



CIVITAS
INSTITUTE



2019
ANNUAL REPORT



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***CIVITAS INSTITUTE BRINGS ON NEW BOARD MEMBER
PAUL "SKIP" STAM***

VIGILANCE KEY TO RESTORING AND EXPANDING LIBERTY



When the Civitas Institute was founded in 2005, the North Carolina state government was dominated by leftist policies and politicians. Civitas set about helping to change that environment through rapid response to bad policy, policy analysis, quality research, polling, and communicating conservative ideas and solutions to concerned citizens and lawmakers. Now, Civitas is approaching its 15th anniversary, and the Old North State has benefited from a conservative shift, including more educational freedom for families, election law reform, and the historic triumph of budget and tax reforms – which continues to serve as a model to the nation.

President Ronald Reagan said, “Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same.”

Therefore, North Carolina conservatives must remain vigilant to protect our hard-won progress in liberty. In that line of thinking, Civitas has increased its efforts to fan the flames of freedom in North Carolina.

- The Left has been adept at using new media. Civitas has responded by bolstering our online presence and finding new ways to communicate – including online videos and podcasts.
- In January, Civitas published an academic study on the potential economic impacts of repealing North Carolina’s corporate income tax. The results were astounding, with the study estimating an economic impact of increased state GDP by \$17 billion or by 2.1%, and lifting GDP per capita by \$1,453 over the next decade.
- The Civitas Institute is reinforcing its research capabilities with new staff and a focus on core areas of policy, such as education, fiscal policy, and elections/ethics policy. Facts are on the side of conservative policy principles, and Civitas is dedicated to bringing those facts to light.

- The Civitas Poll has been a trusted source in North Carolina and nationally for more than a decade now. Over that time, the Civitas Poll has become a recognizable brand in North Carolina politics and is regularly cited in state and national outlets such as the McClatchy Papers, Real Clear Politics, and FiveThirtyEight.

“NORTH CAROLINA HAS BECOME ONE OF THE PERENNIAL EPICENTERS OF AMERICAN POLITICS”

As we approach 2020, the people of the Old North State will enjoy noticeably more freedom, opportunity, and prosperity. Opportunity is the operative word for North Carolina, whether that comes in terms of new jobs or educational freedom for families. We have seen staggering progress over the past eight years, and you, through your support of Civitas and our mission, are responsible for making it possible.

The Civitas Institute will never slacken our established efforts in education and empowering North Carolinians. North Carolina has become one of the perennial epicenters of American politics, and so our efforts are even more vital than they were when Civitas was founded nearly 15 years ago. At Civitas, we promise to continue the fight and continue to be the watcher at the gate of liberty.



Donald Bryson
President



POLICY GOALS

Gov. Roy Cooper talks with North Carolina residents who do not have health insurance during a roundtable at the Andrews-London House in Raleigh, N.C., Wednesday, July 17, 2019. Ethan Hyman

- ❖ **DEFEATING MEDICAID EXPANSION**
- ❖ **EXPANDING SCHOOL CHOICE**
- ❖ **WORKING TO REPEAL THE CORPORATE INCOME TAX**
- ❖ **IMPROVING ELECTION INTEGRITY AND THE VOTING PROCESS**

We sought to influence these four major goals through a variety of means over the past year. Civitas staff coordinated events with legislators and local and national experts to discuss the implications of Medicaid expansion. We held a roundtable discussion to highlight the strong bipartisan support school choice receives and elevate the future of school choice in North Carolina.

In addition to these events, Civitas staff help to form and shape the current debates via timely blog posts, insightful articles, meetings with legislators and coalition partners, op-eds for local and national papers as well as media appearances on television, radio and Internet-based media.

While we know things can change quickly, we are encouraged that efforts to expand Medicaid appear stalled. Healthcare is an important issue. However, Civitas has communicated to legislators and the general public that Medicaid expansion is not the best way to remedy current problems. We continue to champion bills to expand school choice and improve charter schools. **Fair elections remain a top priority.** Civitas will continue to be one of the few conservative voices monitoring voting and redistricting legislation to ensure a fair process for all North Carolinians.

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

In FY 2018, Civitas Institute’s policy objectives were robust and ambitious. From blocking Medicaid expansion to moving the needle on eliminating the corporate income tax and expanding school choice, our staff has kept a full schedule.

To successfully carry out the policy team’s objectives, Civitas’ communications department was intensely focused on consistent and strategic messaging, using all of the platforms and tools at our disposal.

At the beginning of the 2019 session, we engaged in an aggressive campaign to educate lawmakers and the public on the many healthcare problems tied to Medicaid expansion. In April, we held [Medicaid Expansion: Myths and Realities](#), an event to educate legislators in collaboration with Foundation for Government Accountability, Cato Institute, and Sen. Ralph Hise’s (R-Mitchell) office. That same month we also [premiered a video](#) highlighting the Leonard family. Mason Leonard is a North Carolina resident with special needs. Mason’s healthcare experiences tell a story of how our state is helping the neediest North Carolinians access healthcare, while warning of the access strain that Medicaid expansion might place on individuals like Mason. To further drive home the concerns surrounding expansion, we have written [numerous articles](#) and published a number of op-eds in local and statewide outlets.

In January, we released an instructive, academic study on North Carolina’s business environment. [Open for Business](#) is a study that highlights the positive impact citizens would experience if our state completely eliminated the corporate income tax. You can view a brief video explainer of the study [here](#). Forbes contributor Patrick Gleason covered the release of our study [here](#).

In addition to these endeavors, we have continued to advocate for greater education opportunities for North Carolina children. In January we conducted and released a [statewide poll](#) exclusively focused on voter opinion on education policy. We also held a [June event](#) to equip policymakers with the information they need to cham-

pion greater education access for K-12 students, irrespective of zip code. We have also [written extensively](#) about education issues in our state, both on our website and in state and national publications.

Perhaps the most successful policy outcomes were achieved by voters during the 2018 general election. **Civitas engaged in an extensive voter education campaign that sought to provide insight into several key constitutional amendments on the ballot: voter ID, income tax cap, and right to hunt and fish.** We spoke with local groups, wrote [dozens of articles](#), produced [numerous videos](#), and [debated public officials](#) as to the merits of these amendments. On Election Day, each of these amendments passed.

To leverage each of these policy goals more effectively, we rebranded and relaunched [Civitalk](#), a podcast dedicated to connecting culture to civics, in an effort to make it relevant to North Carolinians’ daily lives. Each week we engage with listeners, highlighting issues that impact their families.

Civitas Institute’s communications department has and continues to collaborate with executive leadership, the policy team, and development to work toward our singular mission of “Removing barriers to freedom so that all North Carolinians can enjoy a better life.”

FY 2018 was a productive year that yielded significant, meaningful policy results. We anticipate FY 2019 will have even greater successes to report!



Helping North Carolina’s Neediest - Colleen Leonard and her family



POLICY SPOTLIGHT: VOTING & ELECTIONS

The primary focus in the voting & elections policy arena this year has been on ballot harvesting and absentee ballot reform. With the addition of our new elections policy analyst Andy Jackson, there has been a strong commitment to raising awareness on detailing how widespread absentee ballot fraud has been in North Carolina and what can be done to stop it. That included a [two-part series](#) in February in which Jackson detailed proposed reforms to North Carolina election law. Some of those reforms were included in S683, an absentee ballot reform bill.

Jackson spoke at a meeting of the House Elections and Ethics Law committee in favor of that bill. He also did a [two-part report](#) in August detailing how people paid by the Bladen County Improvement Association with money from the North Carolina Democrat Party conducted an absentee ballot harvesting operation in Bladen and Robeson counties.

Civitas has also been active on redistricting on two fronts. First, we have performed extensive analysis on both the Common Cause v. Rucho and the Common Cause v. Lewis gerrymandering cases.

Second, Jackson has written extensively on the idea of redistricting commissions and has reviewed several of the proposals currently in the General Assembly.

In June and July, Civitas worked tirelessly to help stop H700, a bill that would restrict political speech on the internet. That work included both [writing](#) on the negative aspects of that bill and meeting with several members of the House Elections and Ethics Law committee to educate them on that issue. Committee leaders eventually removed that bill from consideration.

Finally, Civitas has analyzed the two off-year elections that took place in the 3rd and 9th Congressional Districts.



Republican Dan Bishop wins special election for North Carolina's 9th Congressional District

THE POWER OF PRINT FOR OUTREACH

Capitol Connection, the Civitas Institute newspaper, has mailed out over 104,000 copies in the first nine months of 2019. Money and resources have been saved by trimming back some of our mailings for 2019 in anticipation of a much more aggressive printing and distribution push in 2020, giving us added flexibility to target the state leading up to the general election.

One of our top priorities and reasons we exist is to keep the citizenry connected to their state government in Ra-

leigh. This is vitally important as many newspapers close their doors or simply lose more and more subscribers. Civitas has a plan to continue to be the primary source of statewide news for an increasing number of households across the state. Civitas has expanded the publication to provide copies to many public libraries in North Carolina. The newspaper remains an important tool to not only promote our mission and work but motivate and influence citizens in the cause of freedom.

NC Capitol Connection

SEPTEMBER 2019
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Inside

Is Roy Cooper vulnerable on his gun control agenda?, p. 5

It's time to empower military families with education freedom, p. 11

Next election to shape NC policy for years to come

BY RAY NOTHSTINE

The 2020 election will play a significant role for the future direction of North Carolina and the nation. The latest Civitas Polling shows a tight race for president in North Carolina and Gov. Roy Cooper holding on to his lead against potential Republican challengers.

While within the margin of error for most potential Democrat nominees, President Donald Trump is ahead of the field in the Tarheel State. Former Senator and Vice President Joe Biden was closest to Trump, trailing him by only one percent (45-44 percent) in North Carolina. Trump leads Bernie Sanders, 46 to 44 percent, Elizabeth Warren 46 to 43 percent,



and Kamala Harris 47 to 41 percent.

"Across key demographics, President Trump has an advantage in party loyalty and the gender gap, given that men are more likely to vote for him than women are to vote against him," declared Civitas President Donald Bryson. "He

also consistently leads among seniors, unaffiliated voters, and high propensity voters."

Trump's current favorability is a little bit higher in North Carolina than it is nationally, and by and large, the potential Democrat nominees are viewed more favorably nationally than in North Carolina.

Trump's reelection cam-

paign team and Republican National Committee Chair Ronna McDaniel took the Civitas Poll as a sign of good news and shared the results on GOP social media platforms. Trump leads in North Carolina as opposed to other traditional swing states where in some polls he currently

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DEVELOPMENT AND FINANCE

The Civitas Institute ended its 2018-2019 fiscal year with a strong revenue of \$1,446,563, creating a \$125,800 surplus for the year. The board and staff extend a very special thank you to the 643 individuals and foundations who generously paved the way for our organization to reach and extend its goals. We are also pleased to welcome over 130 new contributors to the Civitas donor family network.

The development team also experienced some growth in February 2019 with the new staff additions of Julie Drinkard as director of development and Libby Spain as development associate. They join Carrie Leggins, development and operations manager, as a full-service team dedicated to creating a robust events calendar and strengthening communications with Civitas donors.

EXPENSES TOTAL: \$1,320,726

Breakdown



ADMINISTRATION

\$122,197



EVENTS & TRAINING

\$21,388



COMMUNICATIONS

\$194,655



PERSONNEL

\$687,746



POLICY CONTENT

\$34,606



CENTER FOR LAW & FREEDOM

\$18,270



DEVELOPMENT

\$70,362



POLLING

\$148,233



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

\$23,268



CIVITAS INSTITUTE BRINGS ON NEW BOARD MEMBER PAUL “SKIP” STAM

Paul “Skip” Stam is currently practicing law at Stam Law Firm, PLLC in Apex, North Carolina. He served his eighth (and last) term in the North Carolina House of Representatives in 2015-2016. He was first elected to that position in 1989 and again in 2003. He has served as the House Republican Leader (2007-2010), the House Majority Leader (2011-2012), and the Speaker Pro Tem (2013-2016).

Stam has worked for more freedom and less government to provide school choice to empower parents to

ensure quality schooling for their children, pro-life protection for mothers and children, protection from condemnation and annexation abuse, and fairness to state employees. He has continued to fight wasteful spending in the General Assembly, including hundreds of millions of dollars in subsidies to out-of-state corporations.

Since 1976, Stam has lived and worked in Apex as an attorney.

“[SKIP] TRULY BELIEVES IN MAKING NORTH CAROLINA A FREER AND MORE PROSPEROUS STATE”

– Art Pope, Civitas board chairman





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