

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Chris Cargill **President & CEO**

For more than 20 years, Chris Cargill has worked in communications and public policy. Chris has deep roots in our region and is a graduate of Gonzaga University with a degree in broadcast communications and political science. His experience includes a decade in television news as well as 13 years for another state based think tank.



Chris' work has been published in the Idaho Statesman, The Coeur d'Alene Press, The Helena Independent Record, the Spokesman-Review, The Seattle Times, the Tri-City Herald and Real Clear Policy, as well as many other regional newspapers. He is also a familiar voice on radio stations throughout the region.

Chris is a member of the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025 Advisory Board, which is focused preparing comprehensive policy recommendations to ensure the next conservative presidential administration is prepared for success on day one. He is also a member of the American Enterprise Institute's Leadership Network.

Chris & his wife Lisa are the proud parents of two boys, including one who has special needs - one of the many reasons why he is so passionate about education choice options for families.

In his spare time, Chris spends time with family, serves on his local city council, and enjoys whatever down time he can in the great outdoors on his family property in North Idaho.

Jason Mercier
Vice President & Director of Research

Jason Mercier has more than 20 years' experience working with public officials, media, and citizen stakeholders across the nation to improve the fiscal, governance and transparency policies of local and state governments. He spent the last 16 years as the Director of the Center for Government Reform at Washington Policy Center.



Jason has been appointed by lawmakers and governors to various tax, budget and transparency reform committees. He is a Fellow with the national Better Cities Project and is also a member of the State Tax Advisory Board for the Tax Foundation. Jason has testified numerous times before legislative committees across the country on government reform issues, and his op-eds have been published in numerous newspapers across the region.

When he's not geeking out on studies and audits, Jason's life revolves around his wife and two daughters and the 49ers' schedule.

Madilynne Clark
Senior Policy Analyst

Madilynne Clark holds a master's degree in Agricultural and Resource Economics from Colorado State University as well as a B.S. in Environmental Economics, Policy, and Management from Oregon State University.

Madi's work has been published in The Capital Press, Tri-City Herald, and the Spokesman-Review and she has spoken to agricultural groups across the Pacific Northwest.

A small farmer, and a mom to four boys, Madi is the daughter of a large-animal veterinarian. She grew up on many different farms. Each farm faced its own challenges, which required unique solutions. She learned early on that a one-size-fits-all approach will never work - not for farmers and not for families.



Madi and her husband, Kyler, returned to their home state of Oregon four years ago. They live, farm, and raise their boys only a few miles from the Idaho border.

Amber Gunn **Senior Policy Analyst**

Amber Gunn is the former Director of Economic Policy for the Olympia-based Freedom Foundation. She has served as a voting member on the American Legislative Exchange Council's (ALEC) Tax and Fiscal Policy Task Force and has been a resource to media outlets and legislative staff for issue briefs and policy analysis.

During her time with ALEC, Amber co-authored the organization's influential State Budget Reform Toolkit, which provided budget and procurement best practices to guide state



policymakers in all 50 states as they worked to solve budget shortfalls.

Her work has been featured in the Seattle Times, Investor's Business Daily, Seattle Business, The Street, The Olympian, The Tacoma News Tribune, the Spokesman-Review, and many other news outlets. Her research and analysis has been cited and used by King 5 Investigators, KOMO 4 News, KIRO 7 News, Northwest Public Radio, and various talk radio shows and radio news outlets.

Amber was a Charles G. Koch Fellow in partnership with the State Policy Network and the Institute for Humane Studies.

Sebastian Griffin
Director, Junkermier Center for Technology & Innovation

Sebastian Griffin is a 5th generation Idahoan and Nampa native. He currently serves as MSPC's Marketing and Communications coordinator, and is the lead researcher for MSPC's Junkermier Center on Technology and Innovation.

He is married to his high school sweetheart and has a daughter named Wyld. Sebastian graduated from Nampa High, the College of Western Idaho with his Associate's Degree in Liberal Arts, and Boise State with a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and American Government.



He has been involved in the policy making process in Idaho for the last 5 years starting as a Senate Page and most recently as a Legislative Candidate in District 12.

Bob Pishue
Visiting Fellow

Visiting Fellow Bob Pishue is based in Boise and is currently the Transportation Analyst and head of Research at the global traffic data and analytics company INRIX.

Bob's research and analysis have been featured in key media outlets such as The Wall Street Journal, Fox News, CNN, BBC, Forbes, and The Washington Post, among others.



He has extensive experience in state and local transportation policy, and was formerly the Director of Transportation for Kemper Development Company, a prominent property developer in Washington state and was previously the Transportation Director at Washington Policy Center, a non-partisan free-market think tank.

Dr. Roger Stark
Visiting Fellow

Dr. Roger Stark is a retired physician and author of three books including *Healthcare Policy Simplified: Understanding a Complex Issue*, and *The Patient-Centered Solution: Our Health Care Crisis, How It Happened, and How We Can Fix It*.

He has also authored numerous in-depth studies on health care policy including *Efforts at Reform in Other States, What Works and What Doesn't*:



A Review of Health Care Reform in the States, and Health Care Reform that Works: An Update on Health Savings Accounts.

Over a 12-month period in 2013 and 2014, Dr. Stark testified before three different Congressional committees regarding the Affordable Care Act. Dr. Stark graduated from the University of Nebraska's College of Medicine and he completed his general surgery residency in Seattle and his cardiothoracic residency at the University of Utah. After practicing in Tacoma he moved to Bellevue and was one of the co-founders of the open-heart surgery program at Overlake Hospital. He has served on the hospital's governing board. He retired from private practice in 2001 and became actively involved in the hospital's Foundation, serving as Board Chair and Executive Director. He has been a member of many regional and national professional organizations and currently makes his home in Utah.

Olivia Johnston
Contributor

Olivia Johnston is the author of a quarterly column in MSPC's Pinnacle magazine called "On the Law."

Olivia is a graduate of the University of Idaho College of Law. She earned her undergraduate degree in Business Administration from Gonzaga University where she served was instrumental in bringing the Washington Policy Center Young Professionals' Club to campus.

In 2021, she was the recipient of the Jennifer Dunn Thompson scholarship, named after former Congresswoman Jennifer Dunn. The honor is awarded annually to women with a promise in policy work.



Sam Cardwell
Contributor

Sam Cardwell is an alumnus of the University of Washington and Liberty University, obtaining a bachelor's degree in political science. Sam has worked on multiple legislative and congressional campaigns across Washington State.

He has experience in the governmental sphere as a legislative intern and a session aide at the Washington State Legislature.

Sam is the author of several MSPC studies, including *Adopting a new income tax liability threshold* and *Powering the Mountain States: A snapshot of the region's energy portfolio*.



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