AREAS

Fellows are implementing 501(c)(4) strategies in five key policy areas:

CHILD CARE



States advancing child care policies: Arizona, Colorado, Kentucky, Maryland, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Vermont

PRESCHOOL



States advancing preschool policies: Arizona, Minnesota, North Carolina, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, Virginia

PAID LEAVE



States advancing paid leave policies: Arizona, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Tennessee

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH



States advancing mental and physical policies: Arizona, Colorado, Oregon, Tennessee

FAMILY SUPPORTS



States advancing family supports (ex: tax credits, home visiting): Arizona, North Carolina, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon

501(C)(4) STRATEGIES

To accomplish their policy goals, all Fellows do unlimited lobbying in the forms of direct, contracted, and grassroots. Other essential strategies include: score cards, caucus support, engaging chambers of commerce, electoral modeling, candidate engagement and recruitment, labor engagement, endorsements, thank you campaigns, and communications campaigns.

In 2026, 17 Fellows are working to advance three essential areas of impact across the country:

More pro-young child and family advocates, voters, candidates, and winning candidates.

KENTUCKY: The **Kentucky Chamber of Commerce** is using communication resources and a voter file to identify voters. The voter file allows the Chamber to target voters who care about early childhood issues or are neutral as well as launch a Get Out the Vote campaign.

MINNESOTA: **TakeAction Minnesota** is running a robust screening and endorsement process where candidates will be invited to fill out a questionnaire and meet with TakeAction's members so they can identify candidates who support a pro-child agenda and which ones will lead on the agenda once elected as well as how TakeAction can partner with them. Once endorsed, candidates receive independent expenditure investments, as appropriate, from TakeAction to help get them elected.

NORTH CAROLINA: **Smart Start Advocates** is partnering with other early care and education (ECE) advocacy groups and stakeholders to prepare voter registration guides on state legislative candidates by showing their voting records on ECE and family-related issues. These guides will be posted throughout the state on advocates' and stakeholders' websites and shared with parents and providers.

OHIO: **Ohio Kids First** is increasing its participation in a pre-election conference called *Vote for Ohio Kids* that has been co-hosted in the past by Groundwork Ohio, Ohio Children's Hospital Association, and Ohio Excels, an organization affiliated with the Ohio Business Roundtable. In previous years, hundreds of child advocates have attended and both party's candidates for Governor, including Governor DeWine, when he was running for re-election.

PENNSYLVANIA: **Children First Action Fund (CFAF)** in Pennsylvania aims to boost voter participation among pro-care voters and families with young children by deploying compelling social media ads and organic content in targeted districts, orchestrate highly visible events at child care

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centers, summer camps and other parent/family friendly venues, and door-to-door canvases to target female voters who are not regular mid-term voters.

VERMONT: Let's Grow Kids Action Network in Vermont will mobilize Vermonters to be child care voters through field efforts, paid ads, social media, email, earned media, and phone and text banking to engage them in the political process and get them out to vote.

More pro-child and family legislation and funding.

COLORADO: In 2026, **Healthier Colorado** wants to raise taxes to fund a new program that makes child care more affordable for Colorado families and supports a sustainable child care workforce. Per their state constitution, any proposal to raise state taxes must be approved by the state's voters. There are two ways to put such a proposal on the statewide ballot: collect the requisite number of signatures (124,238 for 2026), or have the General Assembly refer it to voters. Healthier Colorado will specifically seek to prevent legislators from unhelpfully altering the bill, secure bipartisan support, and ensure the best possible ballot question is referred to voters.

MARYLAND: Maryland Rise is issuing a Maryland Families Report Card in 2026. They will circulate materials for the report during the legislative session to build awareness and integrate "report card" messaging into communications with legislators, including during lobbying.

NEW MEXICO: NMVC Action Fund's (NMVCAF) lobbyist is working with coalition partners to directly lobby legislators. This work began in 2025 and will continue through the 2026 legislative session. NMVCAF also provides funding to certain partner organizations to mobilize early childhood advocates to attend the legislative session to speak with their legislators about their issues.

NEW YORK: Alliance for Quality Education in New York is organizing lobbying days in Albany and D.C. featuring parents and childcare providers, delivering testimony and policy briefings to key legislators and budget officials, and staging media campaigns with billboards and digital ads to keep their issues at the forefront leading up to elections and legislative votes.

OREGON: For All Families Oregon is using a "Govern, Run, Govern" strategy, working with the Governor and her staff on parallel policy and campaign tracks to co-develop a statewide universal early learning and care program in 2026 backed by child development best practice and campaign messaging, that she can run on in the midterm elections, and pass in 2027 or send to the 2028 ballot.

VIRGINIA: Virginia Promise in Action is leveraging their team of lobbyists to monitor and shape conversations, building on relationships with child care champions of the year (Speaker of the House, Chairs of House and Senate money committees, ECCE Commission co-chairs) along with deploying grassroots (parents) and grasstops (business/economic development) pressure to communicate the necessity of a robust, well-funded ECCE system that supports access to quality affordable child care for all Virginia families.

More capacity for legislative and electoral advocacy for young children and families

ARIZONA: Stand for Children Arizona's (Stand Arizona) grassroots tactics include mobilizing their base of almost 3,500 early childhood advocates, adding 500 new advocates. They are deepening engagement by contacting legislators, submitting testimony, sharing personal stories, attending legislative hearings, and writing letters to the editor. Stand Arizona aims for at least 5,000 new grassroots actions and 75,000 impressions, a substantial increase from 2025.

MAINE: Maine People's Alliance (MPA) grassroots strategy is building long-term power among parents and providers. Through digital outreach, MPA is moving supporters into in-person action—training a cohort of Parent Ambassadors to recruit and mentor new participants. MPA's canvasses will collect demographic and attitudinal data to identify key child care constituencies—parents, grandparents, women, and small employers—so they can tailor outreach and legislative engagement accordingly.

MISSOURI: Missouri Action for Kids is providing grants to thirteen community organizations across Missouri, equipping them with critical, flexible funding they need to directly engage in legislative and administrative lobbying activities on early childhood education issues.

SOUTH CAROLINA: South Carolinians for Common Sense (SCCS) relies on grassroots-driven tactics and strategic issue advocacy campaigns. Parents, providers, and business leaders will serve as the most credible messengers in conversations with lawmakers, highlighting the impact of childcare access on local economies and family stability. SCCS will facilitate these conversations, host district-based events, and use digital advocacy to ensure legislators hear directly from their constituents.

TENNESSEE: Tennesseans for Quality Early Education's (TQEE) Business + Family Forum shifts their advocacy work through Tennessee's business community into high gear by equipping them with briefs and fact sheets, and encouraging them to contact state policymakers to advocate for early childhood policy proposals as well as hosting events for business leaders with state policymakers to educate and advocate for specific early childhood policy proposals.

