

# FRANKLIN CENTER NEWS

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## U.S. Judge Hands Watchdog a Victory Over Virginia Governor's Green-Car Company

BY WILL SWAIM

JULY 24, 2014 | WATCHDOG.ORG

A U.S. judge in Mississippi on Thursday threw out an \$85-million lawsuit in which an electric car company founded by Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe alleged Watchdog.org had libeled the firm.

Judge Michael P. Mills said GreenTech Automotive failed to prove his Mississippi court had jurisdiction over Watchdog.org's parent, Virginia-based Franklin Center, and Watchdog's Virginia reporter, Kenric Ward.

The judge's order noted that Watchdog's "articles were not aimed at Mississippi" or even GreenTech itself.

"The articles were aimed at McAuliffe and his bid to become Governor of Virginia, and McAuliffe sustained the 'brunt of the harm' of the published articles while GreenTech allegedly suffered from the residuary effects of the articles," Mills said.

"The subject and 'intended harm' of the articles at issue in this dispute was McAuliffe — not GreenTech or Mississippi," Mills wrote.

"This lawsuit against our news organization was an act of intimidation from the beginning, and we simply refused to cave," said Jason Stverak, president of Watchdog.org's parent Franklin Center.

While campaigning for Virginia governor,

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McAuliffe claimed he founded GreenTech — evidence, he said, of his entrepreneurial skill and readiness to make Virginia a major player in the car business. But Watchdog investigations revealed that McAuliffe’s plan to build his plant in Virginia with government subsidies had been rebuffed by that state’s economic development officials, some of whom were concerned about GreenTech’s effort to raise cash through an unusual federal visa program. That process, called the EB-5 program, allows foreign nationals to obtain a U.S. visa in exchange for \$500,000 investments in targeted U.S. businesses. GreenTech is one of those businesses.

On April 5, 2013, just days before GreenTech filed its libel suit against Watchdog, McAuliffe quietly disclosed that he had resigned four months before, on December 1, 2012. The retroactive resignation appeared to be an attempt to divorce McAuliffe from the company.

In its lawsuit, GreenTech alleged that two Watchdog articles written by Ward defamed the company and damaged investor relations.

The electric-car company filed its lawsuit in Mississippi, where

GreenTech says it is building an assembly plant.

But both GreenTech, its financial arm Gulf Coast Funds Management, and Franklin Center are headquartered in Northern Virginia.

“GreenTech has not made a *prima facie* showing that Mississippi was the focal point of the articles,” Mills wrote in his decision.

“There’s no denying that defending the First Amendment rights and responsibilities of our reporters has been costly to us in terms of time, people and money,” Stverak said, “but it’s hard to put a price on defending the Constitution.”

Had the case proceeded, likely deponents would have included Gov. McAuliffe and Anthony Rodham, Hillary Clinton’s brother who is president of Gulf Coast Funds Management, the Virginia-based firm that handles Chinese investments in GreenTech.” •

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Will Swaim is editor of Watchdog.org and vice president of journalism at the Franklin Center. Full disclosure: He was deposed in the GreenTech Automotive libel case. Contact him at [wswaim@watchdog.org](mailto:wswaim@watchdog.org).

## THANK YOU!

Dear Friend:

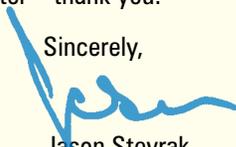
This lawsuit – one of the largest libel suits in American history – was nothing less than an attempt to shut us down for telling the truth.

We were fortunate to have thousands of our supporters across the country respond magnificently, giving us the resources to fight back, to defend ourselves, and most importantly, to keep digging.

Thanks to that show of support, we had the resources and expertise to win this one – to fight back on behalf of all of those whom the system has tried to silence.

We remain deeply grateful to our loyal and generous supporters for standing by us throughout this fifteen-month fight. From everyone at the Franklin Center – thank you.

Sincerely,



Jason Stevrak  
President

# LEARN TO FOLLOW YOUR STATE LEGISLATURE

By Katherine Rodriguez  
Intern, WatchdogWire.com

State legislatures pass hundreds to thousands of bills each year, but do we know what happens in each of those bills passed? Often times, no. That's why tracking the issues that you care about is so important. It may seem like a daunting task at first, but we've compiled a couple tips to make tracking your legislature that much easier.

## 1. Know the process

You can't navigate if you don't have a map. Similarly, you can't follow a bill if you don't know where it's supposed to go next. The first thing you should do when tracking a bill is familiarize yourself with your state's specific legislative process. Which committees have to sign off? Is there a time for citizen testimony? What's the amendment process? You should know the answer to all of these questions so you stay ahead of the curve.

## 2. Find your state's legislative websites

After you've familiarized yourself with the process of how bills are passed, your next stop should be your state's legislative website — a one-stop shop to find out what's going on in the statehouse. A good (and transparent) state legislative website will let you examine the details of different committees, floor meetings, bills and votes.



There are other websites out there that specifically focus on tracking legislation. Websites such as Ballotpedia.org and Billtrack50.com serve as great resources because they link directly to the committees and their members, dates of legislative sessions, and much more.

## 3. Keep an eye on blogs and social media

Follow party leaders, caucuses, and state parties on social media in order to find out information about a particular bill. Sometimes you can find out exclusive information or insider tips about session before the official word is released.

But politicians and party leaders aren't the only ones who have great insight into the statehouse legislative process. State capitol reporters often have a social media presence (especially on Twitter) and are at the state capitol giving minute-by-minute updates online. It's especially helpful to follow them when you can't always be present at the statehouse.

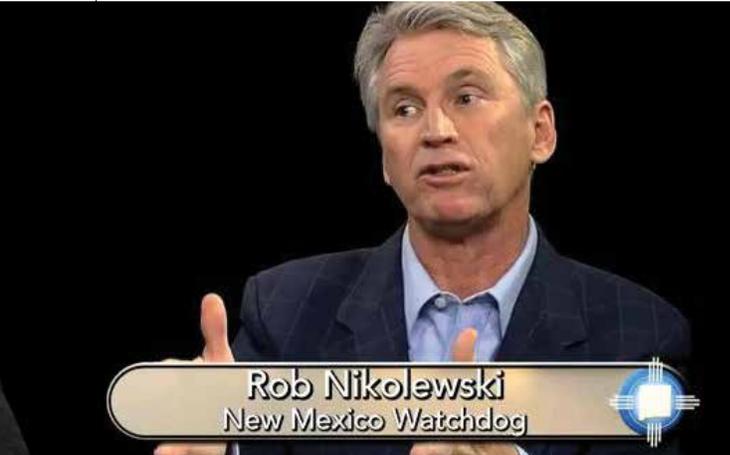
Local political blogs are also really good sources to follow for inside information. If they are already doing the hard work of tracking, you can stay informed and save yourself long hours of research.

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## REPORTER SPOTLIGHT

*"The transition was a bit of a risk but it was something I felt I just had to do." — Rob Nikolewski*



### **ROB NIKOLEWSKI** Aggressive, Independent-Minded Investigative Journalism for New Mexico

Rob Nikolewski has covered New Mexico politics and investigated fraud, waste and abuse in government for the Franklin Center since 2010. In that time, he's produced a data-driven investigation into welfare spending abuse that prompted landmark legislation to curtail it. He's exposed how one New Mexico county used taxpayer funds to send two public employees to a left-wing activist conference, a story that shamed the county into prohibiting similar future stunts. He's brought the Franklin Center's unique brand of aggressive, independent-minded investigative journalism to bear on critical New Mexico issues from school choice to immigration to energy. Along the way, he's forced the state's legacy media to follow his lead, leaving even major papers like the Albuquerque Journal scrambling to catch up.

Rob came to New Mexico Watchdog after 20 years in television as a sports anchor and reporter. He anchored at MSNBC, New York City, Boston, Pittsburgh, Phoenix, Reno and Boise, winning three regional Emmy awards along the way. He holds a master's degree in journalism from Northwestern University, a master's in public administration from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs and a bachelor's degree in journalism from Trinity University in San Antonio.

#### **Why did you become a journalist?**

Since I'm naturally curious about the world, journalism was a good profession for me to choose. I also like to express myself and tell people stories — to inform them about something they may not know. I'm also competitive so I love to be the first person to break a story.

#### **What's the biggest journalistic risk you've ever taken?**

I actually started my career as a TV sports anchor and I've worked in a number of different markets — as small as Boise, Idaho, and as large as New York City. But with each passing year, I became more interested in economics and policy and eventually, I decided to make the switch to covering news and politics. I knew it was time to get out when I would reach for the op-ed page of the morning paper first instead of the sports section. The transition was a bit of a risk but it was something I felt I just had to do.

#### **What's the most important or interesting story you've worked on for New Mexico Watchdog?**



Last year, when it was learned that the IRS was targeting political groups, I got a lead on an entity the agency was investigating in New Mexico called "Marianne Chiffelle's Breakfasts." After I did some digging, I learned the entity was not a restaurant or a business but an 83-year-old great grandmother who served in a World War

II concentration camp in the Pacific who is active in the Albuquerque Tea Party. I tracked her down, interviewed her on camera and posted the story. It was picked up by the national media, then by outlets across the state and put a human face on a national story.

#### **Any advice for citizen journalists?**

This may sound odd coming from someone with a bachelor's degree and a master's in journalism, but one of the great things about being a reporter is that anyone with curiosity and the ability to communicate can do this job. You don't need any special training, just desire. As for the writing aspect, the most important thing to keep in mind is: Why should someone read this story? ●



## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

*"I invest my time, effort, and funds for the world's children." — Mary Beth Weiss*

# Eternally MARY BETH WEISS Vigilant

For Mary Beth Weiss of Chicago, Illinois, it's never been just about her own family.

"I hear people say they do it for their grandchildren, but our and their grandchildren will probably be fine even if we lose the near-term battles. I invest my time, effort, and funds for the world's children."

The battle which Mary Beth is fighting is one for individual liberty, limited government, and free markets. She became active in policy with her husband Dick over twenty years ago, and together they became involved with organizations like the Cato Institute and helped to found the Club for Growth.

It's the continued, dizzying growth in the size and scope of government that spurs Mary Beth to get more and more involved. She's seen firsthand how government has spiraled out of control as she's managed the family's eleven-acre avocado ranch, with paperwork requirements alone growing 300 to 400 percent in the 15 years that they've owned the ranch. "Everything government does is now just a jobs program," she says of the regulations that cost her and other entrepreneurs precious time and resources.

She became involved with the Franklin Center in 2012 and joined the board of directors this spring. She sees education and media bias as the most pressing problems we face, the roots of the many crises our country finds itself in. "The bias is so insidious, even financial publications who should know better carry it on."

She sees the Franklin Center as the essential counterweight to that bias, and has thrown herself into helping us continue to build, taking a keen interest in



messaging and evaluation. She is also working with Vice President of Journalism Will Swaim to build our capacity for Spanish-language reporting, as we work to reach this critical demographic with our unique brand of investigative journalism that promotes free markets, individual liberty, and limited government. With a background in equity research and mutual funds, Mary Beth plays an important role in helping the Franklin Center, still a young organization entering our fifth year of operation, to build better financial governance systems, with an emphasis on honoring donor intent.

Mary Beth's determination to give everyone's children a better start in life also spills over into her work on the advisory board for the Chicago-area Salvation Army. She chairs an annual benefit to fund programs that takes 40,000 children to camp each year, getting them out of the city and into the open air and summer sunshine.

For her personal mantra of inspiration, Mary Beth takes a quotation attributed to Thomas Jefferson: "Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom." Mary Beth's work truly exemplifies that sentiment, and the Franklin Center is proud to have her as a board member and supporter. ●



## FEATURE

# MEET THE FRANKLIN CENTER'S INAUGURAL CLASS OF JOURNALISM INTERNS

Written by Elizabeth Green,  
Development Intern



### ELENA NOVAK

Elena graduated from Florida State University in May with a degree in creative writing and is excited to begin her career in journalism at the *Raleigh News & Observer* in North Carolina. Investigative journalism appealed to her after interning with the Village Square, a nonprofit that encourages civil discourse. She loves how journalism requires the reporter to mentally inhabit both sides of an issue, understanding the opposition and wrestling with the contradictions. Elena appreciates the Franklin Center's pursuit of journalistic integrity. This summer, she's enjoyed getting involved in the Raleigh community and learning how the city ticks in order to better report about local issues. In her time off, Elena enjoys taking part in Raleigh's summer concert scene.



### CELINA DURGIN

Celina studies politics, philosophy, and economics at King's College in New York City. She's been interested in reporting since attending journalism camp at the age of fourteen and is excited to develop the new skills involved with writing for *National Review* this summer. She enjoys the hard fact-finding involved in writing thorough, careful stories. Celina hopes to bring an analytical perspective and an ability to piece together facts to get to the heart of tricky issues. She loves that journalism puts the reporter directly in contact with real issues to affect positive change. On her free days in New York City this summer, she can be found in Central Park reading one of her favorite authors: George Orwell, Aristotle, or C.S. Lewis.



### **ERIN MUNDAHL**

Erin graduated from Hillsdale College with a degree in both English and French. This summer Erin is working at Red Alert Politics, assisting in their mission to translate news content into pithy and amusing pieces, understandable and approachable to citizens. Although she did not plan in college on going into a career in journalism, she's excited to learn more about the craft. As a lifelong news junkie, she looks forward to being on the other end of the news, learning how to convey politics to diverse audiences. Erin loves reading everything and enjoys producing approachable content on blogs or YouTube. This summer, she's enjoyed taking part in the cultural experiences that Washington, D.C. has to offer.



### **CLARE MYERS**

Clare has traveled from the University of Dallas, where she is studying history, journalism, and Spanish, to her summer internship at the *News & Observer* in Raleigh, North Carolina. She is excited to be pursuing fair and impartial journalism with the Franklin Center. Clare enjoyed growing her skills as a writer and learning how to report events in a community rather than on a college campus. She loves that journalism gives the reporter a personal connection to the people she meets, and she could not wait to get to know the people of Raleigh and tell their stories. Because stories bring people together, Clare believes the media is responsible to tell those stories accurately. During her summer in Raleigh, she's most enjoyed attending her first pig roast.



### **JOSH EVANS**

Josh studies political science at Grove City College, and he grew to love reporting in high school after taking a journalism elective on a whim. He wrote for his student paper in college, and this summer he works for the Daily Caller in Washington, D.C. Josh's biggest journalism interest is in tech reporting, and he hopes to bring his ability to learn quickly to the ever-changing world of technology. Through his internship, he hopes to develop the ability to work in a less-supervised environment, growing in his ability to pitch stories, especially in a big city and not a small college campus. After a long career of journalism, Josh hopes to become an advisor to a high school newspaper and teach students about investigative journalism. This summer, he's enjoyed walking on the National Mall and spending time in his favorite bookshop in DuPont Circle.

**MORE ▶**



### SHALVA GINSPARG

Shalva is working with Red Alert Politics in Washington, D.C. this summer. She does a lot of reading and writing in order to produce pitched and assigned website content for Red Alert. She will be a senior at Stern College for Women in Manhattan, where she studies English Literature and Judaic Studies. Shalva serves as editor for her school newspaper, and she can't remember a time in the past year when she hasn't been working on a story. She hopes to hone her journalism skills and believes that Franklin's mission to empower citizens and make government transparent should be the mission of every journalist. She's very interested in the issues she's reporting on and feels that she can bring a well-informed perspective to journalism. She already sees improvement in her adoption of social media tools into her journalism style. During her summer in D.C., she's enjoyed exploring the Smithsonian museums and re-reading her favorite author Edith Wharton.



### KAITLAN COLLINS

Kaitlan, a recent graduate of the University of Alabama, interns at the Daily Caller in Washington, D.C. She started out studying chemistry and transitioned to journalism and political science due to her love of reading and writing. She loves that the journalism internship application for Franklin required discussions on free markets, inspirational books, and other stimulating topics. Kaitlan loves to take potentially dull topics and turn them into appealing stories. She looks forward to producing stories in the real world, as opposed to a college campus, and is excited about improving the quality of her work. Kaitlan hopes to remain in D.C. and do journalism after her internship ends.



### KATHERINE TOBAR

Katherine joins our team of interns from Quito, Ecuador, where she is earning a joint degree in Media & Writing Communication and Multimedia Journalism from Juniata College and Universidad San Francisco de Quito. Through the Franklin Center Internship, she works at Illinois Policy Institute in their journalism division. She loves political journalism and has greatly enjoyed learning more about American politics. Kate appreciates the objectivity emphasized by the Franklin Center journalism model and has enjoyed the online course component of the internship program. She hopes to travel for a while but eventually return to Ecuador, bringing her skills of investigation and persistence to political journalism there. While interning this summer, she has also enjoyed living in Chicago and getting to ride a ferry boat on Lake Michigan. ●



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE STATES

### NATIONAL

In a story that swiftly went viral, **Kenric Ward uncovered a stunning 6.9 million duplicate voters registered across 28 states.** His story exposes special-interest groups who could use the duplicates to their own advantage. His story was picked up by newspapers from Virginia to Colorado, and it has led to calls in many states for voter rolls to be cleaned up before Election Day. He's also been contacted by other reporters from all across the country looking to follow his lead on this story.

### FLORIDA

In the Sunshine State, Marianela Toledo dug into a \$7 million reward that Florida received from the federal government for “efficient” handling of food stamp dollars and efforts to save taxpayer money. **She discovered that records show that erroneous food stamp dollars given out by the state Department of Children and Families misspent more than \$47 million in taxpayer dollars.** Both Fox News and local Florida radio carried Marianela's story.

### NEBRASKA

As part of the swelling border crisis in recent weeks, **the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services placed 200 undocumented children in undisclosed locations in Nebraska,** but conveniently neglected to notify state officials. **Nebraska Watchdog's Deena Winter was the first to dig up this story** — which

turned out to be news even to Gov. Dave Heineman. The governor was outraged when he heard how the federal government had failed to notify him — and Deena broke the story just in time for that weekend's National Governor's Association meeting, where Gov. Heineman personally confronted Vice President Joe Biden over Deena's story. The governor has partnered with Nebraska's congressional delegation to demand more information from the federal government, insisting on increased transparency. **Legacy media powerhouses like *The Hill*, *Politico*, and MSNBC, as well as *The Wall Street Journal* have since followed up on our original work.**

### NEW JERSEY

Does Governor Chris Christie fly above travel regulations? He thinks so. New Jersey's Mark Lagerkvist, two-time recipient of the New York Press Club award for political coverage, reports that Gov. Christie has chosen not to keep travel records. Picked up by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Lagerkvist's report shows that Christie has based his actions on a *memo* from 1979, when a former budget director waived travel state travel regulations for the governor at that time. **New Jersey Watchdog has filed suit against Christie for his non-disclosure of travel records.**

### NEW MEXICO

Uber and Lyft, a pair of innovative ride-sharing

companies with fans across the nation, have recently been the target of protectionist attempts to shut them down — attempts led by taxicab and other public transportation unions keen to avoid competition. New Mexico is the scene of one such attempt, where regulators under the thumb of union interests have sought to deny Uber and Lyft the right to operate. **Rob Nikolewski of New Mexico Watchdog has been covering these companies' fight, and thanks to his work, the regulatory commission has relented** and said they will consider granting operating status to Uber and Lyft, fostering free enterprise and entrepreneurship in New Mexico.

### TEXAS

**We're fortunate to welcome William Murchison to the Texas Watchdog Bureau.**

William is a nationally syndicated political columnist with work appearing in *The Wall Street Journal*, *National Review*, *The Weekly Standard*, and *First Things: The Journal of Religion and Public Life*, among others. Before joining the Franklin Center, he served as associate editor of the *Dallas Morning News*. William has written several books and is the former Radford Distinguished Professor of Journalism at Baylor University.

### VERMONT

We're also pleased to welcome Bruce Parker to our team. Bruce, who will

be reporting for Vermont Watchdog, is an investigative reporter and business writer specializing in state news and public policy. **His work has appeared in the *Daily Caller*, *Human Events*, and *Fox News*,** among others. Bruce is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati.

Among his early stories for Vermont Watchdog, Bruce has found that dire predictions about the Affordable Care Act's effects on small business and healthcare are already coming true in the Green Mountain State, as he's profiled both small businesses and doctors who have found themselves driven out of operation by the law's crippling cost and regulatory burdens.

### WISCONSIN

In yet another chapter in this year's struggle against government surveillance of private citizens, **Adam Tobias discovered that the Chippewa Falls police department is pushing for surveillance cameras in all bars.** His stories pointed out that installing the costly camera systems is a heavy financial burden on small business owners, and the ordinance would force bars to install cameras or close. Officers would be allowed to demand records without a warrant. Investigative journalist Bob Sullivan of NBC News picked up Adam's piece, saying: “Finally, a story that might get folks attention about the surveillance problem.” ●



## THE REST OF THE STORY

# EPA REGULATIONS LIKELY TO KILL 68-YEAR-OLD LOUISIANA PEACH ORCHARD



By Chris Butler | Watchdog.org

RUSTON, La. — The peach orchards at Mitcham Farms, near the north Louisiana city of Ruston, have survived winter freezes, droughts and dangerous hail storms, but they evidently will not survive the Environmental Protection Agency and its regulations.

The family-owned business, established in 1946 and featured in tourism magazines, is Louisiana's largest peach orchard, according to its website, but owner Joe Mitcham expects he'll close up shop in only a few years.

The federal government's banning of a chemical in 2005 known as methyl bromide, used to treat diseased peach trees, has really given him no choice, as most of his trees won't survive without it.

Many of Mitcham's trees have already died.

The EPA claims using this chemical threatens the earth's ozone layer.

Mitcham told Watchdog the fed-

eral regulations have also forced him to downsize his business from 60 employees to 20.

"Well, with more acreage to use we would be prospering," Mitcham said. "We had the potential to be a million dollar business, but definitely not now."

Mitcham said he now has difficulty covering business expenses. While describing himself as upset and frustrated by the situation, Mitcham, who inherited the business from his father, is heading into retirement.

Mitcham's children are not interested in taking on the family business, but even if they were, the land, with the federal regulations in place, can no longer grow peaches or even other types of fruit, he said.

Selling the business to another potential owner is also not an option, for obvious reasons, nor is buying land elsewhere, given the area's high property values, Mitcham said.

EPA spokeswoman Enesta Jones told Watchdog on Wednesday that

many of the agency's experts on the subject of methyl bromide are "out of the office this week."

The peach orchards remain a huge tourism draw, Mitcham said.

"This will have an impact with the loss of jobs and the loss of income of selling the fruit here because we have so many customers coming from out of state, especially Texas," Mitcham said. "Half the vehicles I saw coming through here on July 4 were Texas license plates. The loss of that economy coming through Ruston will be pretty major."

Ruston resident Laura Jones is among those upset about the situation.

Jones told Watchdog she went to the farm often growing up, and she now takes her children there.

"The reason more people aren't in arms over the farm closing is because every time it's been talked about before was because it seemed to be far away in the future, and not imminent," Jones said.

“It’s such a symbol of our area, and it’s such a part of our history and it’s such a shame that it would go away. I don’t know what that would mean for our Peach Festival.”

Jones refers to Ruston’s annual Peach Festival, a big tourism draw held every summer for the past 50 years, with at least a little influence from the Mitcham family.

This year’s festival had a \$5 million impact on the city of about 22,000 people, said Ruston Lincoln Chamber of Commerce President Judy Copeland.

Copeland told Watchdog some people call her agency confused about whether the festival will continue.

Mitcham, though, doesn’t generally bring his own peaches to the festival as he does plenty of business at his farm with the peaches he is still able to grow. The festival will, of course, continue, Copeland said.

“Still, though, we’re losing a big part of our community,” Copeland said. “It’s like losing a family member.”

Mitcham told Watchdog he hasn’t pursued any legal remedies.

Agricultural experts are currently pondering the benefits of an alternative to methyl bromide, but, if approved, no one will sell it until long after Mitcham’s farm is gone, he said. ●

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Chris Butler is the Tennessee bureau reporter for the Franklin Center’s Watchdog.org.



## Joe and the Giant Peach Story

Joe Mitcham’s hands were tied. He couldn’t do anything to save his peach orchard: Couldn’t hire more workers or expand his acreage, he couldn’t sell the property, couldn’t contribute to the peach tourism market, and he certainly couldn’t deal with the fungus destroying his 68-year-old peach orchard. The EPA’s regulations banning the chemical that treats the fungus had almost forced Mitcham out of business. That was before Watchdog’s Chris Butler found out what was happening and drove out to Ruston, Louisiana to get the story.

His story went viral, with thousands of readers on Watchdog’s web pages and other media picking up Chris’s original story. Within a few days, we had good news for Joe Mitcham, his employees, and the people of Ruston: an EPA administrator made a personal telephone call to explore alternatives for saving Mitcham’s orchards. With your support, Chris will continue to keep tabs on the EPA to make sure they keep their promises. Thank you for serving as the backbone to our mission to protect people from government overreach and abuse.



HOW TO FOLLOW  
YOUR LEGISLATURE FROM PAGE 3

### 4. Find out when a bill is coming up for hearing or for testimony

The best time to start tracking a bill is while it is still in committee. If you wait until it goes before the full legislative body for a vote, it is often too late.

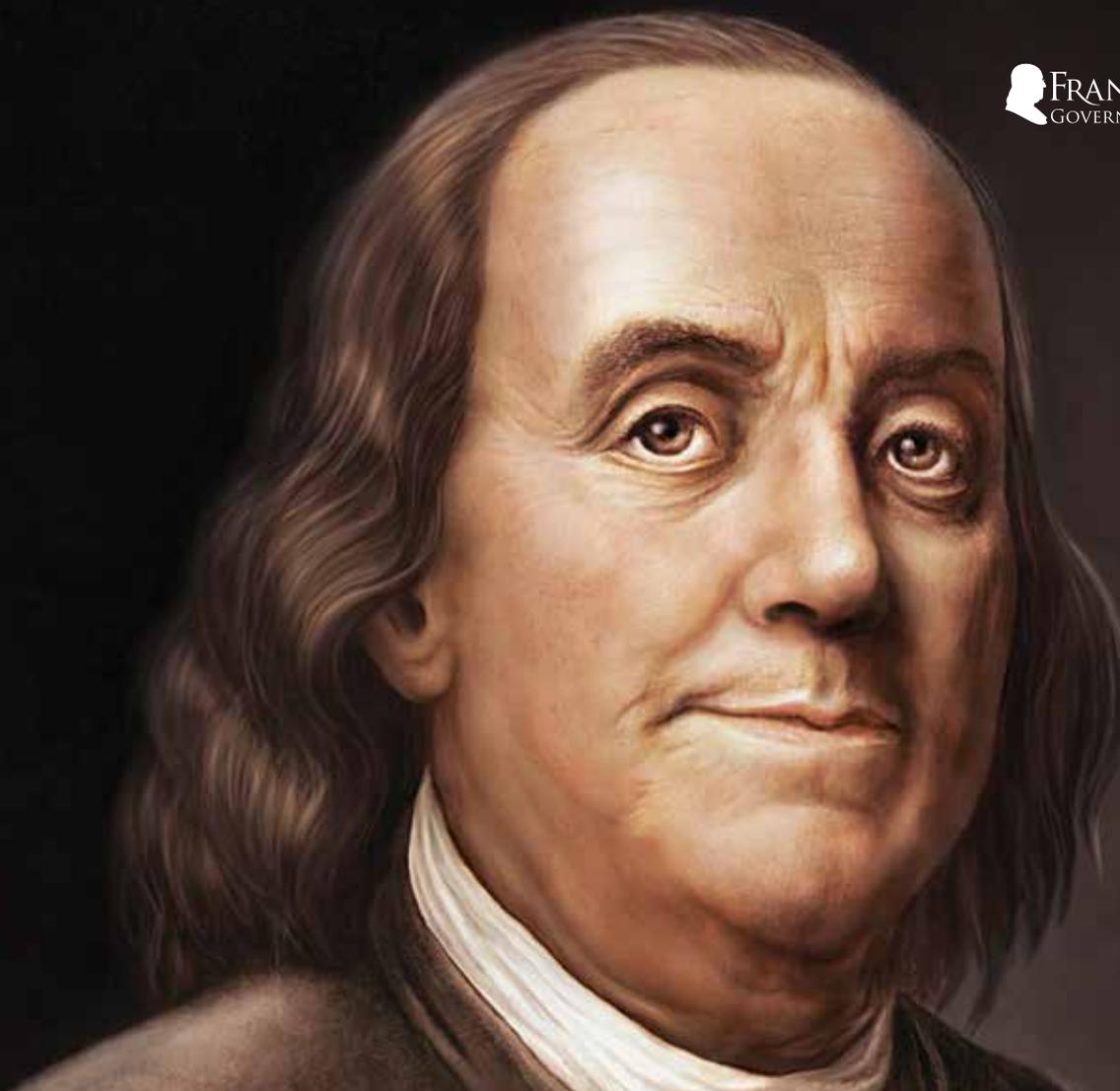
Here are three ways to stay on top of committee hearings and testimonies to avoid this problem:

**Email and/or call the committee legislator’s offices** — Ask them to keep you informed on an issue or particular bill.

**Set up a Google alert for the key committees/issues you are interested in** — A news outlet may obtain information through an open records request that sheds light on an upcoming bill or addresses a new angle you hadn’t considered.

**Sign up for committee alerts through the overall legislature if available** — Sometimes you can request an email to let you know the upcoming agendas which may include bills introduced, discussion, substitute language etc.

Most importantly, keep up to date by watching legislative sessions and committee hearings either in person or through televised sessions. Many states have public televised programs and some have it online. ●



## WE'RE ON A MISSION FROM BEN

**E**stablished in early 2009, the Franklin Center for Government and Public Integrity supports an in-house team of state-based reporters and acts as a capacity-building service provider for organizations that sponsor investigative journalists. Working against a growing tide of mediocrity and bias in the media, the Franklin Center is committed to breaking the monopoly of information in the states. We believe that a free flow of information is essential to maintaining our free republic.

With transparency, accountability, and fiscal responsibility as our watchwords, the Franklin Center identifies, trains, and supports investigative journalists working to detect and expose corruption and incompetence in government at the state and local levels. Our competitive advantage lies in our local focus; commitment to using highly trained and professional journalists; strategic approach to using and distributing resources; and focus on tangible results.

**Find out more at [FranklinCenterHQ.org/about](http://FranklinCenterHQ.org/about)**