

PIONEER  
INSTITUTE

*2025 Annual Report*

Built for Impact, New Horizons



## Mission

Pioneer Institute empowers Americans with choices and opportunities to live freely and thrive.

Through expert research, educational initiatives, legal action, and coalition-building, we advance human potential in four critical areas: K-12 Education, Health, Economic Opportunity and American Civic Values.

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Located in Boston and Washington, D.C., and founded in 1988, Pioneer Institute is a nonpartisan, tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization. To ensure its independence, Pioneer is privately funded and does not accept government grants.

# 2025

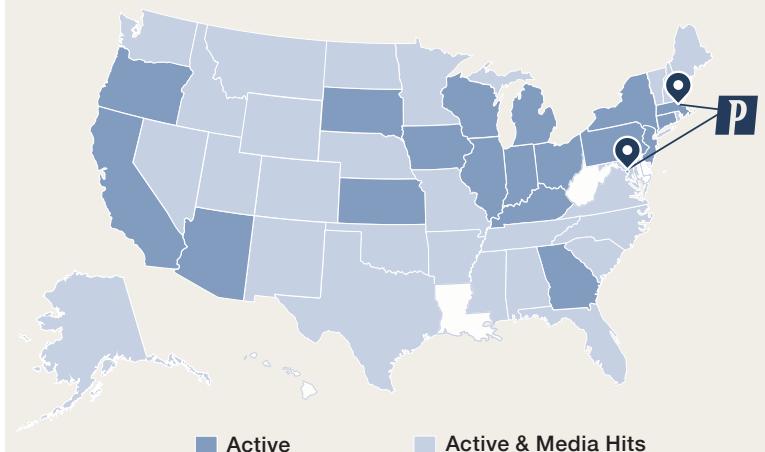
## Contents

Welcome	3
PioneerEducation	4
PioneerCitizenship	7
PioneerOpportunity	9
PioneerHealth	12
Pioneer New England Legal Foundation	14
Events	16
Media	17
Donors	18
Financials	22
Staff	23

## By the Numbers

317K	2,038
Digital Followers	Media Hits
91	4.6B
Publications	Total Media Reach

### Pioneer Influence: Policy & Media



## Welcome

# Built for Impact, New Horizons

You will notice a new look—a new logo, updated fonts, and a sharper focus in our imagery on individuals: the people who benefit from, or bear the consequences of, the policy choices we make.

Our job is to make sure those policies expand opportunities and protect freedoms.

The cover image brings that mission into focus—a young woman imagining her future, whose success will depend on her educational options, economic opportunities, access to care, and the policy choices we make.

Thanks to your partnership, 2025 was a year of transformation and meaningful impact.

Five years ago, Pioneer set out to build the capacities to drive strategic—not merely tactical—change. In 2025, those capacities reached maturity and today are fully deployed, opening new horizons for impact.

Pioneer’s research and communications now deliver policy expertise—shaping agendas and influencing reforms—across numerous states.

In polarized Massachusetts, we have gone further—building extra-legislative pathways to impact through litigation, ballot initiatives, and business-led coalitions that translate ideas into impact.

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**“ Thanks to your strategic investment, the capacities we began building five years ago are now fully deployed—opening new horizons for impact.”**

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**Adam Portnoy**  
Chair of the Board



**James Stergios**  
Executive Director

In 2025, your investments yielded concrete results:

**Education:** 3,000 new vocational-technical school seats added statewide; school-choice litigation; national toolkits for ESAs, tax-credit scholarships, and micro-schools; widely cited books on restoring school rigor and accountability.

**Citizenship:** Our DataLabs platform advanced transparency; our book *Restoring the Republic* impacted executive orders on federalism.

**Opportunity:** Widely covered reports on private-sector job losses, workforce participation, and competitiveness showed how rival states are winning the race for talent; our research played a central role in statewide ADU legalization.

**Health:** Legislation passed in Indiana and Michigan; national thought leadership on drug pricing and reforms to pharmacy benefits managers, the federal 340B program, and the Inflation Reduction Act.

**Our Reach:** 90 publications, more than 2,000 media mentions, hundreds of thousands engaged digitally, high-impact public forums, consequential litigation, and four ballot questions we helped inspire.

Our expanded capabilities open new horizons. We are launching bold work in Florida and other states, while remaining even more deeply committed to Massachusetts. In 2026, we will deploy more resources here than at any point in our history, with the goal of restoring Massachusetts to its rightful position as a national leader in education, innovation and economic growth.

We are sincerely grateful to you. None of this work would be possible without your generosity and commitment to policies that improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

Our horizons are expanding—and inspiring. Thank you for standing with us.

# Restoring Excellence and Expanding Choice

In the 1990s and 2000s, K–12 standards-based reform drove important gains in American students’ learning, as evidenced on the Nation’s Report Card. That progress was derailed—first by the disruptions of Common Core and the pandemic school closures—and since 2013 U.S. student achievement has plummeted. States have responded in three ways: roughly half have turned to school choice through Education Savings Accounts (ESAs); others reformed their curricula and teaching approaches. Too many, unfortunately like Massachusetts, have neutralized their accountability systems and reverted to bureaucratic processes that maintain the status quo.

In 2025, Pioneer helped states confront that reality directly through research, books, policy proposals, litigation, and by educating leaders and the public through data tools, podcasts, and direct communications. As a think tank that seeks to advance both public and private school choice and high-quality academic content, our work has more relevance than ever to states across the nation—and especially in Massachusetts.

## Public School Choice

### Vocational-Technical Expansion

Massachusetts’ vocational technical schools rank among the nation’s strongest, and Pioneer’s research and advocacy, starting more than a decade ago, have fueled significant growth in enrollment.

- **FY2025 Research:** *Expanding Access to Career Vocational Technical Education*, authored by Dr. Ken Ardon (Salem State University), mapped barriers in admissions, funding, and capacity, calling for predictable state support to meet demand.
- **FY2026 Budget Win:** State lawmakers approved \$100 million in grants to create 3,000 new seats, closing part of the 8,100-seat shortage statewide. Because of Pioneer’s multi-year campaign, nearly 20 percent of Massachusetts high school students now attend vocational technical schools.
- **Testimony & Statement:** Pioneer submitted public testimony to the Board of Elementary & Secondary Education urging equitable, merit-based admissions that protect program rigor while broadening opportunity.
- **Toolkit for Madison Park:** A reform plan for Boston’s sole vocational-technical high school, detailing improvements in governance, industry partnerships, credentials, and facilities modernization.

## Private School Choice

### Microschools, Homeschools, and ESAs

Pioneer’s school-choice research in FY2025 provided tools and analysis for policymakers nationwide seeking to expand options beyond traditional public schooling.

- **Toolkit:** *Earning Full Credit: A Toolkit for Designing Tax-Credit Scholarship Policies (2025)*—practical guidance for creating Education Savings Account (ESA) and scholarship programs that balance flexibility with accountability.
- **Study:** *Easing Barriers to Innovative Learning Models (2025)*—by Lynn Swanson, Amar Kumar, and William Heuer—identified state and local barriers that limit microschools, homeschool collaboratives, and learning pods, and offered model policy solutions to legalize and encourage educational entrepreneurship.

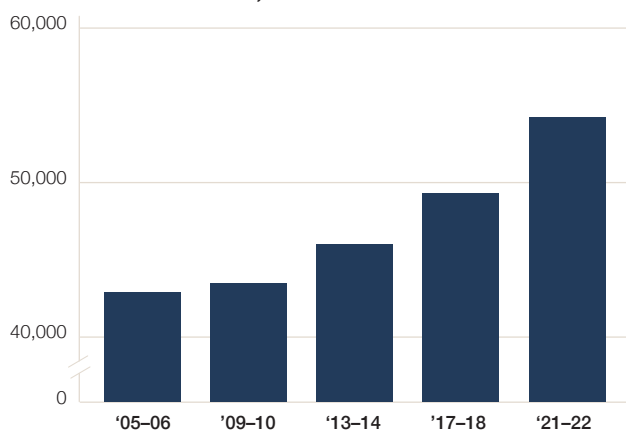
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**“New Hampshire is proving that school choice is not an experiment but a durable model that gives parents real control—and drives schools to improve.”**

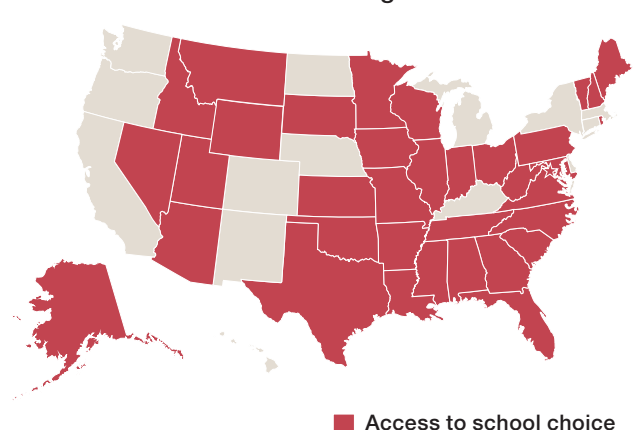
—Jim Stergios, *Boston Globe*

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**Voc-Tech Enrollment, 2004–2022**



**States with School Choice Programs**



## Excellence & Accountability



Pioneer’s education work this year focused on restoring rigor—through *The Lost Decade*, a new analysis of learning loss, and leadership in the MCAS debate.

*The Lost Decade* by Steven Wilson, charter-school founder and education innovator documents how the emphasis on social justice ideology over student engagement with academic content and quality has undermined gains and set back the work of bridging racial

and socioeconomic achievement gaps. In the book, he focuses significant analysis on the loss of rigor in Massachusetts’ standards and accountability system. Most importantly, he offers a roadmap for recovery.

**Coverage:** Featured across the country, including in *The New York Times*; generated 46 news pieces and 26 speaking engagements, from national podcasts to education-policy forums.

“To my mind, Ascend had been a clear success. I was baffled. There was a deep conflict between the liberal arts commitment Ascend had made and the anti-intellectualism of the doctrine I was being asked to implement.”



– Pioneer Senior Fellow, Steven Wilson, *The New York Times*

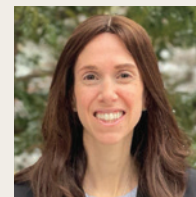
“*The Lost Decade* is a tale told more in sorrow than in anger, and it is all the more devastating for its detached accounting of the indelible and avoidable damage wrought by the ideological excesses of recent years.”

– Dr. Helen Baxendale, Chief of Staff at Great Hearts Academies, *Education Next*

## PIONEER EDUCATION

The Institute for Justice (IJ) and Pioneer New England Legal Foundation urged the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit to reverse a lower-court ruling on behalf of clients Ariella and David Hellman, and Josh Harrison and Miriam Segura-Harrison, two sets of Jewish Day School parents whose children have special needs. The appeal challenges the dismissal of their lawsuit, which contests a Massachusetts regulation barring children in private schools from receiving special education services to which they are statutorily entitled.

“Jamie Gass at Pioneer Institute was the first person to believe that we had a case, and he introduced us to the Institute for Justice and Pioneer New England Legal Foundation. When they offered us representation, it felt like someone was finally acknowledging the pain families like ours have carried.”



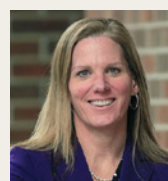
Ariella Hellman, Lead Plaintiff



For over six years, *The Learning Curve* brings listeners into conversation with Pulitzer Prize-winning authors, historians, and leading scholars from around the world. Hosted on rotation by Albert Cheng and Alisha Searcy, the show explores the ideas, history, and policies that shape great education—spotlighting content-rich learning, timeless stories, and the people advancing excellence in schools.



**Urban School District Reform**  
Mike Miles, Houston Superintendent



**Worcester Tech & ma's Urban Voc-Tech Schools**  
Dr. Sheila Harranty, Superintendent at Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School District

- Pioneer research paper *From Crisis to Opportunity: Post-Pandemic Academic Growth in Massachusetts* by Professor Daniel Hamlin (University of Oklahoma) found that Massachusetts experienced some of the nation’s steepest post-pandemic declines—particularly in urban districts and middle-grade math—with widening achievement gaps. The report urged the state’s education leaders to refocus on content-rich curricula, phonics-based early-reading instruction, and transparent public reporting.



**“Yesterday was a bad day for public school students in Massachusetts because the last pillar of the most effective state education reform in modern American history fell. Since 2008, the Commonwealth has been witness to the systematic dismantling of the 1993 Education Reform Act.”**

—Statement from Pioneer Institute on MCAS Ballot Failure and State of Education in Massachusetts

**“Massachusetts didn’t lose its edge by accident—we walked away from the standards that built it.”**

—Jamie Gass & Charlie Chieppo, *Commonwealth Beacon*

- During the 2024 MCAS ballot fight, Pioneer served on the executive committee of the statewide coalition defending the MCAS graduation standard. The Institute published analyses, issued public statements, and educated voters with webinars, podcasts, and videos on the importance of maintaining a fair, transparent statewide assessment that measures learning and informs reform.
- Pioneer highlighted states like Louisiana and Mississippi that have demonstrated strong reading gains because of their focus on content-rich reading strategies and phonics, underscoring that Massachusetts can regain a more positive trajectory for its students if it returns to the 1993 Education Reform Act’s emphasis on knowledge-based instruction and accountability.

## Looking Ahead to FY2026

- **Public Choice:** Build on a decade of vocational-technical expansion that increased enrollment by over 20 percent; continue closing the seat gap and deepen industry-credential and apprenticeship pathways.
- **Private Choice:** Work with key states and policy leaders to expand access to education saving accounts and tax-credit scholarship programs; support microschoools and homeschool networks through regulatory and funding reform.
- **Excellence & Accountability:** Re-center academic content-rich, knowledge-based state standards, curricula, modernize assessments without losing comparability, and rebuild transparent accountability systems.
- **National Reach:** Apply Pioneer’s expertise in academic standards and nation-leading charter, vocational-technical, and religiously affiliated school models in Florida and states with high levels of school choice adoption, ensuring that the link between choice and school quality remains central to K–12 reform efforts.

## Education Team



**Jamie Gass**  
Director,  
Pioneer Education



**Albert Cheng**  
Senior Fellow, Host of  
The Learning Curve



**Alisha Searcy**  
Senior Fellow, Host of  
The Learning Curve



**Steven Wilson**  
Senior Education  
Fellow

# Promoting Civic Engagement through Transparency and State Policy Innovation

## The DataLabs: Laboratories of Democracy

In 2025, Pioneer launched **US DataLabs**, **Mass DataLabs**, and **Boston DataLabs**—a suite of platforms that puts clear, trusted data directly in the hands of the public, media, and policymakers. Built on decades of reliable federal and state data, the tools provide intuitive charts, rankings, and comparisons across core policy areas, allowing users to evaluate government performance at the national, state, and local levels.

From education and infrastructure to taxes, crime, energy, and economic growth, DataLabs makes it easy to explore trends, compare outcomes, and identify what works—and what doesn't. By turning complex data into clear, actionable insight, DataLabs strengthens transparency and accountability—equipping citizens, journalists, and policymakers to ask better questions and evaluate government performance more effectively.

## Advancing Open Government

The Massachusetts Legislature avoids public accountability by exempting itself from public records and open meeting laws, blocking state audits, and maintaining outdated financial disclosure requirements. As a result, major policy decisions are made behind closed doors, contrary to the state constitution's promise of transparency, leaving citizens unable to judge whether lawmakers are acting in the public interest. Pioneer is committed to reversing this trend.

Highlights from the year:

- **Sunshine Week 2025:** Pioneer reiterated its call to support a legislative audit, apply public records laws to the Legislature, and reform policies governing Statements of Financial Interests—with a focus on anonymous requests and more accessible, substantive disclosures.
- **Public Advocacy:** Director of Government Transparency Mary Connaughton co-authored an op-ed in the *Boston Herald* detailing the Legislature's disregard for voters in its continued resistance to an audit by State Auditor Diana DiZoglio.
- **Roger Perry Interns:** Government Transparency Interns contributed original research and analysis that strengthened Pioneer's data-driven work on transparency and accountability. Highlights of their work from the past year are detailed in the sidebar (see right).

## Promoting Practical Federalism

Pioneer has long been a leading voice on federalism, championing the capacity of states to govern, innovate, and set policy without dictates from unelected federal agencies. Whether challenging federally driven efforts such as Common Core, or pressing for greater state discretion in welfare, transportation, and other domains, Pioneer has consistently advanced the constitutional balance between federal and state power.

In 2025, this work advanced with *Restoring the Republic: A Blueprint for Constitutional Administration*, a two-and-a-half-year project involving 25 experts that examined how federal grants concentrate agency power, weaken presidential and congressional oversight, and bind state bureaucracies to federal priorities. Coauthored by Emmett McGroarty, Charles Keckler, and Adam Millsap, the report outlined 24 legislative and executive reforms to restore separation of powers and strengthen state authority, earning praise from leading scholars for its discrete, actionable recommendations.

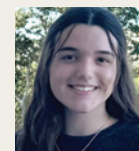
## Government Transparency Interns

Through the Roger Perry Internship Program, we cultivate the analytical skills of emerging leaders, engaging interns in producing data-driven content using our full suite of DataLabs tools.



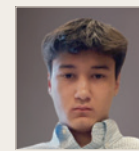
**Andrew Harding** used US DataLabs to show that Massachusetts

frequently ranked in the bottom ten states for road and bridge quality over the past two decades.



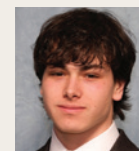
**Erin Moran** used US DataLabs to analyze EV charging infrastructure,

finding that Massachusetts ranks third nationally in charging stations per capita.



**Oliver Dabora** used US DataLabs to analyze patent issuance patterns, finding that in

2023 Massachusetts ranked fourth nationally in patent application filings.



**Sam Davis** explored school-choice expansion nationwide, emphasizing that

choice alone is not enough—quality choices matter most.

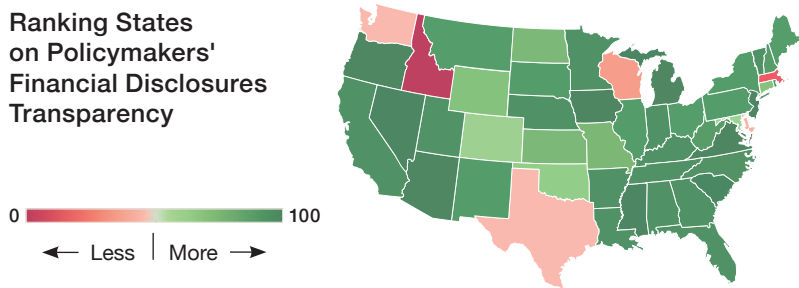


Donate to  
**Roger Perry  
Internship Program**

“Once seen as a city upon a hill, Massachusetts, the first state with a public viewing gallery for its Legislature, faces persistent concerns about lack of government transparency.”

— Government Transparency Intern Andrew Harding on how lawmakers hide public access to their financial disclosures

**Ranking States on Policymakers' Financial Disclosures Transparency**



We distributed *Restoring the Republic* to congressional staff offices and held webinars and in-person briefings. A nationwide media campaign brought broad coverage across TV, radio, print, and online outlets, reaching hundreds of thousands. Highlights included *The Lars Larson Show* (200 stations, 4.25 million listeners), *The Steve Gruber Show* (1 million video subscribers and 100,000 radio listeners), and *The Mark Davis Show* (115,000 listeners), with especially strong exposure in Florida, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

Key recommendations were adopted through executive action in 2025, including:

- **EO 14332:** Strengthened oversight of federal grants by requiring legal and policy review of awards, eliminating duplicative programs, holding political appointees accountable, and adding termination-for-convenience clauses.
- **EO 14270:** Established a regulatory sunset process for energy-related agencies, requiring regulations to expire unless affirmatively renewed.
- **EO 14192:** Created a regulatory budget, mandated elimination of ten regulations for every new one, and restored Office of Management and Budget (OMB) review of tax regulations.
- **EOs 14217 & 14238:** Directed agencies to identify and roll back actions lacking statutory authority.
- **EO 14215:** Brought independent regulatory agencies under OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs review and reaffirmed presidential authority over executive-branch legal interpretations.

**Citizenship Team**



**Mary Connaughton**  
Director,  
Transparency



**Jamie Gass**  
Director,  
PioneerEducation



**Michael Walker**  
Data Made Useful



**Gary Blank**  
Senior Fellow  
For Government  
Effectiveness



**Civic Knowledge for the Learning of Liberty**

Our national education podcast *The Learning Curve (TLC)* includes an important focus on United States history as the basis to advance constitutional and civic education among the public, policymakers, teachers, and students alike. As a lead-up to the celebration of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the American Revolution, TLC featured prominent American historians, policymakers, and teachers discussing America's enduring revolutionary, constitutional, and civic ideals, including:



Pulitzer Winner Rick Atkinson on the American Revolution's 250th Anniversary



Lerone Martin (Stanford) on Martin Luther King, Jr. & the Civil Rights Movement



Pulitzer Winner Gordon Wood (Brown) on the American Revolution's 250th Anniversary



Margaret Washington (Cornell) on Sojourner Truth, Abolitionism, & Women's Rights



Pulitzer Winner Jack Rakove (Stanford) on American Independence

# Competing for Opportunity: Jobs, Growth and Our Future

Massachusetts' high costs—taxes, housing, healthcare, and energy—continue to push talent and investment toward more affordable states. In 2025, Pioneer Institute placed competitiveness and affordability at the center of the policy debate. Through data-driven research, targeted advocacy, and legal engagement, Pioneer exposed the state's deepening economic slowdown, advanced reforms to expand housing supply, and elevated the importance of immigrant entrepreneurship as a driver of national innovation and job creation. Together, these efforts shaped state and national discussions about how to create greater opportunity for the next generation.

## Regaining Our Competitive Edge

Massachusetts is losing its competitive edge. Once a magnet for innovation, the Commonwealth now ranks among the slowest states for private-sector job growth and continues to bleed talent and capital to lower-cost regions. In 2025, Pioneer exposed the scale of the slowdown and made competitiveness—how to attract and keep businesses and workers—the defining economic issue on Beacon Hill.

- **Diagnosing the Slowdown:** Our *Massachusetts at Risk* policy brief series detailed that private-sector and professional employment have lagged peer states, with significant implications for tax revenues and household income growth.
- **Mapping the Losses:** *Mapping Mass Migration*—built on IRS and Census data—showed continued outmigration of young and high-income residents, offset only by international arrivals. The findings drew coverage in *Bloomberg*, *Fox Business*, and *The Boston Globe*.
- **Quantifying the Stakes:** Pioneer's *Consensus Revenue Hearing* analysis warned lawmakers that weak private-sector growth threatens future revenue stability, underscoring the need for tax and regulatory reforms.
- **Driving Reform:** Pioneer's report on state workforce development systems spotlighted inefficiencies that slow skills alignment and urged a unified, accountable system—recommendations now reflected in pending legislation (S.1326).
- **Business Cost Awareness:** Commentary in *CommonWealth Beacon* and *Boston Business Journal* argued that Massachusetts' competitiveness depends on reining in taxes and regulation rather than layering new mandates such as project labor agreements.

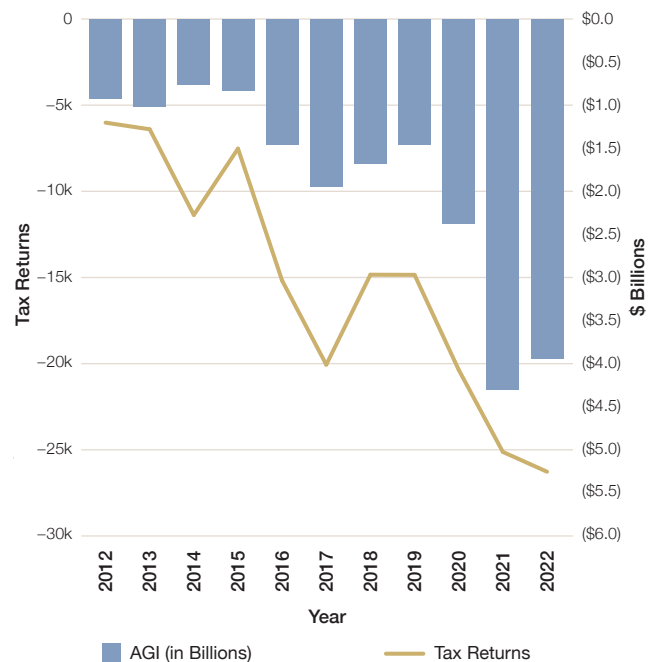
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“Massachusetts has one of the slowest job-growth rates in the country... The stakes are real.”

—Jim Stergios, *CommonWealth Beacon*

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**MA Net Income & Tax Filer Migration, by Tax Year**



## Unlocking Housing Supply and Affordability

Housing is the fault line of Massachusetts' economy—and of every high-cost state struggling to keep young families and workers. With some of the nation's lowest per-capita permitting rates, Massachusetts faces a shortfall exceeding 200,000 homes. In 2025, Pioneer turned research into results: helping legalize accessory dwelling units statewide, drive MBTA Communities compliance, and push overdue permitting and zoning reform.

- **MBTA Communities Act:** Pioneer's analysis of the SJC's *Milton* decision made clear that compliance with the Act is required; *A Wide Range of Approaches to Compliance with the MBTA Communities Law* then provided the first systematic review of the many pathways cities and towns can take to comply. These publications, amplified by *Banker & Tradesmen*, *Telegram & Gazette*, and regional newspapers, guided municipal planners statewide.

- **Statewide ADU Legalization:** Pioneer’s years-long campaign culminated in the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities’ 2025 regulations legalizing accessory dwelling units across Massachusetts—an affordable housing milestone first proposed by Pioneer in 2018.
- **Permitting Reform:** *Massachusetts Housing Permitting Process Needs Systemic Reform* exposed the delays and uncertainty that deter developers and raise costs. Staff is working with legislators to update permitting legislation.
- **Re-examining Inclusionary Zoning:** *Inclusionary Zoning Helps Some but Can Jeopardize Broad-Based Affordability* and follow-up coverage in *Banker & Tradesman* prompted local officials to reassess how affordability mandates affect overall supply.
- **Countering Rent Control:** Pioneer’s study *Rent Control Offers Short-Term Relief but Steep Long-Term Costs* and accompanying op-eds explained why price controls deter investment and worsen shortages—arguments echoed in editorials across the Commonwealth.
- **National Reach:** Pioneer shared its permitting reform blueprint at the 2025 YIMBYtown Conference in Connecticut and published comparative work on housing reform efforts in Florida, Maine, and Connecticut, extending its influence beyond Massachusetts.

“Facilitating housing development through existing infrastructure is more fiscally responsible, environmentally friendly, and immediately actionable than expanding infrastructure.”

– Andrew Mikula, *Banker & Tradesman*

“While the nation debates illegal immigration, we must not lose sight of legal immigrants—the innovators and entrepreneurs who start companies, create jobs, and drive our next wave of growth.”

– Pioneer Institute statement, 2025

## Immigrant Entrepreneurship: Building the Next Generation of Growth

Across America, immigrants start businesses, create jobs, and power growth at twice the rate of native-born citizens. Yet federal visa bottlenecks and state licensing barriers hold them back. In 2025, Pioneer brought data and policy together to change that narrative—documenting the cost of inaction, helping deliver \$40 million in state ESOL investments, and positioning legal immigration as an economic-growth strategy for Massachusetts and the nation.

- **Quantifying Lost Opportunity:** *Outdated U.S. Immigration System Delays Creation of 150,000 Businesses and 500,000 Jobs* revealed how federal visa backlogs and occupational-licensing barriers suppress entrepreneurship. Widely cited in *CommonWealth Beacon* and *Politico*, the report reframed legal immigration as an economic-growth imperative.
- **Elevating Legal Immigration:** Pioneer’s national commentary, including *Immigrants Can Make Us Rich If We Let Them*, argued for reforms that welcome skilled immigrants and link education visas to entrepreneurship.
- **Workforce-linked ESOL Success:** Building on earlier research, Pioneer’s advocacy informed the *FY25 Supplemental Budget*, which invested \$10 million to expand workforce-connected English-for-Work programs for 3,000 residents. The *FY26 Budget*

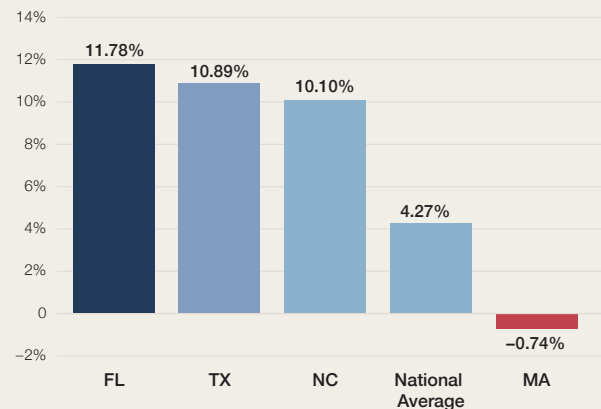


### Data Tools and Visual Platforms

Pioneer’s analytics infrastructure—**U.S. DataLabs, Mass DataLabs,** and **Boston DataLabs**—made

economic and demographic trends accessible to citizens and policymakers. The 2025 rollout introduced new interactive dashboards on migration, job growth, and infrastructure, and an AI-powered zoning-regulations database for Massachusetts (to expand nationally in 2026–27). These tools empower fact-based policy debate on competitiveness, housing, and regulation.

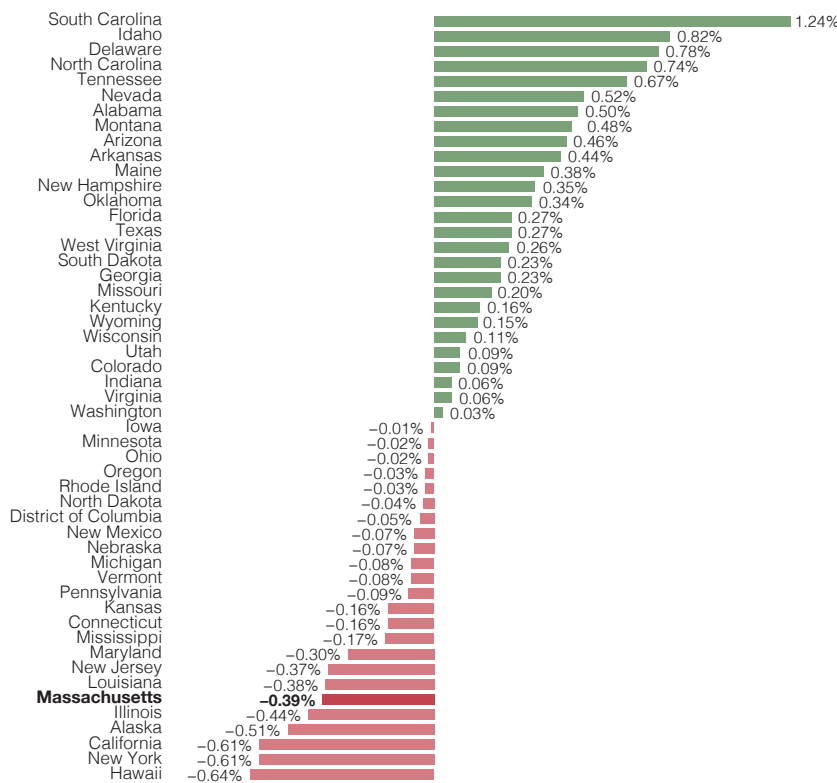
Change in Private Employment, Jan. 20–Mar. 2025



added \$30 million for adult education and ESOL services for 10,000 learners, launching a new *ESOL for Work and Career Access Credential*—policies informed by recent Pioneer reports.

- **Institutional Reform Achieved:** The state's Workforce Skills Cabinet established a cross-agency ESOL strategy aligning labor, education, and economic-development programs—an approach developed in Pioneer's earlier recommendations.
- **Employer Partnerships Expanding:** Over \$2.7 million in ESOL grants were awarded to employer consortia, adopting the work-based model advanced by Pioneer's research.
- **National Data Leadership:** Senior Fellow Josh Bedi's analyses of STEM-student visa pathways and licensing reform informed federal discussions and positioned Pioneer as a thought leader on immigrant entrepreneurship.

### 2025 Domestic Migration Rate



## Looking Ahead to FY2026

- **Competitiveness:** Educate voters on tax and unemployment-insurance reforms; promote business-tax modernization and fiscal discipline; continue exposing drivers of outmigration.
- **Housing:** Track MBTA Communities compliance, evaluate inclusionary-zoning outcomes, and expand public education on rent-control risks.
- **Immigrant Entrepreneurship:** Advance visa and licensing reforms for skilled immigrants; scale work-linked ESOL models; strengthen the narrative around legal immigration as economic strategy.
- **Fiscal Accountability:** Use data-driven reporting to highlight growth in state spending and identify innovations that improve government efficiency.

## Opportunity Team



**Mary Connaughton**  
Chief Operating Officer, & Director of Government Transparency



**Aidan Enright**  
Economic Research Associate & Fellow on Immigrant Entrepreneurship



**Andrew Mikula**  
Senior Fellow on Housing in Residence



**Josh Bedi**  
Senior Fellow for Entrepreneurship



**Michael J. Walker**  
Data Scientist

# Advancing Innovation & Transparency in Healthcare

Like education and civic engagement, healthcare underpins both personal well-being and economic growth. Pioneer’s Life Sciences Initiative (PLSI) protects America’s global leadership in biomedical innovation while advancing transparency and patient access. Under the direction of Dr. William Smith, PLSI is now active in nearly 20 states and Washington, D.C., working with legislators, patient groups, and industry leaders to ensure that U.S. policy sustains—not stifles—medical discovery.

## Protecting Innovation and Access

Greater Boston anchors the world’s most productive life sciences cluster, employing over 100,000 people and driving billions in new therapies each year. Federal drug price controls and opaque hospital and pharmacy practices threaten that engine of growth.

PLSI’s research on the Inflation Reduction Act showed that so-called “price negotiations” reduce investment in future cures and raise out-of-pocket costs for seniors. To expose these effects, PLSI launched a public database tracking out-of-pocket spending for the first ten Medicare drugs now under price controls—providing patients, analysts, and journalists with real data on affordability. The data demonstrated that out-of-pocket charges for those ten drugs rose 32 percent from Q1 2024 to Q1 2025. The database will expand as the government sets additional “maximum fair prices” in 2026.

PLSI’s analysis has been cited in congressional hearings and industry filings as evidence that short-term political fixes can make drugs less affordable.

“Pioneer Institute recently released some real-world data indicating that after the Biden Administration pushed down the prices of 10 popular Medicare drugs, the out-of-pocket costs paid by seniors for those drugs went up — by 32%!”

—Bill Smith, *Boston Business Journal*

## Reforming the 340B Drug Pricing Program

The 340B Drug Pricing Program—once designed to help hospitals serve low-income patients—has ballooned into a \$90 billion system often enriching hospitals rather than economically disadvantaged patients. PLSI remains the national leader calling for reform.

Key impacts in 2025:

- **Indiana Transparency Law:** Following testimony by Dr. Smith before both the House and Senate, Indiana enacted the nation’s first law requiring 340B hospitals to publicly disclose how much revenue they earn from discounted drugs and how those funds are spent. Other states are now preparing similar bills.
- **Preventing Costly Expansions:** Working with legislators in Michigan, New York, Georgia, and California, PLSI helped block proposals to extend 340B to new hospital classes—saving hundreds of millions in potential program abuse.
- **Accountability in Charity Care:** PLSI’s analysis found that many 340B hospitals refuse Medicaid patients or provide minimal free care, contradicting the program’s mission. Its findings prompted new transparency rules in Maine and Minnesota and inquiries from lawmakers in additional states.
- **National Resource:** PLSI’s 50-state 340B database maps program growth, charity-care spending, and revenue by legislative district—now used by journalists, patient advocates, and policymakers nationwide.



**Tomas Philipson & Robert Popovian (Hewitt Lecture)**

### Inflation Reduction Act Tool:



“ However, the life sciences sector in Massachusetts — which has been flying so high for so long — is about to experience a very hard landing.”

– Bill Smith, *Boston Business Journal* (2023)



## Looking Ahead to FY2026

- In 2026, PLSI will publish a comparative analysis of Medicaid admissions and charity-care spending at 340B and non-340B hospitals to quantify whether safety-net funds truly reach low-income patients. PLSI also plans to publish a paper on charity care provided by academic medical centers affiliated with universities. It will also broaden its MFP drug database to track price-control effects on availability, R&D investment, and patient affordability as well as premium increases that may take effect.
- Our healthcare team will also examine the role that Massachusetts healthcare transparency laws play in carrier-provider price negotiations and the changes that may have to occur in the marketplace for such laws to become more effective in controlling healthcare costs.
- Senior Fellow Josh Archambault will update his national report on the state of telehealth.

## Restoring Fairness in Patient Costs

PLSI's policy work directly improves patient affordability.

- Pioneer has been critical of Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) and their penchant for preferring expensive drugs to maximize rebates. An alternative to PBMs has emerged in Eli Lilly's sale of GLP-1s, which are now available to consumers directly through a new program, LillyDirect. Lilly will not use a PBM for this program in which costs have been dramatically cut for weight loss and diabetes patients.

## Promoting Sound Policy

Beyond the life sciences, our PioneerHealth team expands public visibility into healthcare prices and governance.

- **Telehealth Reform:** Senior Fellow Josh Archambault, with the Cicero Institute and Reason Foundation, co-authored the *2025 State Policy Agenda for Healthcare Innovation*. The report identified barriers to interstate telehealth and called for removing Massachusetts' two-year requirement before physicians can prescribe independently.

By grounding its research in data and policy outcomes, Pioneer continues to protect innovation, strengthen patient access, and safeguard a life sciences sector that is vital to both America's health and its prosperity.

## Health Team



**William Smith**  
Director, Life Sciences Initiative



**Robert Popovian**  
Senior Visiting Health Policy Fellow



**Gauri Binoy**  
Researcher, Life Sciences Initiative



**Barbara Anthony**  
Senior Fellow in Healthcare



**Josh Archambault**  
Senior Fellow in Healthcare



**BY IN-HAND DELIVERY AND EMAIL (SNYDERGE@DOR.STATE.MA.US)**

June 24, 2025

Geoffrey E. Snyder  
Commissioner of Revenue  
100 Cambridge Street  
Boston, MA 02114

**Re: City of Boston's Unauthorized and Unconstitutional Assessment of An Additional Property Tax on Taxpayers Who Exercise Their Statutory Right to Seek an Abatement before the Appellate Tax Board**

Dear Commissioner Snyder,

A fundamental mission of the Pioneer New England Legal Foundation (PNELF) is to preserve the rule of law and to protect economic justice. In this connection, certain real estate owners in Boston have informed PNELF that the City of Boston's Tax Assessment Department (the "City") has been engaging in the unauthorized and unconstitutional practice of *increasing* the assessed property value for those taxpayers who exercise their statutory right of appeal to the Commonwealth's Appellate Tax Board (ATB) for an abatement of their real estate tax, under G. L. c. 59, §§ 64-65. In so doing, the City has unlawfully increased those taxpayers' tax burden by as much as hundreds of thousands of dollars. Accordingly, PNELF has copied the City on this letter.

**First formal letter sent to Commissioner of Revenue, Geoffrey Snyder, on the City's unconstitutional tax practices.**

**Government Accountability and Transparency**

The Legal Foundation promotes open government and enforces constitutional limits on governmental power.

- The Legal Foundation has prepared a brief supporting WilmerHale's federal court challenge to executive orders punishing private law firms for their clients, advocacy, and hiring decisions, arguing that excluding WilmerHale lawyers from federal buildings and agency practice was unlawful executive overreach that interfered with clients' choice of counsel.
- In *Central Maine Power Company, et al. v. Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics and Election Practices*, the Legal Foundation filed an amicus brief in support of corporate political speech under the First Amendment. The First Circuit ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, reaffirming that constitutional protections for political expression apply equally to corporations and individuals.

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**Support**  
Pioneer New England  
Legal Foundation

*Looking Ahead to FY2026*

The Legal Foundation is a critical part of Pioneer's strategy to expand freedom and opportunity across New England and the nation. In 2026, the Legal Foundation will:

- Pursue precedent-setting cases protecting educational choice, property rights, and economic opportunity, and intensify efforts to promote transparent, accountable government.
- Expand appellate and U.S. Supreme Court work.
- Hold more regional events, build partnerships, and engage allies committed to freedom, the rule of law, and accountable government.
- Relaunch the Cabot Gala, a longstanding NELF tradition that brings together leaders in law, business, and civic life.

**Watch:** Frank Bailey presents evidence that the City of Boston is unfairly penalizing commercial property owners who appeal their tax assessments to the Appellate Tax Board.



**Legal Team**



**Frank J. Bailey**  
*Legal Foundation  
President*



**Gabriela Forero**  
*Staff Attorney*



**Paul Johnson**  
*Staff Attorney*

# Advancing Innovation & Defending Liberty Through Rigorous Debate

At a time when critical questions about the future of our country demand thoughtful answers, Pioneer remained committed to rigorous debate and evidence-based dialogue. In 2025, we convened distinguished experts and thought leaders for policy discussions on pharmaceutical innovation, federalism's role in American progress, and the essential role of civil discourse in preserving democracy.



## Hewitt Healthcare Lecture

*The Cost of Control:  
Navigating the Impact of the  
Inflation Reduction Act*

**Dr. Tomas J. Philipson**,  
former Acting Chairman of  
the Council of Economic

Advisers and Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago, delivered the 2025 Hewitt Healthcare Lecture on how the Inflation Reduction Act's prescription drug pricing reforms are reshaping patient access and pharmaceutical innovation.

Challenging conventional assumptions about drug pricing, Philipson argued that "innovation always lowers the price of health" by making treatments available that were previously impossible at any cost. He warned that the IRA's approach of selecting drugs for price controls based on total spending—rather than price alone—creates perverse incentives that penalize successful medications treating major diseases like diabetes and Alzheimer's. "If you help a lot of patients with a low price drug, the government's going to come after you, which is kind of perverse," Philipson explained, noting that 60 percent of the initial drugs targeted qualified due to high patient volume rather than high prices—discouraging development of treatments for widespread diseases affecting millions of Americans.



## Lovett C. Peters Lecture & Annual Dinner

*Economic Dynamism—Why  
Some States Are Winning  
the Future*

**Dr. Tyler Cowen**, Holbert L.  
Harris Chair of Economics at  
George Mason University and

Chairman of the Mercatus Center, delivered the 2025 Peters Lecture on how state-level experimentation and competition are reshaping education, energy policy, and economic dynamism across America.

"People are pessimistic about many things these days when it comes to the American experiment," Cowen observed. "But I will submit, if you look to the states and also local, city, and county governments, there's really a great deal to be optimistic about."

Cowen introduced his central thesis: "Federalism is the speed setting on the country's learning curve"—a mechanism that allows states to experiment, learn from successes and failures, and rapidly adopt what works. He explored how federalism enables dynamic competition across policy domains—from the YIMBY movement's deregulation of housing to the expansion of school choice, which is now available to approximately half of American children.



## Brackett B. Denniston, III Rule of Law Lecture

*Speaking Freely, Listening  
Well: Civil Disagreement in  
Polarized Times*

**Danielle Sassoon**, former  
Assistant U.S. Attorney for the  
Southern District of New York,

delivered the second annual Denniston Lecture on the essential role of rigorous debate in preserving both our legal system and our democracy.

"Debate, even when uncomfortable, is the mechanism of progress," Sassoon argued. "On the other hand, when we stifle disagreement, we allow harmful or mediocre ideas to go unchallenged, which in turn can hurt the development of the law, as well as the pursuit of truth and just outcomes."

Drawing from her experience prosecuting high-profile corruption and financial fraud cases, Sassoon recounted her decision to resign rather than dismiss corruption charges against NYC Mayor Eric Adams—a powerful example of the courage required to uphold the rule of law in the face of political pressure and the importance of principled disagreement within our institutions.

In 2025, Pioneer hosted exclusive events across the nation for National Leaders Forum members. As we expand our strategic efforts in Florida, we're bringing these members-only gatherings to Naples, Palm Beach, and Boca Grande.

**To join the National Leaders Forum and gain access to these exclusive events, please contact Andrew Horgan, Chief Strategy and Development Officer, at [ahorgan@pioneerinstitute.org](mailto:ahorgan@pioneerinstitute.org).**

# Pioneer Institute Media Relations Report

## The New York Times

BIG CITY

### He's a Foe of D.E.I. in Schools but Not a Fan of Trump's Crusade

Steven Wilson was forced out of the charter school network he started for an essay that conflicted with antiracism initiatives. Five years later, he feels both vindicated and dismayed.

Share full article



“ The broader signal is equally troubling. Employers expect stability and fairness in tax policy. Adding arbitrary assessments to Boston’s already high costs and regulatory burdens will only deepen doubts about the city’s competitiveness—and accelerate the flight of jobs and investment elsewhere.”

– Robert Cordy, *Boston Globe*.

### EDUCATION

“ The deterioration in the quality of public education in Massachusetts had been underway for nearly a decade by the time the pandemic hit. Even if we were to recover pandemic learning losses, the Commonwealth would still be a far cry from its public education heyday in the first decade of this century.”

– Jamie Gass, Charlie Chieppo, *CommonWealth Beacon*

### HEALTH

“ At the end of the day, many actors in the system are making billions from duplicate discounts, so very few people have any interest in reform or standing up for the "rule of law." Transparency and accountability will help fix the problem; unfortunately, those principles are opposed by HRSA, which steadfastly ignores removing corruption from the current 340B model.”

– Bill Smith & Robert Popovian, *Real Clear Health*

### CITIZENSHIP

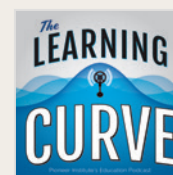
“ It is clear that the public is dissatisfied with the Legislature’s lack of transparency and, increasingly, with its inability to get the people’s business done in a timely and efficient manner, distinguishing itself among its peer legislatures for being the least transparent and the least accountable in the country.”

– Mary Connaughton, Jeanne M. Kempthorne, *Boston Herald*

### OPPORTUNITY

“ Proponents of Section 3A often invoke supply and demand to argue that lowering housing prices requires policies that encourage building more housing in general. There is strong academic evidence that this claim has merit, although Section 3A alone is unlikely to bring housing supply and demand in balance in Massachusetts.”

– Andrew Mikula, *Lowell Sun*



“ It’s a beautiful poem because it’s about those very things that seem quite commonplace to us, but it’s beautifully put, which is again, going back to her feelings about Dorothea. The idea that a good life, an important life is one where somebody just lives quite anonymously, but does small acts of goodness and actually makes the world a slightly better place for the people around them.”

– Kathryn Hughes, author of *George Eliot: The Last Victorian*

“ Why shouldn’t a parent of limited (means) have the same power to choose the right educational environment for their child as someone with more money?”

– John Kirtley, founder and Chairman of Step Up for Students

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*Pioneer wishes to recognize our longtime supporters, listed with in **bold**, for their ongoing contributions over five or more consecutive years.*

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**Bruce Johnstone**

**Dedication**

For more than two decades, Bruce Johnstone has been a visionary presence on Pioneer’s Board of Directors. The epitome of a “happy warrior,” he pushed all of us beyond the status quo—especially when the mission was expanding educational opportunity. For Bruce, one goal stood above all: ensuring every child has access to an excellent education. His conviction animated his work in the boardroom, his engagement with each new Roger Perry intern class, and his memorable Peters Lecture appeals.

Bruce and Holly’s philanthropy has been equally impactful. Over three decades, the Johnstones have provided more than \$1 million in support of Pioneer’s mission and included the Institute in their estate plans—an extraordinary commitment that continues to strengthen both the Institute and the Legal Foundation.

Though Bruce’s board service has concluded, he and Holly remain essential members of the Pioneer family. We are profoundly grateful for their leadership and friendship.

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**In Memoriam**

Pioneer mourns the loss of Bob Doran, a respected leader and longtime friend. Bob served as Chief Executive Officer of Wellington Management Company from 1990 to 1999 and was widely respected for his integrity and principled leadership, his commitment to long-term excellence, and his belief in putting clients first.

What we will remember most is Bob's genuine care for Massachusetts and its people. His generous support reflected a deep conviction that sound policy can transform lives and that the work of advancing prosperity, opportunity, and accountable government is always worth doing.

We are grateful for Bob's longstanding belief in our mission. Our hearts go out to his wife, Happy, and to his family.

---

**What we will  
 remember most is  
 Bob's genuine care  
 for Massachusetts  
 and its people.**

---

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Robert Kirby	Gerald Nadeau	Yun Shen	
<b>Katharine Myers &amp; Robert</b>	Warren Nader	<b>William Sherwin</b>	
<b>Kretschmar</b>	Frank Nagle	Robert and Joanne Silver	

Pioneer Institute, Inc. is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. To ensure its independence, Pioneer does not accept government grants.

† Indicates donor is deceased.

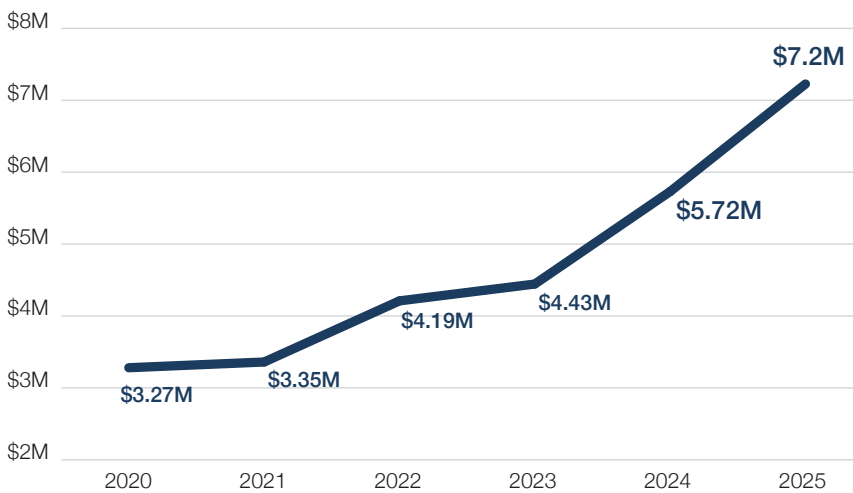
# Fiscal Year 2025

## Financial Structure

The 2025 unaudited financial results presented here reflect the consolidated financial performance of Pioneer Institute, Inc., and its affiliate, PioneerLegal, LLC, d/b/a/ Pioneer New England Legal Foundation, a not-for-profit public interest law firm. Complete Fiscal Year 2025 Audited Financial Statements will be available at [www.pioneerinstitute.org](http://www.pioneerinstitute.org). Pioneer Institute and PioneerLegal (together the “Organization”) are privately funded, accepting no government grants.

In the fiscal year ended September 30, 2025, the Organization received approximately \$7.2 million in contributions, with 40 percent of those without donor restrictions and 60 percent with donor restrictions. Fiscal Sponsor gifts amounted to \$811 thousand and represent donations intended for another organization as it obtained non-profit status. The Organization generated \$469 thousand in net investment gains and income and increased its net assets by \$1.77 million during the year.

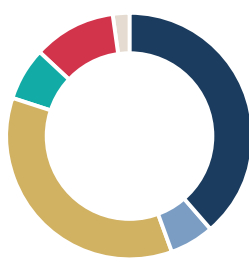
### Revenue 2019–2025



**“ We steward your dollars with discipline, investing in strategic priorities and measuring impact to ensure your generosity delivers results”**

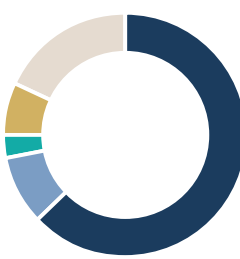
– Michael Brown, Board Director

### Revenue Distribution (\$7.2 Million)



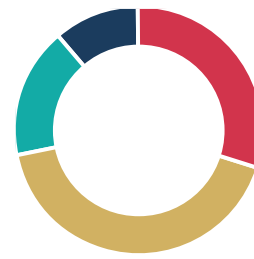
- Individuals: 39%
- Corporations: 6%
- Foundations: 36%
- Event Revenue: 7%
- Fiscal Sponsor Gifts: 11%
- In-Kind: 2%

### Expense Distribution (\$5.9 Million)



- Research Areas: 63%
- Communications: 9%
- Signature Events: 3%
- Operations: 7%
- Fundraising: 18%

### Research Expense Distribution (\$3.72 Million)



- PioneerEducation & PioneerCitizenship: 30%
- PioneerOpportunity: 42%
- Pioneer Health & Life Sciences: 17%
- Pioneer New England Legal Foundation: 11%

## 2025 Staff

Jim Stergios, *Executive Director*

Mary Z. Connaughton, *Chief Operating Officer & Director of Government Transparency*

Andrew Horgan, *Chief Strategy and Development Officer*

Caitlin Marple, *Deputy Director of Development*

Katie Martinez Castellano, *Director of Individual Giving*

Amie O'Hearn, *Communications & Media Director*

Avonlea Cummings, *Digital Content Specialist*

Gauri Binoy, *Researcher, Life Sciences Initiative*

Aidan Enright, *Economic Research Associate & Fellow on Immigrant Entrepreneurship*

Jamie Gass, *Director, PioneerEducation*

Andrew Mikula, *Senior Fellow on Housing*

William Smith, *Director, Life Sciences Initiative*

Victoria Huynh, *Events and Operations Coordinator*

### Pioneer New England Legal Foundation

Frank Bailey, *President*

Gabriela Forero, *Staff Attorney*

Paul Johnson, *Staff Attorney*

### Media

Charles Chieppo

### Senior Fellows

#### **P** EDUCATION

Albert Cheng, *University of Arkansas*

Alisha Searcy, *Center for Strong Public Schools*

Steven F. Wilson

#### **P** CITIZENSHIP

Michael Walker, *Data Made Useful*

Gary Blank

#### **P** HEALTH

Barbara Anthony

Joshua Archambault

Robert Popovian

#### **P** OPPORTUNITY

Josh Bedi, *University of Wisconsin*

### Advisory Boards

#### **P** EDUCATION

Dr. Kenneth Ardon, *Salem State College*

Ken Campbell, *IDEA Public Schools*

Cornelius Chapman, *Mirick O'Connell*

Nancy Myers Coolidge, *Mifflin Memorial Fund*

Dr. Charles Glenn, *Boston University*

Dr. Susan Goldsmith, *Boston University*

Ed Kirby, *American Federation for Children*

Dr. Kathleen Madigan, *AccountabilityWorks*

Dr. Paul Peterson, *Harvard University*

Henry Thomas, *Springfield Urban League*

#### **P** CITIZENSHIP

Kelley Brown, *Easthampton High School*

Roger Desrosiers, *Mass. Center for Civic Education*

Will Fitzhugh, *The Concord Review*

E.D. Hirsch, *Core Knowledge Foundation*

Robert Leming, *"We the People"*

Anders Lewis, *AMSA Charter School*

William Mayer, *Northeastern University*

Mariam Memarsadeghi, *Cyrus Institute*

Paul Reid, *Author*

#### **P** HEALTH

Dr. Ernst Berndt, *Mass. Institute of Technology*

Timothy Hunt, *Alliance for Regenerative Medicine*

Keith Hylton, *Boston University Law School*

Stephen Knight, *F-Prime Capital*

Gary Paul Magnant, *TriBiotica*

Dr. Amir Nashat, *Polaris Partners*

William F. Weld, *ML Strategies, LLC*

#### **P** OPPORTUNITY

David Boit, *Loring, Wolcott & Coolidge*

JD Chesloff, *Mass. Business Roundtable*

Joseph Downing, *John Adams Innovation Institute*

John Friar, *Northeastern University*

Ryan Hayden, *PriceWaterhouseCoopers*

Bill Rennie, *Retailers Association of Mass.*

### Academic Advisors

John Friar, *Northeastern University*

Keith Hylton, *Boston University*

Jonathan B. Imber, *Wellesley College*

Laurence J. Kotlikoff, *Boston University*

Mark Landy, *Boston College*

Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr., *Harvard University*

R. Shep Melnick, *Boston College*

Peter Skerry, *Boston College*



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2025ANNUALREPORT**

