

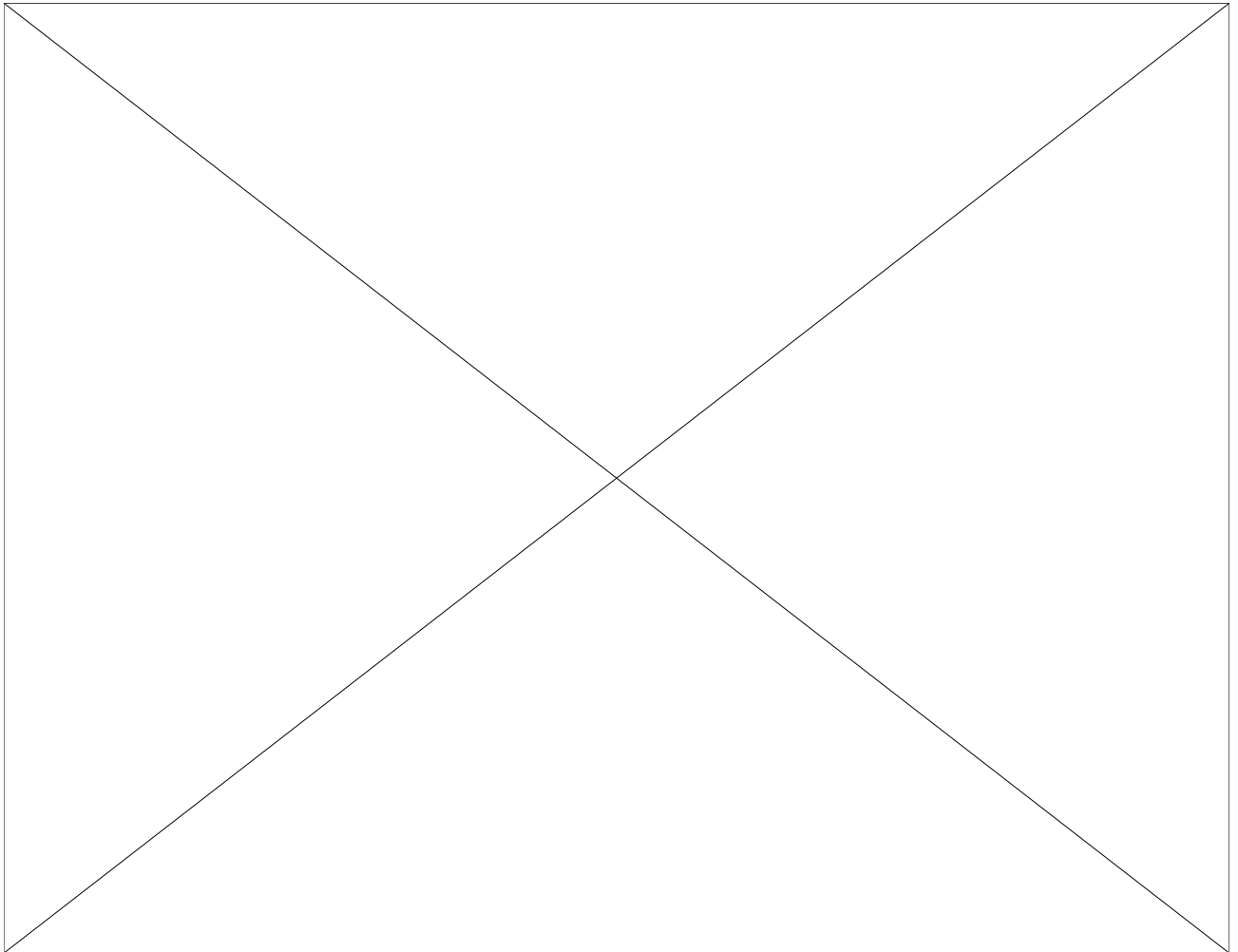
State Policy Network has strong connections to conservative establishment

By [Laurie Bennett](#)

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Organize regionally, rather than nationally, and you sometimes can build a massive power base before the opposition notices.

This was the path of the conservative State Policy Network, which now has member organizations in every state.



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Many of them, writes Andy Kroll in [Mother Jones](#), are working against public unions.

In Wisconsin, two member institutes supported Gov. Scott Walker's efforts to end collective bargaining. Another member organization in Michigan, the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, has filed Freedom of Information Act requests with public universities, seeking email messages concerning the Wisconsin labor controversy.

In Nevada, a member institute has opposed efforts to pass collective bargaining. And in California, another member has issued a series of reports criticizing the impact of teachers unions on the quality of public education.

According to its [web site](#), the State Policy Network was founded by Tom Roe in 1992, at the urging of Ronald Reagan. Its aim is to build and equip a 50-state network of "free-market think tanks" that will "educate the general public and policy makers in every state to embrace market-friendly policies that maximize liberty and opportunity."

Tracie Sharp, president of the State Policy Network, told *Mother Jones* that member agencies operate independently. Many dispute that, saying a broader agenda is clearly being implemented across the board.

The Muckety map above shows many interconnections among network directors, members and associate members, as well as strong links to better-known conservative organizations, such as the Cato Institute and the Heritage Foundation.