



# Student PIRGs

Student Public Interest Research Groups | 2020-2021 REPORT



**“MaryPIRG provides an important opportunity for students to learn skills they wouldn’t learn in the classroom —how to effectively advocate for important causes they believe in.**

“When I worked for WISPIRG in Wisconsin and trained students at the University of Wisconsin — Milwaukee around advocacy for student rights, the environment, and for support of people experiencing homelessness, I found my voice and developed leadership and advocacy skills that later enabled me to be a leader in College Park. MaryPIRG provides University of Maryland students the same opportunities here.”

- Patrick Wojahn, alum and Mayor of College Park, MD



**“MASSPIRG’s chapter on our campus has been very effective in engaging our students and exposing them to the value of advocacy and civic participation.**

“In the past several years they have had many successes... North Shore Community College is fortunate to have an active and passionate MASSPIRG chapter on our campus for our students to be involved with, which also benefits the community, and the Commonwealth.”

- Dr. Nate Bryant, Interim President, North Shore Community College



# Student PIRGs

## 2020-2021 Report

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# A year unlike any other.

The 2020-2021 school year was an unprecedented year which called for unprecedented organizing. We went in knowing that the year was going to be challenging given the pandemic, but we had to get it right given the gravity of the 2020 election. We also know our nation's college campuses are full of our peers who envision a better future, and that organizing together is key in working towards a better and more democratic world.

With this in mind, our student organizers remained resilient throughout the entire year. To adapt to the changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, we ran hundreds of tests all across the country to refine our remote model. We trained hundreds of student leaders over the summer of 2020, and successfully ran our entire program virtually for the whole academic year. And most importantly, we made sure our campuses were vote-ready for the fall!

Our student organizers were the boots on the ground and made so many digital footprints in our campus communities! With campus staff and administrators focused on the remote learning transition and many student groups struggling with campus engagement, we filled the gap. We continued to activate and engage our peers, and worked together to build our campus communities, turn out the vote, and keep student activism alive at the local level.

One virtual conversation at a time, we built a grassroots movement of students across the country who were ready to turn out to the polls and reach out to their friends and families to do the same. And, our team got RESULTS in the No-

vember election! Our student organizers helped achieve record breaking youth voter turnout across the country – **82% of the students we helped register turned out, as did 76% of the students we contacted** in the weeks leading up to Election Day.

Thanks to the support of foundations and donors, following the election we were able to continue our work by providing students with the training and support they needed to work with elected officials for change in the spring. In total we engaged 17% MORE students than last year and won more than 30 campaigns, ranging from passing statewide policies to end student hunger and banning the worst kinds of single-use plastics, to implementing local programs to make textbooks more affordable.

Despite such a challenging year, I truly believe it brought out the best students had to offer. I am so proud of our team for the impact that we made on the election, the communities we built across the country, and for believing in the power that we hold as students. I am also incredibly grateful to this team, our campus communities, and all of our supporters, and I'm excited for us to continue to work together to keep up the momentum towards a more meaningful future that exists for all of us. We're at the brink of pivotal change and young people are leading the way.



*Prabhdeep Rai*  
CALPIRG Students Board Member  
Student PIRGs National Board Member  
UCLA Class of 2021

“ Our student organizers helped achieve record breaking youth voter turnout across the country — **82% of the students we helped register turned out, as did 76% of the students we contacted** in the weeks leading up to Election Day.”

### Student PIRG Board Chairs

CALPIRG Students — Ria Coen Gilbert, UC San Diego '22

CONNPIRG Students — Caroline Munn, Trinity College, '21

Florida PIRG Students — Carrie Walker, Eckerd College, '22

MaryPIRG Students — Akshaya Balaji, University of Maryland at College Park, '23

MASSPIRG Students — Arianna Maddox, University of Massachusetts at Boston, '24

NCPIRG Campus Action — Katelynn Gilbert, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, '23

NJPIRG Students — Tehreem Uzma, Rutgers New Brunswick, '22

OSPIRG Students — Christie Clark, University of Oregon, '22

WASHPIRG Students — Sydney Porter, University of Washington, '23

**1,700**

**student leaders graduated from our leadership development program.**

**Activists aren't born. They're trained.**

From working with the media to managing a massive petition drive, our training program covers everything emerging leaders need to win campaigns and build strong organizations.

# The Power of Yo

We are America's largest and most diverse generation, but there are many issues that bring us together, even in an incredibly polarized time.

From protecting the environment to engaging young people in civic life, to making college more affordable, our goal is to advocate for concrete policy solutions, provide direct service to our communities, and educate our peers about the power of their voice.

Each term, our student board of directors takes the advice of faculty, student group leaders, and campus community members when deciding on the issues to prioritize the following term.

Feedback from our campus communities allows us to engage diverse coalition partners, from our athletics departments, to small businesses, to our campus multicultural centers.

This process allows us to run winning campaigns that are responsive to the needs of our campus communities.

“CONNPIRG is an organization that has historically fought for sustainability in a variety of ways from the environment to inequalities in the classroom. They are an example to the core beliefs of our institution, and the power of structured, organized student advocacy!”

- Jeddric Estrella  
Trinity College Student Government President



# Engaging People

Most students don't graduate from college with the knowledge to be an active and effective participant in our democracy. But over the last 50 years, our training and campus programs have given over a million students across the country the opportunity to learn by doing. Our alumni have taken these skills and experiences to continue making a difference for a lifetime.

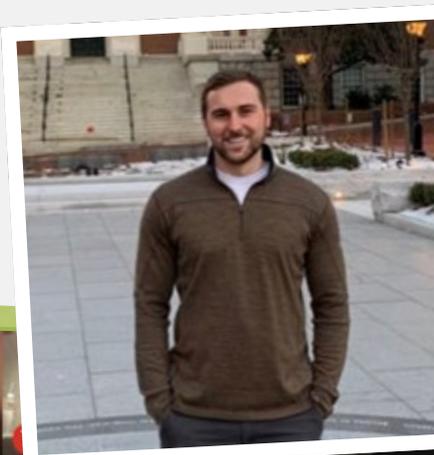
Our alumni continue to receive recognition for their incredible work, bolstered by their first experiences in organizing and activism with the Student PIRGs. These include awards such as the Clio Award for Social Good, the Lucy Stone Lifetime Achievement Award from the League of Women Voters, the 2020 Abolitionist of the Year award from Coloradans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, and the Pratt-Heins Award for Service at the University of Nebraska. In addition, alumni Josh Becker was elected as a California state senator, Patrick Wojan was elected to a third term as mayor of College Park, MD, and Rich Williams became the Chief of Staff of the Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Education!

**6,700** students volunteered remotely with the Student PIRGs in 2020-2021.

**137,000** campaign actions were taken, from signing a petition to calling their legislator.

“MaryPIRG presents excellent opportunities for students to engage in impactful policy decisions. My time involved with the organization helped me learn how to effectively organize around issues, which is often useful in my career. But whether one plans to use these skills professionally or not, students of all backgrounds who want to learn how to become civically engaged can look to MaryPIRG to get their start.”

- Brad Fallon MaryPIRG Alum and Assistant to the Majority Leader, Maryland House of Delegates

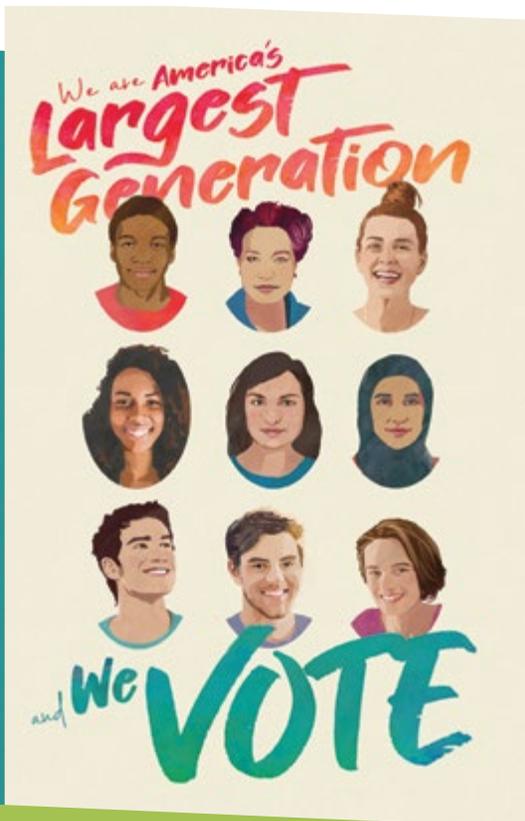


# The New Voters Project

The nonpartisan Student PIRGs' New Voters Project aims to achieve full participation of young people (aged 18-24) in the democratic process. College and university campuses are a critical place to engage young people as they develop their civic identities.

In spite of the pandemic, our student-powered team expanded to 200 college campuses across the country, helping new voters cast their ballots this election cycle. Not only that, our program gave thousands of student leaders a crash course in organizing and activism.

Data from the Center for Information Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) shows that across the board, youth voter turnout increased dramatically in 2020. In states where we organized, we saw turnout rates increase from 5 to 22 percentage points over 2016. We saw the biggest gain in states like New Jersey (22%), Arizona (18%), California (17%), and Georgia (14%), where we invested in training student organizers to run voter registration and GOTV efforts in their own communities and build campus cultures of civic engagement. Nationally, the youth voter turnout rate is expected to reach the highest level in nearly 50 years.



## BY THE NUMBERS

**82%** of the young people who the Student PIRGs' New Voters Project helped to register leading up to the 2020 election turned out to vote.

**76%** of the young people contacted through our peer-to-peer GOTV program turned out to vote.

(This compares to 68.5% of a representative sample of college students overall who were registered and voted in 2016.)

**2 million** students educated

**390,000** peer-to-peer GOTV contacts

**3,000** student volunteers

**2,700** interns leading campus vote initiatives

**100** staff on 200 campuses, 73 of which enroll a majority of students of color.



## CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

Our University of North Carolina - Pembroke team helped **train all of the Residential Advisors** on voter registration.



The University of South Florida team worked with the Student Government Association to get **voter registration incorporated into freshman orientation**.

At Eastern Michigan University, our team successfully advocated for an **all-campus push notification** to our online voter registration tool StudentVote.org through the campus phone app.

## ACTIVATING CAMPUS LEADERS

**400+** faculty, campus staff, administrators, and student group leaders joined our local vote coalitions.

**200,000** Number of students those faculty emailed about the election.

**1 million+** total enrollment of campuses that sent campus-wide emails, texts, and/or push notifications on campus phone apps about the election as a result of our work.

Above: Student leaders promoting the New Voters Project and New Voters Project Director Manny Rin on PBS Frontline (bottom left).



“In such a unique year Associated Students has been lucky to have the partnership of the UC San Diego CALPIRG Chapter. COVID changed the way we do voter registration and promote voter turnout and the CALPIRG New Voters Project went above and beyond to ensure that the nuanced details reached Tritons.”

- Heather Belk, Director of Associated Students Student Government at UC San Diego

Left: New Voters Project social campaign artwork. Facing page middle: Student PIRG leaders making a plan to vote.

## Vote Early Day

Hundreds of students volunteered **1,200+** hours at 7 statewide and regional phonebanks spanning **17 states**.

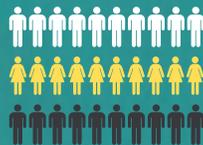
We had **4,000+** phone conversations with young voters on the national day of action.

In the week before the Day of Action, our team talked to an additional **7,000 students**.

## National Voter Registration Day **IN ONE DAY...**

**1.6M** STUDENTS

our team reached out to students through phone calls, text messages, emails, and social media to make sure they were registered to vote



**210** ORGANIZATIONS

local and national groups— from the NAACP to University of Oregon Athletics—partnered with us to reach their members



**VOLUNTEERS 980**



student volunteers were trained in grassroots skills to reach their peers to help them register and make a plan to vote

**COLLEGE CAMPUSES 45**



sent campus-wide emails with a link to our StudentVote.org tool to help their students register to vote

# Campus Highlights

## PARTY AT THE POLLS

Volunteers from over a dozen campuses across **Massachusetts** volunteered at a virtual “Party at the Polls” event to call their peers and classmates. Students made **50,000 contacts in just one day!**

OSPIRG’s Party to the Polls at the **University of Oregon** featured a performance from the **Oregon Dance Team, a capella groups**, and comments from the student body Vice-President. This event continued the success of the Keep it 100 initiative, a partnership between UO Athletics, OSPIRG, and the Black Cultural Center to provide voter education resources for athletes.

## SUMMITS

**NCPIRG** worked with a statewide coalition to host the state’s 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Vote Summit and the state’s first “Democracy Doesn’t Sleep” week of action.

**CALPIRG Students** co-hosted the California Youth Voter Summit, featuring then Secretary of State, now Sen. Alex Padilla as keynote speaker. **Over 600 people attended the summit.**

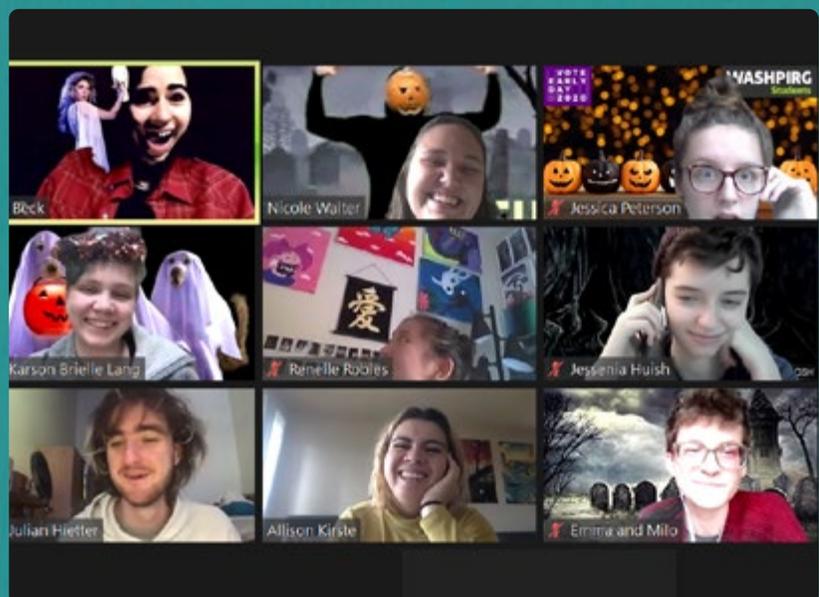
After the election, **Florida PIRG Students** held the state’s first “How to Institutionalize Student Voting” summit in collaboration with the Campus Vote and Campus Election Engagement projects. The event helped administrators, staff, and faculty build more democratically engaged campuses.



- ▶ Students in **Washington** hosted a Halloween-themed Zoom phonebanking session, “**Friends Don’t Let Friends Ghost the Vote,**” that reached hundreds of students.

**Florida students** threw a **boy band themed phone-a-thon** event. Twelve partners ranging from the University of Central Florida’s **College Republicans**, to Eckerd College’s **College Democrats**, Florida International University’s Honors College, and the University of Florida Pre-Physician Assistant Association participated.

Students spent a combined **400 hours** calling and talked to over **1,300 people** about their plan to vote!



# Climate Change: The Fight for C

Over the past year, students have experienced the impacts of climate change first hand, from deadly wildfires in the west, to increasingly severe hurricanes on the Gulf and Atlantic coasts. The longer we wait to act meaningfully on climate, the worse

the impacts will be in the future. So this year, we continued to prioritize our campaign for 100 percent renewable energy, calling on our campuses, communities, and states to cut emissions and move rapidly towards a cleaner, greener, renewable future.

## 100% Renewable Campuses

**In Maryland**, MaryPIRG Students helped secure a commitment to carbon neutrality by 2025 and laid the groundwork to pass the FUTURE Act, a state bill co-written students from MaryPIRG, which will commit all University of Maryland system schools to carbon neutrality by 2035.

**In Florida**, our team passed five student government resolutions calling on their universities to generate 100 percent of their energy from renewable sources by 2040. More than 2,500 students and 140 faculty, staff, and alumni signed on in support of the initiative.

We also passed student government resolutions in support of 100 percent renewable energy at a number



of additional campuses, including **UCLA, Rutgers University and the University of Wisconsin - Madison.**



**California becomes first state to plan to end oil and gas drilling.**

In April, CALPIRG Students celebrated a new directive from Gov. Gavin Newsom announcing a ban on new fracking wells by 2024 and calling on the state's air resources agency to end oil and gas drilling by 2045.

### BY THE NUMBERS

**50,000** student petitions

**5,300** phone calls to legislators

**400** faculty & coalition endorsements

**140** lobby meetings

**100** media hits

# Our Future

## 100% Renewable States

**Oregon:** OSPIRG Students won their campaign to pass a statewide bill that will **transition Oregon to 100 percent renewable energy!** To help pass the bill, OSPIRG volunteers collected over 1,000 student signatures and held dozens of meetings with elected officials during their statewide virtual lobby week. This bill will make Oregon the eighth state to adopt a commitment for 100% clean electricity and is the **fastest timeline adopted by a state to date.**

**California:** CALPIRG Students continued their climate advocacy by calling on the state to speed up California's transition to 100% renewable electricity. During the California Climate Action Summit, **150 CALPIRG student leaders met with more than 70 state legislators and submitted 18,000 signatures** to Governor Newsom's climate advisor in support 100% by 2030, and called on legislators to ban fracking.

**Washington:** WASHPIRG Students pushed for legislation to **make all new cars electric by 2030.** The bill got farther in the state legislature than any previous year. Students gathered hundreds of petition signatures; organized a virtual Lobby Day, where **35 students met with their legislators;** and held an educational panel with partners such as the Clean Energy Transition Institute and the Washington Research Foundation.

**Massachusetts:** After calls for climate action in Massachusetts from MASSPIRG Students and coalition partners, Governor Baker signed a bill that will ensure that at least **40 percent of the state's electricity comes from renewable sources by 2030.** While the law is a step forward, we know that there's more work to do. MASSPIRG Students is now **working to pass the 100% Clean Act** to commit the state to 100 percent renewable energy.

Since it was introduced in February, MASSPIRG **collected 10,000 signatures** in support of the policy from students and over 100 signatures from faculty and other community leaders. Their virtual lobby day and other advocacy alongside Environment Massachusetts resulted in **75 legislators co-sponsoring** the bill.

▼ Clean Energy Lobby Day: CALPIRG Students deliver 18,000 signatures to Gov. Newsom's climate advisor calling for a 100 percent renewable California by 2030.





“Something like a foam coffee cup that we use for 10 minutes can pollute our environment for hundreds of years. These plastics don’t break down. They don’t biodegrade. They just form smaller microplastics that harm our environment.”

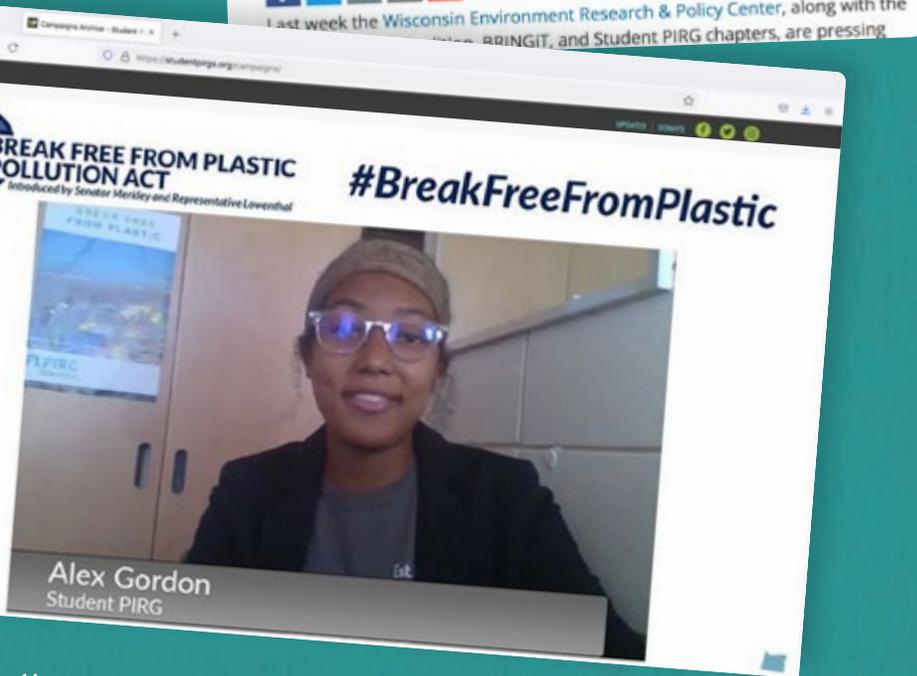
- Alexa Moore, NMPIRG Students zero waste campaign University of New Mexico class of 2020



◀ UCLA’s Newsroom credits CALPIRG’s contribution to getting the campus to develop a policy phasing out single-use plastics.



◀ A radio station in Madison, WI covers our campaign to get Whole Foods to eliminate single-use plastic packaging from its stores.



◀ Florida PIRG student leader Alex Gordon represents the Student PIRGs at a virtual event introducing the federal Break Free from Plastic Pollution Act in Congress.

# Break free from plastic

From extraction to production to disposal, single-use plastics have demonstrated that they're not worth the convenience. **Nothing we use for five minutes should pollute the planet for 500 years.** That's why we're calling on our community and state leaders to ban unnecessary single-use plastics, and working to create sustainable zero waste models that can be scaled economy-wide.

## One item at a time

In many of our communities, we've focused our campaign on shifting public consciousness around one pervasive single-use plastic like plastic bags or straws. This strategy has been a highly effective organizing tool, serving to educate students about the impacts of single-use plastic without complicating the issue, while also making a tangible impact by getting rid of the most egregious examples of plastic waste and setting the stage for larger scale bans and corporate transitions.

## UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SYSTEM BANS SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

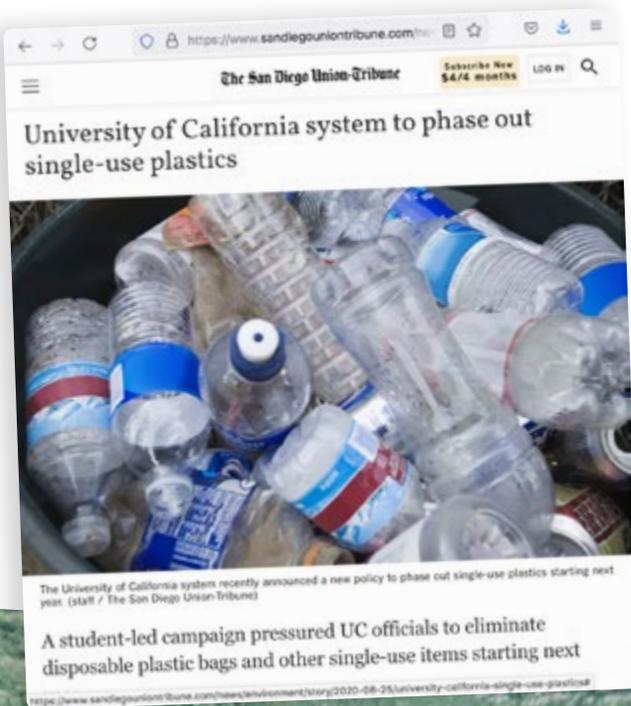
Without a bold change of course, plastic trash flowing into our oceans could triple by 2040. And one study estimates that 2020 produced 30% more plastic waste than 2019 because of COVID-19. But our universities are leading the way towards solutions, spurred on by students organizing for change. That's why in fall of 2019 our team at CALPIRG Students launched a campaign with the goal of banning single-use plastics at the 10 University of California campuses.

Across the UC system, CALPIRG organizers and volunteers built a movement of student support for stronger limits on plastic use on our campuses. Statewide we collected over 12,000 signatures from supportive students, passed resolutions in student governments across the state, and met with key stakeholders at the University of California. In addition, the CALPIRG team played a big role in developing the policy with the UC Zero



Waste Committee and held public events on local beaches with legislators to highlight the problem of plastic pollution.

UCLA took the first step to announce a strong ban on non-essential foodware plastics on campus, and then UC Berkeley followed suit and developed one of the most comprehensive bans on single use plastics in all campus facilities. Finally, in August 2020, the entire University of California system announced they would start phasing-out single-use plastics, paving the way for campuses free of non-essential plastics by 2030.



## LEVERAGING CAMPUS PROGRESS TO PASS POLICY

“Think globally, act locally” has caught on as a catch-phrase for a reason: It’s excellent strategic advice. Our chapters built on their policy wins of the last school year by helping to win a polystyrene ban in Virginia and Washington state, and leading the campaign to pass a polystyrene ban in Connecticut. Our teams also represented the student voice in the fight to pass numerous bills aiming to curb plastic pollution in California and Florida.

“When taking on big projects like eliminating single use plastics on campus, it is extremely helpful to have an ally like PIRGIM. They have assembled a team of student leaders to address this pressing issue and given us invaluable resources and guidance.”

– Zackariah Farah, Vice President, University of Michigan Student Government of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.





“Being involved in CALPIRG taught me skills I never thought I would be good at, let me advocate and WIN policy change for students, and most importantly has helped me become a version of myself that I never thought I could be.”

- Prabhdeep Rai, CALPIRG student leader, incoming Campus Organizer, UCLA

“I wasn't passionate about climate change or advocacy work until MASSPIRG opened my eyes to the gravity of the issues our Earth is facing. But now I know that we are a part of a huge movement to make the world and our quality of life better.”

- Arianna Maddox, MASSPIRG Board Chair, UMass, Boston



“NJPIRG allowed me to break out of my shell...The skills that I learned during my year with NJPIRG will not be forgotten — I will use them to advocate for many important issues as the Vice President of Rutgers Newark Student Governing Association. I would not have been offered this role without the help of my NJPIRG family and I will be forever grateful.”

- Fatima Ahmed, Former NJPIRG Intern, Rutgers Newark

# Making Higher Education Affordable

Attending college in America is one of the largest expenses someone will ever have in their lifetime. Absurd textbook prices, decreasing student aid, scams targeting students and more add to this burden. This

debt carries lifelong consequences for students, which is why the Student PIRGs are working to protect students from predatory companies and ensure college is affordable in America.

## Making Textbooks Affordable

Since the 1970s, textbook prices have increased at three times the rate of inflation. Students want access to their materials and faculty want students to succeed, yet the majority of students cannot afford the basics. COVID-19 made things worse as students struggled financially and more classes adopted automatic billing models for course materials.

### Leading Research in Textbook Affordability

This year, along with the U.S. PIRG Education Fund, we released the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of our report on the broken textbooks market. Our national survey revealed that 65% of students skipped buying a textbook due to cost, even though 90% reported that they worried it would negatively impact their grade. We used this report to advocate for more textbook price trans-

parency and free open textbooks, and push back against some of the worst practices of the publishing industry.

### Victory for Price Transparency

In **Oregon**, OSPIRG helped pass a bipartisan bill to establish a course marking system to provide textbook cost transparency statewide. And at the **University of North Carolina** – Chapel Hill, our team won a campus-wide course marking system. These victories will ensure that students can enroll in classes they can afford and budget for more costly courses.

### Victory Against Textbook Auto-Billing

In a win for student choice and textbook affordability, our team at the **University of Central Florida** collected

## Student Loan Borrower Bill of Rights

In California, Massachusetts, and Oregon, PIRG-backed student loan borrower bill of rights legislation was signed into law this year. These new laws will protect students from unfair and deceptive lending practices by loan servicing companies.

- ▶ **Top:** State Representative Natalie Higgins gives MASSPIRG a shout-out after the Student Loan Borrower Bill of Rights passes in Massachusetts.
- ▶ **Bottom:** CALPIRG student leader Valerie Nguyen featured on ABC 7 News to discuss the impact of textbook costs on students during the COVID-19 pandemic.



# dable

over 1,200 signatures to reject a proposed automatic billing program for textbooks and access codes. The coalition included open information advocates, College Democrats, and College Republicans.

## Celebrating Open Textbooks

During Open Education Week, a worldwide celebration of open education, we held dozens of events in support of free open textbooks.

In **Massachusetts**, MASSPIRG formed a working group to help UMass Lowell adopt more open textbooks. These groups came together to celebrate the

first-ever “OERscar” award ceremony, which honored 27 professors for their innovative use of affordable course materials.

In **Illinois**, our team helped three new universities get funding for open textbooks and helped the student government at the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign secure additional funding for their open textbooks program. And at Southern Illinois University, our team successfully urged the university to start an open textbooks program based on the Urbana Champaign model.

## Advocating for Federal Support

For decades, the Student PIRGs have been representing student voices in Washington, D.C. Despite being unable to meet with legislators in person this year, we held our **largest federal lobby day on record**. Over 150 student advocates virtually called on more than 80 congressional offices to double the Pell grant, include student dependents in stimulus payments, and provide emergency grants to students.

In the American Families Plan, President Biden proposed adding \$1,200 to the maximum Pell Grant award, approximately a 20% increase. Although this historic change is welcome, we’re calling on Congress to build on President Biden’s request and use the next budget and COVID relief package to double the Pell grant. And we’ve already signed on over 100 student leaders to support doubling Pell.



## Representing students in DC

CALPIRG student leader Prabhdeep Rai represented student voices at a roundtable meeting with the new federal Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona.

CALPIRG student leader Prabhdeep Rai (bottom right) meets with Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona (top center).

**This year, our work was featured in more than 670 stories in the media — from features in campus and local newspapers, to letters-to-the-editor, to mentions in major state and national publications.**

“Manny Rin, who leads the New Voters Project for Student PIRGs... says [voter] registration is half the battle. His work now focuses on guiding students to the polls. ‘The thing that we’ve been really urging and stressing is that we’ve got to continue the work on election day [and] continue working hard to make sure we can turn people out.’ During the pandemic, the Student PIRGs have shifted to remote tactics such as phone calls and text messages to reach students across the country.”

PBS Frontline



“Instead of piling into a car and driving up to Salem or Portland to meet with legislators in person, the students of OSPIRG lobbied from home over Zoom...‘It’s super cool that we still get to make a legislative change, even just from our dorm room or living room.’

- University of Oregon freshman Emma Ruby in the Daily Emerald.



“WISPIRG was part of a nationwide phone and text bank to commemorate Vote Early Day. They specifically focus on encouraging young people in the Midwest to get out and vote. ‘It’s exciting to see all the early voter turnout among young people specifically,’ said Noah Lewine, UW-Madison campus organizer for Wisconsin Student Public Interest (WISPIRG). ‘It’s a little bit easier over a period of ten days to find the time to go vote.’”

WKOW ABC News Wisconsin



# Zero Hunger Campaign

Millions of Americans are going hungry, including 44% of undergraduate students who are experiencing food insecurity, according to the UC Global Food Initiative. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in even more challenges for students in need. Our strategy this year was to secure federal support for student aid, while working to support local community programs. In total, we raised over \$31,000 for dozens of local shelters and food banks.

## CALLING FOR FEDERAL AID

In November, 120 students from around the country Zoomed into Washington D.C. and held **nearly 60 meetings**, calling on Congress to offer more emergency grants to help students in need.

## LOCAL EVENTS AND FUNDRAISERS

**WASHPIRG Students** raised over \$1,800 for Tent City 3, which supports University of Washington students, alumni, and community members that are experiencing homelessness.

**OSPIRG Students** raised over \$4,000 for local organizations Huerto de la Familia, Food For Lane County, and Willamette Farm & Food Coalition.

**NJPIRG Students** at Rutgers New Brunswick held a basic needs webinar on International Women's Day with Dr. Radhika Balakrishnan, the faculty director at the Center for Women's Global Leadership and professor in Women's and Gender and Sexuality Studies.

## LEGISLATIVE VICTORY

The Hunger-Free Campus Act passed through the Maryland legislature in the spring and will help build critical infrastructure to combat on-campus food insecurity. Our team at the University of Maryland collected testimonies from food insecure students, testified at hearings, and met with elected officials to help pass the bill.



▲ Students from CALPIRG at UC San Diego in a meeting with the office of Congressman Scott Peters.



## HUNGER & HOMELESSNESS AWARENESS WEEK

More than 200 campuses and community organizations participated in our annual Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, co-hosted by the National Coalition for the Homeless. Campus groups, university departments, and local non-profits held educational events, fundraisers, advocacy actions, and more.

# Youth Earth Week

Since Earth Day was founded in 1970, students have been on the forefront of change to protect our environment. This year, **more than 3,100 volunteers participated in 270 events** around the country during #YouthEarthWeek. Events ranged from virtual sustainable cooking classes, lobby meetings with elected officials, documentary screenings, roundtable discussions with community leaders, strikes and rallies, and so much more.

We gave out awards to some of the top groups and events including:

**California Climate Action Summit:** CALPIRG Students won the grand prize for their Climate Action Summit on Earth Day. The CALPIRG team hosted six panels plus campaign actions and trainings that were attended by more than 750 young people and community leaders across the state. ▶

**Students for Environmental Concerns** at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: SECs hosted nearly a dozen events during Earth Week, ranging from a Climate Strike to a stargazing social and a “plogging” clean-up event that was covered by the local news.

**MASSPIRG at UMass Amherst:** More than 130 students attended six events throughout Earth Week. From a lesson on native bees to a Break Free From Plastics scavenger hunt and a sustainable recipe demo, the MASSPIRG team hosted safe, educational, and creative events. They also helped put together a statewide Youth Advocacy Week to support a bill for 100 percent renewable energy, and successfully signed on three new co-sponsors to the bill!



## Protecting the Arctic

At the University of Colorado Boulder, our students ran a campaign to protect the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, targeting Rep. Joe Neguse to co-sponsor legislation protecting the Arctic. After students generated dozens of calls into his office, he signed onto the bill after just a week of campaigning! Not long after, the Biden administration announced they would suspend all leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge pending environmental review.



## Saving the Bees

In March, the Massachusetts Pesticide Board Subcommittee enacted a new statewide regulation to restrict the use of bee-killing neonicotinoid pesticides. Over the past few years, MASSPIRG Student volunteers have generated over 4,500 grassroots actions calling for action to save the bees and other pollinators.

And in California, UC Irvine became a Bee Friendly Certified Campus, joining the ranks of UCLA, UC Davis, and UC Berkeley, thanks to the work of CALPIRG student activists.

### UCI Certified as Bee Campus USA Affiliate

By: Campus News Writer



## Strengthening Democracy

In Maryland, MaryPIRG Students helped pass the Student and Military Voter Empowerment Act, which will increase civic participation by reducing the barriers that students and military members face when registering to vote and turning out.

## Improving Health Care

WASHPIRG at the University of Washington hosted a panel to explore organizing actions toward health care accessibility. One solution discussed was legislation to tax drug manufacturers for revenue generated by drug price increases not supported by new clinical research or evidence. The event was covered in the UW Daily newspaper.

## Rolling Back Environmental Rollbacks

When President Biden took office, the Student PIRGs and our partners called on the Biden Administration to roll back some of the most harmful environmental rollbacks from the Trump Administration. After President Biden's first 100 days, we helped release a report revealing that progress has been made on 17 of our 20 priority environmental actions, including rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement, strengthening fuel economy and emissions standards, and withdrawing from President Trump's offshore drilling plan.





“ The NCPIRG team has been an incredible asset full of effort, enthusiasm, and knowledge in the student vote space. I’ve worked with the PIRGs on a wide variety of events and plans. NCPIRG has always been incredibly helpful and have often brought up points of improvement and ideas to our plans that otherwise may have been missed.”

- Joseph Brinkley, Office For Community & Civic Engagement  
University of North Carolina at Pembroke



“ Georgia PIRG raised over \$700 to purchase hygiene items for the Panther’s Pantry in a week! We are extremely grateful for their contribution that is going to help us alleviate food insecurity and stress burden in our Georgia State University community!”

- Patricia Perez, Director of the Panther’s Pantry at Georgia State University  
Georgia State University

# The Power of Grassroots Funding

We are the nation's oldest and largest majority student-funded non-profit, and we know we're doing something right when year after year, students vote to support their campus PIRG chapter with a small fee on their tuition bill. A BIG THANK YOU to our 290,000 student members that make this work possible!

## Powered by Students

In Massachusetts, students at nine state universities and community colleges across the state voted to reaffirm their support for MASSPIRG's waivable fee on campus with an average 84% of students voting yes. Big shout out to all of the student group and student government leaders, faculty, and administrators across all who supported our referendums this year.

Students at Trinity College in Connecticut, University of Maryland, and Evergreen State College in Wash-

ington, also reaffirmed their support for funding their PIRG chapters with an average 81% of the student body voting yes.

In California, CALPIRG Students signed up 9,700 new dues-paying student members - all from home!

## Small Donors, Big Impact

In addition to our student members and foundation partners, we held fundraisers for Giving Tuesday, Earth Week, and our expansion efforts in states like Florida and Michigan. Staff, students, and alumni reached out to their personal networks to raise more than \$28,000 from over 900 individual donors.



# Foundation & Donor Support

Over the last 50 years, we've developed a campaign and leadership development model that has trained over a hundred thousand students in effective activism. With the support of these incredible foundations and donors, we were able to serve students on over 60 additional campuses across the country this year.

## FOUNDATIONS & PARTNERS

ACLU  
Allegany Franciscan Ministries of Florida  
Andrew Goodman Foundation  
BluePrint NC  
Break Free From Plastic  
Clean and Prosperous America  
Combined Defense Fund  
Earth Island Institute  
EcoAmerica  
Educational Foundation of America  
Energy Foundation  
Ettinger Foundation  
Florida 501(c)(3) Civic Engagement Table  
Forney Family Foundation  
Foundation For The Carolinas  
G Lee and Diana Humphry Charitable Fund  
Herb Block Foundation  
The Hewlett Foundation  
Hillman Family Foundations  
Hull Family Foundation  
Marisla Foundation  
MassVOTE  
Michigan Civic Action Fund  
Naomi & Nehemiah Cohen Foundation  
National Voter Registration Day  
New Mexico C3 Engagement Table  
New Venture Fund  
Oceana  
Park Foundation  
Paul M. Angell Family Foundation  
Plastic Pollution Coalition  
Plastics Solutions Fund  
Point Break Foundation  
Rachel's Network  
Redwood City Arts Commission  
Rockefeller Philanthropic Advisors  
Roddenberry Foundation  
Schmidt Family Foundation  
Seelig Family Fund  
State Voices  
The Story Network Foundation  
Students Learn Students Vote Coalition  
Sunflower Foundation  
Tides Foundation  
Wallace Global Fund  
Weeden Foundation  
The Winston-Salem Foundation  
Wisconsin Voices  
Youth Engagement Fund  
Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation

## Thank You!

All of this incredible work would not have been possible without the generous support of our student members, foundation partners, and individual donors. These funds allowed us to hire organizers to work with over **150 campuses in 25 states**, and powered our work to get young people to the polls, fight climate change, and make education more affordable.

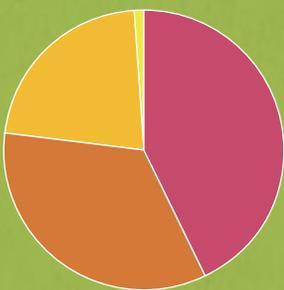
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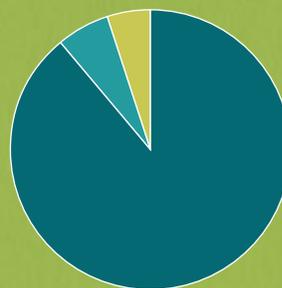
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# Student PIRGs



### FY20 Income

- Student Members 43%
- Grants 34%
- Program Services 22%
- Donors 1%



### Expenses

- Program 89%
- Management 6%
- Fundraising 5%

Our FY20 budget reflects the combined income and expenses of the Student PIRGs national projects including our C3 and C4 corporations. It does not include individual state budgets from our state groups.

# **Student** **PIRGs**

[www.studentpirgs.org](http://www.studentpirgs.org)

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