



PRESS RELEASE
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Hannah Halbert named new Policy Matters director

Policy Matters Ohio has named Hannah Halbert its new executive director.

Halbert joined Policy Matters in 2010 as a policy liaison. She had previously spent nearly four years with the Equal Justice Foundation and the Legal Aid Society of Columbus where she protected homeowners from foreclosures during the housing crisis. Halbert was named project director in 2018, overseeing work and wages research. Under her leadership, Policy Matters articulated a clear vision for working people with [“A New Way Forward: 10 Ways to Support Ohio’s Working People.”](#) Halbert has documented the growing prevalence of low-wage jobs in [Ohio](#) and promoted smart policies to ensure all Ohioans share in the economic growth their work produces. Her research and advocacy prevented Ohio workers from losing [crucial unemployment compensation benefits](#) and led to increased state support [to protect working people](#) from having their wages stolen. Halbert also serves on the board of the Central Ohio Worker Center and the Ohio Association of Nonprofit Organizations.

Halbert takes the helm following the departure of executive director Amy Hanauer, who founded Policy Matters in 2000. “Hannah is exactly who Policy Matters needs at this moment,” Hanauer said. “Her strategic sense, her vision for social justice, and her deep commitment to accurate research will move the organization forward. I am ecstatic at the board’s decision and eager to watch in admiration at the new things this brilliant team achieves.”

Halbert has a master’s in nonprofit management, a law degree from Hamline University and a bachelor’s degree from Transylvania University. Her life experiences shape her dedication to Policy Matters’ mission of building an Ohio where everyone thrives. She grew up in rural Kentucky, raised by her mother and stepdad, who worked as coal miner.

“I am testimony to the life-changing importance of the work Policy Matters Ohio does every day,” Halbert said. “Social Security dependent benefits gave my mom and me tremendous security after losing my dad in a workplace shooting. My public-school teachers helped me see beyond my holler. Even though my stepdad never carried a union card, the United Mine Workers raised standards across the coalfields, so my stepdad’s employer had to pay him a good wage and keep the workplace safe enough for him to make it home at the end of the day. I want every child, regardless of where they are born or the color of their skin, to build the life of their dreams. This cannot happen without organizations like Policy Matters Ohio.”