

The Center Square

# Delivering Impact: Enterprise Investigations

IMPACT REPORT – JULY 2025

The Center Square is creating an Enterprise and Investigative Unit—launching with a groundbreaking three-part investigative series on Pennsylvania’s higher education funding. Working in a unique partnership with data specialist Jennica Pounds—known by her X handle as the DataRepublican—The Center Square newsroom utilized the information unearthed through advanced AI technology, then condensed that information into highly consumable articles and videos.

## Unprecedented Access and Analysis

Using enhanced AI systems to mine complex federal spending data, The Center Square revealed how Penn State received more than \$263 million, the University of Pittsburgh collected over \$79 million, and the University of Pennsylvania secured \$245 million in federal grants between 2020 and 2025—all while operating expenses soared and enrollment declined.

The series required extraordinary coordination between our Chief Content Officer Dan McCaleb, Pennsylvania editor Christen Smith, and Pennsylvania statehouse reporter Christina Lengyel, who dedicated 100 focused hours to verify data, created source pathways, and delivered comprehensive reporting that other outlets wouldn’t touch.

## Massive Distribution and Impact

The three-part series achieved remarkable reach locally and nationally, including MSN-News, MSN-Money, AOL, and NewsBreak. Collectively, these stories generated an advertising value equivalent (AVE) of **\$1.37 million**, showing how investigative reporting transforms public awareness.

Social media amplification proved equally powerful, with our content generating **over 669,000 total views across X.com**.



**DataRepublican (small r)** ✓

@DataRepublican

University waste has been one of my top requests from readers to investigate.

This is the third and final article in [@thecentersquare](#) series investigating waste in universities. This was my first time collaborating with a published outlet – a lot of fun.

Alex Shieh criticized Brown University, one of the nation's eight Ivy League institutions, for raising tuition to more than \$90,000 per year while being on track to run a **\$46 million deficit**.

"Where's all the money going?" Shieh said before a congressional committee on June 4. "I'll tell you where it's going: it's going to an empire of administrative bloat and bureaucracy."

9:38 AM · Jun 29, 2025 · **124.9K** Views

**71** Retweets **1.2K** Quotes **3.9K** Likes **239** Bookmarks



## Exposing Financial Disparities Others Won't

Replicating this investigative work, The Center Square conducted a deep dive into tax increases across Washington state. After the state legislature passed and Gov. Bob Ferguson signed into law the largest tax increases in state history this spring, The Center Square examined 10 years of state spending data, finding the state budget increased by more than 116% over that time, far outpacing inflation and population growth. Over the course of several weeks The Center Square published a series focused on the departments that saw the most dramatic spending hikes.

The first articles drove **\$1.42 million in AVE**, made early waves on social media, and earned local media interviews with The Lars Larson Show and The Ari Hoffman Show.



Fiscal fallout: Washington state government spending surges 116% since 2015

**44K+ Views**



Washington State's Budget Crisis: Spending, Taxes, and a Looming Deficit EXPLAINED

**36.7K+ Views**



Fiscal Fallout: WA allocates \$150 million for Medicaid-like healthcare to illegal aliens

**105.3K+ Views**

## Delivering Impact

Investigative reporting can take months, but creates needed accountability pressures. On July 9, The Center Square published 'Newsom unveils \$101M to build Palisades low-income housing,' driving **66,300 views on X.com and earning 233 republications**. The piece then went viral with influencers driving 5.5 million views on X.com. This reach caught the attention of California Gov. Gavin Newsom, who attempted to fact-check The Center Square, but fell short.

Publishing a follow-up piece, 'CA bill to let LA buy fire-destroyed lots for low-income housing,' The Center Square drove an additional **14,400 views when publishing the article to X.com**.

By July 16 the Los Angeles Resilient Rebuilding Authority bill was on hold, with social posts crediting our reporting for the pushback.

## Continuing the Path Forward

These recent articles show the growth you are making possible at The Center Square with the newly launching Enterprise and Investigative Unit. Together, you and I will expose institutional failures that impact taxpayers through strategic partnerships with data specialists and fearless, data-driven accountability reporting. Thank you for delivering the comprehensive analysis that drives meaningful policy discussions nationwide.

