Proud, Principled, Pragmatic Partisanship

The current election cycle is straining many of the core assumptions and institutions that sustain our nation’s unique brand of democracy.

There is no question that our nation is divided. This is not a new feature in our pluralistic society, and it is certainly no excuse for a failure to govern. In Federalist No. 10, Madison envisioned the essential relationship between political freedom and political conflict writing, “Liberty is to faction, what air is to fire.” In seeking to govern a divided nation, our goal must not be to reduce the distinctions that flow from our freedoms. Instead, we must embrace and engage our differences in the pursuit of broadly acceptable policy. At BPC, we practice what we preach.
Through BPC policy negotiations, we have come to understand the intense and often personal exchanges that are required to overcome heartfelt differences.

While the diverse participants in our policy negotiations do not have to stand for election, they are by no means disinterested parties. BPC task force members have long histories and public positions on the issues under discussion. They often hail from communities and interest groups with well-defined interests, many are active in party politics, and, like all of us, they carefully guard their professional reputations and relationships. Moreover, our project leaders understand that BPC projects are not remote academic exercises. Following the BPC credo—ALL TALK / ALL ACTION—project members commit at the outset of negotiations to publicly advocate for any consensus recommendations. There can be a lot on the line.

In every challenging negotiation—from energy and climate to immigration reform to housing policy to retirement security and Iran policy—there are moments when consensus seems impossible. When agreements are finally struck, they are achieved through some combination of rigorous analysis, mutual respect, peer pressure, public duty, frustration, and exhaustion. A recent BPC project on Retirement Security and Personal Savings reflects these dynamics. After two years of heated debate and round upon round of edits, we achieved a final agreement that addresses a number of controversial policy challenges, including reforms to Social Security. The true meaning of consensus was expressed in notes from commission members, conveying their support for the report. A few of my favorites are noted below:

“The report is well written, easy to read, and only mildly offensive to me.”

“I hope our final meeting gives us a chance to speak frankly about our misgivings and differences, especially because the bargaining is over.”

“I started to play with language and numbers over the days since getting the draft, but decided that doing that one more time would be an exercise of little added value.”

“There are a number of recommendations with which I do not agree, and a number of the ‘factual’ points with which I do not agree are correct, but that is life and that is to be expected in a commission process.”

“I can support the total package, as a package, as long as there are no minority reports or conditional statements included in the report from other commissioners.”

“I like the proposal better than I remember.”

These ambivalent expressions of agreement reveal an essential truth about reconciling policy differences. It’s painful, but more important, it’s possible.

Despite the political challenges leading up to a presidential election, our government actually achieved some real progress over the past year. BPC and the Bipartisan Policy Center Advocacy Network (BPCAN) were right in the middle of the debate.

Our policy recommendations were incorporated into numerous legislative actions spanning; the Medicare Access and Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2015, the Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, and the end-of-year omnibus appropriations and tax extender package. Furthermore, we influenced change at the regulatory level. The Department of Health and Human Services incorporated several BPC proposals into new regulations on Health Information Technology and nine distinct BPC recommendations on cost-containment and delivery reform were incorporated into Medicare regulations. Most recently, BPC recommendations were reflected in bipartisan legislation on medical innovation approved by the Senate HELP Committee and in legislation to increase the Low Income Housing Tax Credit.

Over the next six months, BPC projects on expanding economic opportunity, infrastructure investment, defense reform, energy innovation, and evidence-based budgeting will pave the way for progress in 2017.

If you are a proud, principled, and pragmatic partisan, I hope you’ll join us.
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About the Bipartisan Policy Center

The Bipartisan Policy Center is a non-profit organization that combines the best ideas from both parties to promote health, security, and opportunity for all Americans. BPC drives principled and politically viable policy solutions through the power of rigorous analysis, painstaking negotiation, and aggressive advocacy.

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Former Senator from Wisconsin and Secretary of Health and Human Services

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Former Mayor of Los Angeles

Antonio R. Villaraigosa
Former Mayor of Los Angeles

bipartisanpolicy.org
BPC took its constructive partisanship model to new audiences and issues in 2015, and our collaborative process resulted in meaningful success. The recommendations from our commissions and task forces can not only be found in our reports and on our website, but they have informed multiple pieces of legislation and federal regulation.

We have been behind the scenes on several of the most successful bipartisan efforts in the 114th Congress—whether we are working on investment in medical innovation, securing the electric grid from cyberattacks, or modernizing the approach to chemical safety.

LEGISLATIVE IMPACT

The 2015 end-of-year omnibus appropriations and tax extender package included several key BPC recommendations, including:

- An end to the ban on crude oil exports.
- Requirements on the Department of Homeland Security to develop a better set of metrics to measure immigration enforcement and border security efforts and publicly report the data on a regular basis.
- Greater information sharing on cyber threats between companies and the U.S. government.
- Increased investments for the National Institutes of Health (a $2 billion increase) and the Food and Drug Administration (a $132 million increase) to speed the delivery of safe and effective medical treatments.
- Permanency of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit.
- Increased investments in energy efficiency and innovation through ARPA-E, the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Office and the Office of Science, as well as making the research and development tax credit permanent.

The Medicare Access and Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Reauthorization Act of 2015 contained several BPC Health Project recommendations, including payment incentives for physicians to participate in value-based payment models and more means-testing, as well as a two-year reauthorization of CHIP.

BPC’s Governors’ Council helped Sens. Dean Heller (R-NV) and Joe Manchin (D-WV) champion an amendment to give governors more say in state education plans. It was included in the enacted Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015.

The Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2015 that was enacted into law contained BPC Energy Project recommendations on securing the electric grid from cyberattacks.

The House-passed 21st Century Cures Act—critical legislation addressing medical innovation—included recommendations proposed by BPC’s Health Innovation Initiative on health information technology and medical innovation.

Several bipartisan bills were introduced that included BPC recommendations on energy innovation, including legislation by

The Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act was signed into law in 2016 following the successful passage of complementary bipartisan bills in both the House and the Senate. The Bipartisan Policy Center Advocacy Network strongly advocated for its passage.

In 2016, Congress has introduced some bipartisan bills that mirror BPC’s housing recommendations. Sens. Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Orrin Hatch (R-UT) introduced legislation increasing federal support for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit by 50 percent; Sens. Angus King (I-ME) and Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) introduced legislation improving coordination of federal programs and support of home assessments and modifications; and Reps. Patrick Murphy (D-FL) and Bruce Poliquin (R-ME) introduced tax legislation to help older adults afford home modifications and assessments. The House and Senate have also introduced bipartisan bills supporting the Independence at Home Demonstration Program.

REGULATORY IMPACT

Nine recommendations from BPC’s Health Project on the subjects of cost-containment and delivery reform were incorporated into Medicare regulations.

Recommendations proposed by the Health Innovation Initiative—both for how health information technology (IT) is regulated and for improving health IT interoperability—were incorporated into roadmaps published by the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Financial Stability Oversight Council (FSOC) has adopted several of BPC’s Financial Regulatory Reform Initiative’s recommendations to improve FSOC transparency and enhancements to the process to allow systemically important financial institutions to shed that designation.

The Federal Reserve Board’s new requirement for Total Loss Absorbing Capital for the nation’s largest financial institutions broadly follows recommendations found in the 2013 too-big-to-fail report released by BPC’s Financial Regulatory Reform Initiative.
PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

DEMOCRACY
ECONOMIC POLICY
ENERGY
FINANCE
GOVERNORS’ COUNCIL
HEALTH
HOUSING
IMMIGRATION
INFRASTRUCTURE
NATIONAL SECURITY
Americans are deeply concerned about the health of our democracy. They view Congress as insensitive to their needs and incapable of effective collaboration. The rules of our elections have become a political grudge match, and voters are rightly concerned about outdated registration and voting systems that lead to confusion on Election Day. BPC, however, believes that the core of American democracy is resilient and BPC is undertaking efforts designed to strengthen our governing institutions and elections.

This Congress, lawmakers have embraced a number of key recommendations from BPC’s Commission on Political Reform. BPC has tracked progress on these recommendations via its Healthy Congress Index. Congressional committees have been active, and there have been more amendments debated in the Senate, although the House has not held as much open debate as it should.

In the lead-up to the 2016 elections, BPC and the former members of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration are working to improve the voting experience. Many states have adopted online registration and joined programs to improve the accuracy of voting rolls. And BPC has pushed forward recommendations on improvements to voting technology and postal issues relating to mail ballots.

Looking Ahead

On November 8, 2016 Americans will go to the polls to elect new leaders. BPC will be collecting data at polling places in at least 40 jurisdictions, covering 30 million registered voters across the nation, to compile the first of its kind dataset on polling-place lines.

- John Fortier  |  Director of the Democracy Project
Millions of Americans are financially unprepared for retirement. Half of all adults say they could not access $2,000 in 30 days for an emergency expense without selling possessions or resorting to payday loans. Our Social Security system is financially unsustainable and barely adequate to sustain basic life-needs for many older Americans. Overall, our retirement system—designed for the economy of the 20th century—is difficult to navigate and not providing effective incentives and support for American workers.

To address many of these issues, the Economic Policy Project (EPP) concluded two and a half years of intense work when it issued the Commission on Retirement Security and Personal Savings report in June 2016. Headed by former Sen. Kent Conrad and former Executive Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation and Deputy Commissioner of the Social Security Administration James B. Lockhart III, the 19-member commission made a wide range of recommendations to help Americans achieve retirement security.

Looking Ahead

EPP has joined with BPC’s National Security Program and the Health Program’s Prevention Initiative in a yearlong effort designed to address the crisis in military personnel policies. The current regime is not attracting a diversity of talent, and is failing to serve interests of many who serve our country but do not spend the bulk of their professional life in uniform.

BPC’s task force of defense experts, veteran service organizations, and policymakers is wading into these complex and politically charged issues. Led by former Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, former National Security Advisor Gen. James L. Jones (ret.), former Sen. Jim Talent, and Head of Blue Star Families Kathy Roth-Douquet, the commission will develop consensus recommendations designed to protect our nation and preserve our solemn commitment to those who serve it.

- Steve Bell | BPC Senior Fellow

Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew.

Senator Rob Portman (R-OH).

Senator Susan Collins (R-ME).
Energy policy has been a bright spot for the U.S. economy over the past several years. Increased production of oil and gas has created jobs and lowered energy prices. At the same time, increases in energy efficiency, growth in renewables, and increasing reliance on natural gas in the power sector have substantially lowered a variety of pollutants, including carbon emissions. In this new environment, BPC and BPCAN worked with a bipartisan group in Congress to lift the oil export ban and secure the economic and security benefits of abundance, while also pushing for major increases in federal R&D investments to accelerate the transition to clean energy technologies.

BPC is working intensively with a group of midwestern states and NGOs to analyze a variety of compliance pathways under the Clean Power Plan. Additionally, we are working with stakeholders to develop guiding principles for consent-based siting of nuclear waste.

Looking Ahead

BPC is collaborating with an array of private- and public-sector partners to support the critical energy infrastructure needed to support our economy and propel the transition to a cleaner and more secure energy future. BPC’s energy and economic policy teams are working together to promote efficiency and accountability in energy-relevant components of corporate tax reform.

- Tracy Terry | Director of the Energy Project
Throughout 2015 the Financial Regulatory Reform Initiative (FRRI) continued to influence the debate to improve the Dodd-Frank Act, with an overarching goal of balancing the imperatives for financial stability, economic growth, and meeting the financial needs of consumers and entrepreneurs. Multiple BPC-supported provisions were adopted into regulation and proposed in legislation, and FRRI launched a new project on insurance regulatory reform.

**Looking Ahead**

BPC is working to assess how the post-crisis financial regulatory system is working as a whole and the impacts on small business and consumers. FRRI is also launching a number of efforts centered on disruptive financial technologies and working in collaboration with BPC’s National Security Program to promote reforming outdated anti-money laundering laws so they are more effective in tracking terrorism financing.

- Justin Schardin  |  Director of the Financial Regulatory Reform Initiative
Governors have to make tough decisions every day that affect the lives of their constituents. They can’t afford to get tied up in partisan wars with their legislatures. Schools have to be funded, disasters must be responded to, and residents must receive services. In creating the Governors’ Council, BPC sought to bring that pragmatism to Washington. In that spirit, the council has tackled timely and important national issues like restoring state primacy over K-12 education, encouraging improvements to Medicaid and the higher education system, and better coordination between workforce training and the marketplace. Additionally, the governors hosted a briefing for Hill staff explaining the intersection between federal and state budgets, and calling for more cooperation. They are bringing a much-needed voice to federal policymaking.

Looking Ahead

Regardless of who wins the presidency, the new vice president will be a former governor bringing a state perspective to the White House for the first time in eight years. The council believes this provides a key opportunity to rebalance the federal-state partnership to one of cooperation and collaboration and will therefore soon release recommendations on improving the federal-state relationship.

- Michele Nellenbach | Director of the Governors’ Council

Governors’ Council Members

Mike Beebe
Former Governor of Arkansas

Steven Beshear
Former Governor of Kentucky

Jim Douglas
Former Governor of Vermont

Chris Gregoire
Former Governor of Washington

Linda Lingle
Former Governor of Hawaii

Sonny Perdue
Former Governor of Georgia
The top priority of BPC’s Health Innovation Initiative this year was developing actionable recommendations to accelerate the development and delivery of safe and effective cures and treatments for Americans. Under the guidance of our co-chairs, former Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, M.D., and former Rep. Bart Gordon, we were pleased to see several of our proposals included in the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee’s medical innovation package, the House 21st Century Cures Act, and the Prescription Drug User Fee Act VI draft commitment letter.

Looking Ahead

In the coming year, BPC and BPCAN will continue to work with congressional leaders and key stakeholders to promote its recommendations in advancing much-needed medical innovation legislation in 2016 and as part of drug and device user fee legislation in 2017.

- Janet Marchibroda | Director of Health Innovation
The debates over health policy and health insurance continue to figure prominently in congressional debate and the U.S. economy. It was a banner year for the Health Project, as many of our proposals were adopted by Congress or the administration. Former Senate Majority Leaders Tom Daschle and Bill Frist, M.D., partnered with former Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Tommy Thompson, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, and former Congressional Budget Office Director Alice Rivlin to extend children’s health insurance coverage, improve health care quality, and lower costs, and reform the delivery and financing of long-term care for older Americans.

Looking Ahead

People with chronic conditions, especially those individuals dually eligible for Medicare and Medicaid, are often not served effectively or efficiently by the current health care structure. In 2016, BPC will develop recommendations to address the unique needs these vulnerable populations face. Furthermore, BPC will work to refine and advocate for proposals that ensure older Americans have economically viable options for long-term care. BPC is also exploring a new effort to improve the quality and dignity of advanced end-of-life care.

- Katherine Hayes
Director of Health Policy
In 2015, BPC’s Prevention Task Force continued to elevate prevention as a critical component of health policy and broadened recognition of its value for health outcomes and potential cost savings. HHS took an important step in 2016 by covering the YMCA’s evidence-based diabetes-prevention program through Medicare. The issue is gaining traction with the administration, and BPC will continue to advocate for our recommendations to build the evidence base and integrate prevention into our nation’s health care delivery system.

- Lisel Loy | Director of the Prevention Task Force
In 2015, BPC created a task force, co-chaired by former Housing and Urban Development Secretaries Henry Cisneros and Mel Martinez, and former Reps. Allyson Schwartz and Vin Weber, to bridge the gap between housing and health care for our nation’s aging population. In the spring of 2016, the task force released recommendations that would help improve health outcomes and reduce health care costs for our nation’s seniors.

**Looking Ahead**

The task force will focus on advancing the recommendations with the executive and legislative branches, state and local officials, and the private sector. To achieve momentum in 2017, BPC will work to advance the task force’s recommendations on realizing opportunities to integrate the health care and housing sectors and better coordinating resources for age-based home modifications with officials at the local, state, and federal level. BPC is also updating the recommendations of its 2013 Housing Commission to reform the nation’s housing finance system as well as address the growing need for affordable rental housing.
The debate over how to fix our nation’s broken immigration system and address the illegal immigration and status of undocumented immigrants that has resulted from it has been one of the most polarizing aspects of the 2016 election. BPC’s Immigration Policy Project has sought to confront these divisions with substantive analysis of border security and enforcement, sanctuary cities, the refugee crisis, the continuing influx at the border of Central American children and families, the impact of immigration on the labor force and wages, and the president’s immigration executive actions.

**Looking Ahead**

It seems almost certain that immigration policy will play a dominant role in our nation’s political discourse regardless of the outcome of the November elections. BPC’s project is well positioned to advance serious conversations and build a constructive center in this highly divisive debate. Early in 2017, we plan to update and release new recommendations from our bipartisan Immigration Task Force on how the parties can get back to pragmatic, substantive legislative efforts, and continue to focus efforts on the policy and political necessity of bipartisanship to finally fix our immigration system.

- Theresa Cardinal Brown | Director of Immigration Policy
The Executive Council on Infrastructure, a group of CEOs and executives, released recommendations earlier this year to overcome the political and regulatory barriers that discourage private capital from investing in our nation’s infrastructure.

The report called for increased private investment in our nation’s crumbling roads, bridges, water systems, airports, and civic buildings. Among the priority recommendations, the council called on states to adopt broad enabling legislation to allow for the full range of partnerships between the public and private sectors for all types of infrastructure.

**Looking Ahead**

The council is continuing its work together to advance state and federal policies that foster more and smarter investment, while working to shape the infrastructure priorities of the incoming Congress and administration. BPC is also launching a focused effort to apply the broad insights from the council to the immediate crisis facing our nation’s water infrastructure.

“Our council is proof of the willingness among bipartisan political leaders and the business community to come together with a renewed focus and imperative to invest in our nation’s shared future.”

- **Doug Peterson**
  Co-Chair, BPC Executive Council on Infrastructure; President and CEO, S&P Global

- **Susan Story**
  Co-Chair, BPC Executive Council on Infrastructure; President and CEO, American Water

Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR) (left), and Senator John Hoeven (R-ND).

Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO), and BPC President Jason Grumet.

CEO of Siebert Brandford Shank & Co. Suzanne Shank.
Recent upheaval has painfully demonstrated the costs to international peace of radical extremism and spreading global instability. BPC’s National Security Program (NSP) continues to focus its efforts on Iran and Turkey—two nations that have a critical influence on the future of the Middle East and a significant impact on U.S. interests. In the last year, NSP thoroughly analyzed the Iran nuclear deal, the many players involved in the conflict with ISIS, Turkey’s growing authoritarianism, and strategies to battle extremist ideology. BPC, in partnership with the Mike Rogers Center, also launched an initiative to bring together Silicon Valley and government experts on cybersecurity, which culminated in a widely reported event headlined by Director of National Intelligence James Clapper.

**Looking Ahead**

In the coming year we will stay focused on U.S. policy in the Middle East, working with Congress and the new administration to establish a more collaborative dialogue on the key threats to the nation’s security. BPC is also launching a new effort led by former 9/11 Commission Co-Chairs Tom Kean and Lee Hamilton exploring the structural drivers of extremism and calling on the United States to work with Middle Eastern partners to propagate moderate and peaceful ideas.
"I’d like to be known as someone who tried to solve problems."

BPC Senior Fellow and former Senator Robert F. Bennett (1933-2016)
HONORING THE LATE
SEN. ROBERT F. BENNETT

Earlier this year, BPC was saddened by the passing of our dear friend and colleague Sen. Robert F. Bennett.

Bennett was a BPC senior fellow and former U.S. senator who served Utah from 1993 to 2011. He was a member of the BPC Commission on Political Reform, where he pushed to open up the electoral process and reform Senate rules.

“We will miss Bob’s vitality, intellect, optimism, and wonderful stories. Bob was guided throughout his life by a deep desire to do what is right, not only for his state, but for his country. He was a man of deep passion and conviction, not to mention a dedication to serving the country, both in the armed forces and in public office.”

- Jason Grumet | BPC President

“Bob Bennett’s life is a testament to honor, integrity, and good work. In an era of growing partisanship in the U.S. Senate, Sen. Bennett always remained a strong voice for compromise and reason. He loved his family, loved his country, and left a powerful legacy of excellence in public service.”

- Byron Dorgan | Former Senator from North Dakota

To honor Bennett’s legacy of public service, BPC and Arent Fox—where Bennett was a senior policy advisor—have established the Robert F. Bennett Award.

The award is presented each summer to the BPC intern and Arent Fox summer associate who best exemplify Bennett’s commitment to public service and desire to make a difference.
There is a compelling need for the individuals at the Bipartisan Policy Center because they are the most respected people that I know in America, so I’m grateful for this policy center—even if it contains a few of my old enemies.

- Senator John McCain (R-AZ)
If you are looking for an organization that goes above and beyond in the name of bipartisanship, look no further than the Bipartisan Policy Center.

- Senator Mark Warner (D-VA)
By the Numbers

BPC HAD **1,765** PRESS MENTIONS THROUGHOUT 2015

BPC increased its total number of TV INTERVIEWS THROUGHOUT 2015 TOTALING **85**

83 OP-EDS THROUGHOUT 2015

In 2015, BPC increased its total number of RADIO INTERVIEWS TOTALING **52**

IN 2015 BPC HELD **87** PUBLIC EVENTS

4,000+ PEOPLE attended a BPC EVENT in 2015

EVENTS IN:
DC, New Hampshire, Arkansas, Montana, Minnesota, Washington State, and Michigan

FEATURED ON

THE HUFFINGTON POST
USA TODAY
Roll Call
The Washington Post
THE HILL
The New York Times
U.S. News
THE WALL STREET JOURNAL
CNN
In 2015, more than a quarter of all events were partnership events. 24 in total.

Over half of all 2015 events used webcast technology to reach our audience.

The BPC website was visited 457,526 times in 2015. This includes 310,108 unique visitors.

70% first time visitor page views in 2015 (1,200,257).

Social Media 2015

2,412 new Twitter followers

818 new Facebook likes
Financial Information

REVENUE

Grand Total

$19,547,918

Individuals and Family Foundations
Institutional Foundations
Corporate and Other

32% 43%

25%
BPC received significant revenue at the end of 2014. Expenses associated with these restricted gifts were incurred in 2015.
Our Supporters

The Bipartisan Policy Center wishes to recognize and thank the diverse group of foundations, corporations, and individuals that invested in our programs and core operations during 2015. Your support aids in BPC’s ability to promote bipartisanship and find creative, effective solutions to the nation’s challenges.

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Julie Sweet
Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association
Terwilliger Family Foundation, Inc.
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United Services Automobile Association
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