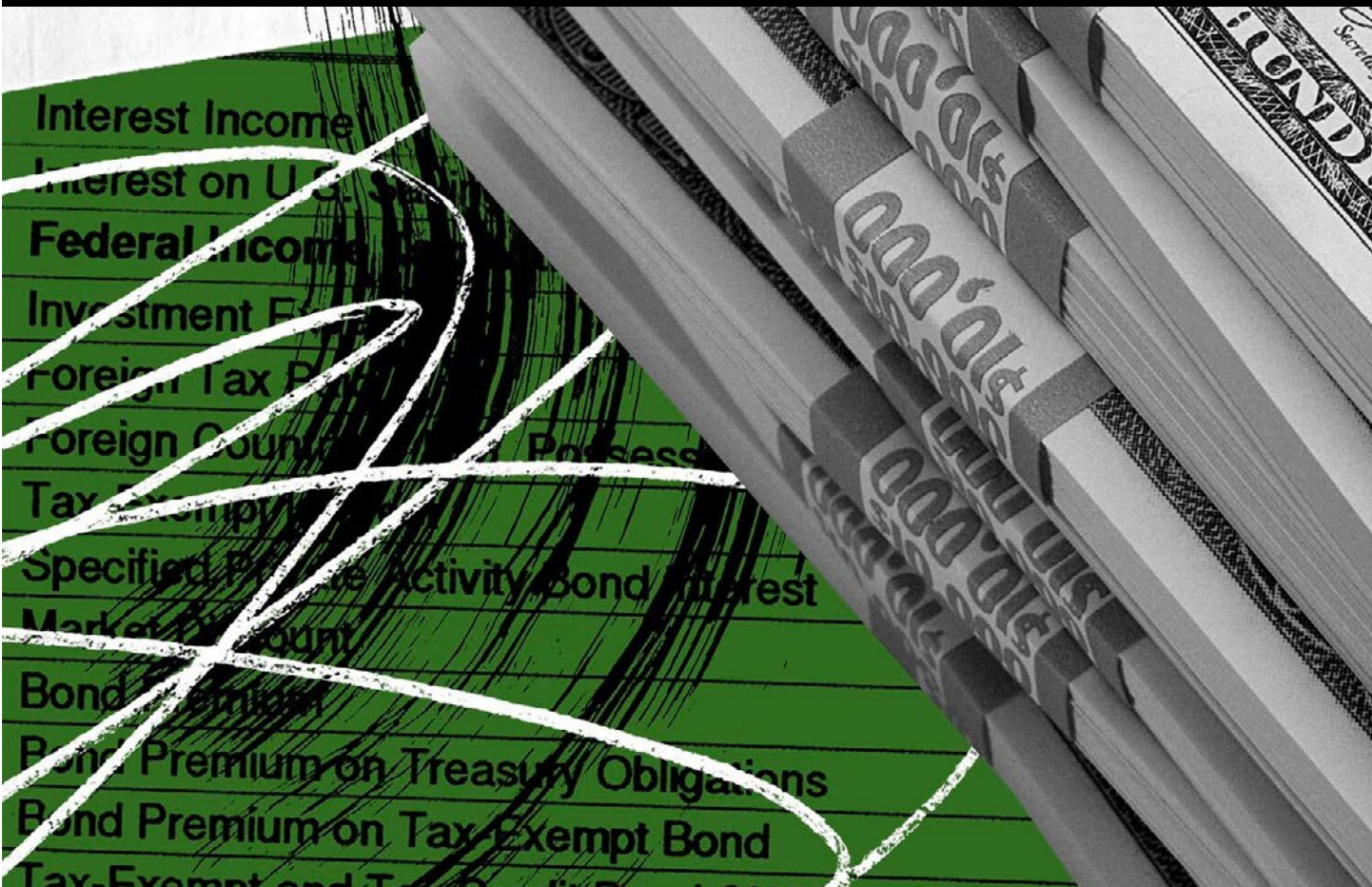




# PROPUBLICA

REPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS, MAY-AUGUST 2021

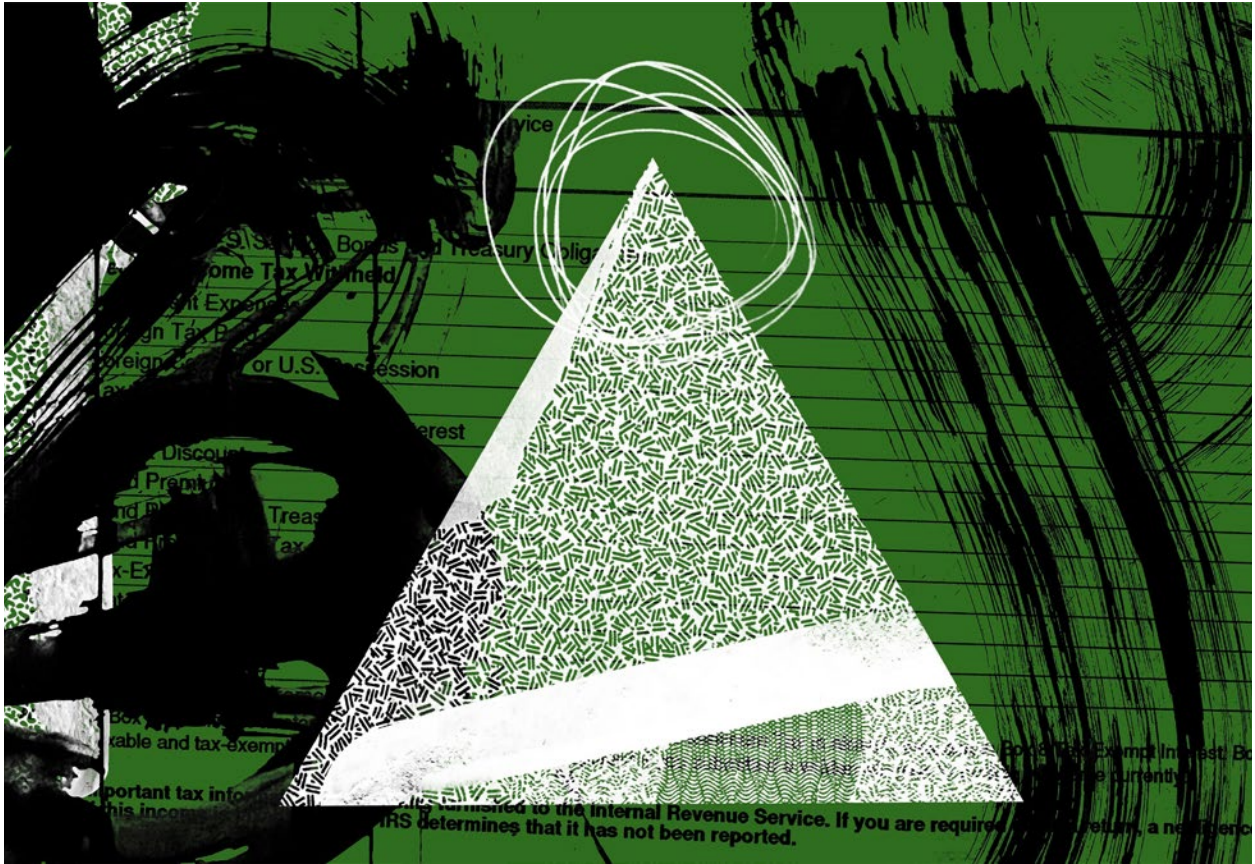


# The Secret Tax Files — and What They Tell Us

In June, ProPublica published the first articles in our groundbreaking series, “The Secret IRS Files,” an analysis of American wealth and inequality that reveals in startling detail precisely how the richest Americans routinely — and usually perfectly legally — sidestep the U.S. tax system. Our analysis, based on a vast trove of never-before-seen IRS data, went beyond confirming that our nation’s wealthiest citizens do not pay their fair share of taxes to show that many effectively live outside the income tax system altogether. In some years, our reporting showed, some of America’s most powerful billionaires paid literally zero in income taxes.

Subsequent stories in the series, which continues, have shown in detail how the ultrawealthy have turned tax breaks designed for the middle class to their own enormous advantage, how favored industries like sports team ownership accentuate inequality and how, through political influence, the richest people shape our tax laws to their further advantage. For the first time, such stories quantify precisely how much is being gained from such maneuvers — at a cost of higher deficits and less money for pressing societal needs.

**Cover:** *Lisa Larson-Walker/ProPublica*



*Our first blockbuster investigation in “The Secret IRS Files” revealed how the top 25 richest Americans routinely and legally sidestep taxes. (Lisa Larson-Walker/ProPublica)*

## How We Got Here

“The Secret IRS Files” is the culmination of nearly a decade of ProPublica reporting on American taxation and tax enforcement (or lack thereof).

Our source, whose identity we do not know, told us ProPublica was entrusted with this vast trove of IRS data because of an extensive series of earlier stories called “Gutting the IRS,” which revealed a multiyear campaign to slash the IRS budget, leaving the agency understaffed and its meager enforcement work focused on the poor, which proved a boon for tax cheats, the rich and big corporations.

Reporting “The Secret IRS Files” presented challenges in logistics, security and data analysis. Our team meticulously verified the IRS data, organized it into a workable database from which our reporters

could extrapolate key findings and set up rigid security and communication protocols to protect it.

At ProPublica, we believe in the power of facts. By providing concrete evidence of just how the ultra-wealthy avoid taxes, our reporting immediately helped energize and shape the debate over changes in federal tax policy.

The series is spurring leading lawmakers, including the chairs of the key committees in both houses of Congress, to call for tax reforms. Beyond this, ProPublica’s reporting has reignited conversations about inequality and inspired dozens of further reports and commentary across the country and the full spectrum of views.

## In Other News

The devotion of a large team to scrutiny of the American tax system did not stop our newsroom from continuing to pursue other important issues during the middle months of 2021.

ProPublica and a coalition of 15 other newsrooms sued for access to the video exhibits shown in the criminal cases against the Jan. 6 insurrectionists at the Capitol; we posted the videos in an online companion to the collection of Parler videos we had published earlier in the year. We also partnered with The New York Times to reveal China's use of propaganda videos to counter reports of the persecution of Uyghurs.

ProPublica remains deeply committed to local news, and our local initiatives have continued their dramatic growth in 2021. In Florida, Local Reporting Network partner the Miami Herald investigated Florida's Birth-Related Neurological Injury Compensation

Association, a program designed to help parents of brain-damaged newborns that has instead denied or delayed help for struggling families — sometimes spending tens of thousands more in legal fees fighting requests for benefits than it would cost to help parents. Our reporting resulted in the most far-reaching reform in the program's history being signed into law by Gov. Ron DeSantis. Another Florida Local Reporting Network partner, The Palm Beach Post, published new findings on how burning cane sugar harms air quality in Florida's heartland, disproportionately affecting impoverished residents of color while wealthier, whiter cities remain largely smoke-free.

As we head into the last period of the year, there is much to do, and many more long-term projects nearing fruition. We look forward to sharing all of it with the readers who make our work possible.

## Welcoming Robin Sparkman

This month, Robin Sparkman joins ProPublica as our president, and co-CEO with Editor-in-Chief Stephen Engelberg. She succeeds Richard Tofel, who retired after leading the business operations of ProPublica from our inception.

Prior to ProPublica, Sparkman was the CEO of nonprofit media organization StoryCorps, where she more than doubled the organization's annual revenues to \$20 million and added \$6.5 million to its reserves.

Previously, she spent more than two decades as a reporter and editor. She served as editor-in-chief of the American Lawyer from 2010-2014, and earlier as executive editor, as well as deputy editorial director, of parent company American

Lawyer Media. Previous work included stints at MSNBC.com and Newsweek.

Sparkman is a graduate of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and Wellesley College, where she is a member of the Business Leadership Council. She holds a certificate in nonprofit management from Harvard Business School and serves on the executive committee of the board of Union Settlement of East Harlem.

Tofel, who joined ProPublica as its founding general manager and became president in January 2013, helped create a strong foundation for ProPublica's long-term sustainability. ProPublica's president has responsibility for all non-journalism operations,



*Claudio Papapietro for ProPublica*

including communications, legal, development, finance and budgeting and human resources. Over the last eight years, ProPublica's annual budget has more than tripled, and our reserve fund now includes a full year of funding.

# Impact

The most important test of ProPublica is whether our work is having impact. We measure impact not in terms of audience size or honors, but in real-world change. Our journalism in the middle period of 2021 spurred such change in a number of important areas.

## **Far-Reaching Reforms in Florida Program for Injured Newborns**

In April, our Local Reporting Network partner Miami Herald reported on Florida's Birth-Related Neurological Injury Compensation Association (NICA), a program designed to reduce doctors' malpractice bills that strips parents of brain-damaged newborns of their right to sue. Instead, the program offers a one-time payment and promises to cover medical expenses. Yet NICA has [frequently denied or delayed help for struggling families](#) — sometimes spending tens of thousands more in legal fees fighting requests for benefits than it would have cost to help parents who depend on the program to care for their children. Hours after the initial story was published, the [Florida's chief financial officer initiated an audit of the program that, months later, would validate many of our findings](#). By the end of April, [Florida lawmakers passed sweeping legislation to increase benefits and protections for families of brain-damaged babies, including mental health services, parental representation on the program's board of directors and retroactive compensation of \\$150,000](#). The following day, the executive director of NICA announced a host of [additional reforms that went beyond those mandated by lawmakers](#). In June, [Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed the new legislation](#), approving the most far-reaching reform in the program's history.



*Dozens of Missouri homeowners who used state loans to fix up their home ended up trapped in debt and could soon see their homes sold at auction. (Dawline-Jane Oni-Eseleh for ProPublica)*

## **Missouri Lawmakers Reform Clean Energy Loan Program**

In April, ProPublica published an investigation into a [home-loan program in Missouri called Property Assessed Clean Energy, or PACE](#), that lets borrowers finance energy-efficient home improvements, like solar panels and heating systems, by repaying their loans through their annual property tax bills. We reported that the program put dozens of borrowers, many in Black neighborhoods, at risk of losing their homes due to the program's lack of effective over-

sight, which allowed private companies to charge high interest rates. Soon after, lawmakers in Missouri began exploring ways to rein in the state’s “clean energy” loan program and, in June, Gov. Mike Parson signed into law a measure to add consumer protections and oversight to programs that make such loans in the state.

### **Illinois Lawmakers Ban Use of Restraints and Seclusion in Public Schools**

In Nov. 2019, ProPublica Illinois partnered with the Chicago Tribune on an investigation into [Illinois public schools’ misuse of “isolated timeout” rooms](#), wherein children as young as five were sent to seclusion rooms alone, sometimes for hours on end. Our reporting prompted lawmakers to call for a [national ban on the use of student seclusion rooms and physical restraints](#), and the Illinois State Board of Education to take emergency action when they unanimously voted to [permanently prohibit the use of locked seclusion rooms](#) and stop schools from using prone restraint. However, in May, ProPublica reported that Illinois schools nevertheless continued to [use restraints and seclusion more than 15,000 times during the 2020/2021 school year](#), even as most schools were closed due to the pandemic. Following our report, Illinois lawmakers passed [legislation that requires schools to make a plan to reduce and eventually eliminate the use of restraints and seclusion over the next three years](#). In August, Gov. J. B. Pritzker signed the bill. In addition, efforts to ban seclusion and limit the use of restraints nationally moved forward in May when House and Senate Democrats jointly introduced the Keeping All Students Safe Act.

### **Reporting Helps Solve a 1983 Murder in Baltimore**

In May, ProPublica published a [three-part tale](#) about one doctor’s pioneering effort to create what was effectively one of the first DNA databases and how, decades later, it’s being used by Baltimore police to solve cold cases and reshaping conventional wisdom about rapists. In the course of her reporting, Catherine Rentz helped solve one of these cold cases when she tipped Baltimore police off to a possible connection between serial rapist Alphonso Hill and the 1983 murder of Alicia Ann Carter, a 21-year-old college student, after noticing Carter’s case file fit a pattern of offenses linked to Hill’s modus operandi. Rentz asked Baltimore police if they had considered Hill as a sus-

pect and if there was still DNA from Carter’s case that could be tested. In June, the Baltimore County Police Department said that [Hill had confessed to raping and murdering Carter](#), as well as committing other crimes and rapes, after detectives informed him they had DNA evidence and offered him immunity from prosecution in exchange for his confession.

### **Lawmakers Seek To Rein In Mega IRAs**

In June, after ProPublica published our investigation that detailed how billionaire Peter Thiel converted his Roth IRA, a retirement vehicle intended to help average working Americans, into a mammoth onshore tax shelter, Senate Finance Committee Chair Ron Wyden said he was [revisiting proposed legislation that would rein in tax breaks for gargantuan Roth retirement accounts](#). In July, two members of Congress who have helped shape federal laws on retirement savings [announced their intention to seek reforms](#). Sen. Ben Cardin wants to ban shares in companies not publicly traded from Roth IRAs, while House Ways and Means Chair Richard Neal wants to cap the amount that could be saved tax-free. Also in July, [Sen. Wyden and Rep. Neal requested data on mega IRAs](#) from the Congressional Joint Committee on Taxation, which showed that the number of multimillion-dollar Roth IRAs has soared in the past decade as more wealthy Americans use them to shield fortunes from income taxes. The data revealed the number of Americans with traditional and Roth IRAs worth over \$5 million tripled, to more than 28,000, between 2011 and 2019. In addition, a staggering \$15 billion is stowed away in tax-free Roth accounts held by just 156 Americans. Both Wyden and Neal said in statements that the new figures demonstrate the need for reform.

### **YouTube Removes Chinese Propaganda Videos**

In June, ProPublica partnered with the New York Times to investigate China’s efforts to counter reports of the persecution of members of the Uyghur community, an ethnic minority in Northwest China. We reported that [China was spreading propaganda](#) videos of Uyghurs denying abuses against their community. Our investigation found a pattern of similar language used in the videos, which appeared on Twitter and YouTube, indicating that they are part of an elaborate influence campaign by Chinese officials to counter human-rights concerns raised by foreign govern-



*ProPublica and the New York Times published propaganda videos of Uyghurs denying reports of repressive government policies in Xinjiang, China.*

ments and corporations. In response, YouTube took down many of the videos we identified.

### **Rhode Island Votes to Certify 911 Call Takers in CPR**

In 2019, ProPublica Local Reporting Network partner The Public’s Radio’s investigation revealed that poor training of Rhode Island’s 911 call takers was resulting in unnecessary deaths. Our investigation had significant impact, including the replacement of the head of Rhode Island’s 911 system, a review of procedures and training provided to 911 call takers, and lawmakers earmarking funds in their 2020 budget for 911 call takers to learn how to provide CPR instruction, in an effort to counteract the lagging rates of cardiac arrest survival statewide. In May 2021, the Rhode Island House of Representatives unanimously approved a bill mandating that operators receive certification in emergency medical dispatch and provide CPR in-

structions and other emergency medical directions to callers.

### **Audit Finds Oregon Forest Agency Possibly Violated State Law**

ProPublica and Local Reporting Network partner Oregon Public Broadcasting joined with The Oregonian to investigate the timber industry, reporting on how the state’s preferential treatment for wealthy corporations has had detrimental effects on both the local economy and the environment. Among other findings, the reporting team revealed that the tax-funded Oregon Forest Resources Institute worked to discredit academic research and acted as a lobbying and public relations arm for the timber industry. In July, an audit prompted by our investigation found that OFRI, an agency intended to educate the public about forestry, misled the public by presenting a biased view of

forestry favoring the timber industry and may have violated state law.

### **Federal Agency Closes Legal Loophole**

In Oct. 2019, ProPublica co-published an investigation with ARD German TV into [pharmaceutical companies luring Mexicans across the U.S. border on temporary visas to donate blood plasma](#). While other nations limit the frequency of paid plasma donations out of concern for donor health, the U.S. has comparatively loose standards. Whereas the U.S. caps donations at 104 a year, Europe’s recommended frequency is 33 times per year and, in Mexico, selling plasma is banned entirely. In June 2021, [U.S. Customs and Border Protection closed a legal loophole that allowed U.S.-based blood plasma companies to harvest plasma from thousands of Mexicans a day](#).

### **Congress Investigates Lender Responsible For Sending PPP Loans to Fake Companies**

In May, ProPublica reported that an online lending platform called [Kabbage sent 378 Paycheck Protection Program loans worth \\$7 million to fake companies](#). Many of these claimed to be farms with names like “Deely Nuts” and “Beefy King.” Through the PPP, the federal government provided \$800 billion in financial support to banks to vet and make low-interest loans to companies and nonprofit organizations in response to the economic devastation caused by the pandemic. In June, the House Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis opened a [probe into loans by Kabbage and other non-bank financial technology companies](#), citing ProPublica’s reporting. Reuters has also reported that [Kabbage is also under investigation by the Department of Justice over how it calculated PPP loan amounts](#).

### **Officer Charged By Watchdog Agency After NYPD Finds “No Wrongdoing” Over Police Killing**

In Dec. 2020, as part of our ongoing investigation into the New York Police Department, we analyzed the [killing of Kawaski Trawick in 2019 by an NYPD officer, revealing that the officers failed to follow NYPD procedures to de-escalate situations involving individuals struggling with mental illness](#). Trawick was one of 16 individuals experiencing mental health crises killed by the NYPD since new procedures and training were touted by the de Blasio administration. ProPublica’s reporting renewed public attention to Trawick’s death



*A May story revealed that online lending platform Kabbage approved hundreds of Paycheck Protection Program loans for fake farms. (Richard A. Chance, special to ProPublica)*

and outrage over the lack of accountability for officers using excessive force. In June 2021, New York’s Civilian Complaint Review Board brought charges against the officer who shot and killed Trawick. Under new disciplinary guidelines adopted last year, the officer could be fired if found guilty by the CCRB.

### **Maine Public Defense Lawyer Removed From Service**

In Oct. 2020, ProPublica Local Reporting Network partner Maine Monitor investigated Maine’s use of court-appointed private attorneys to provide legal services to the poor. Maine is the only state that does not have a public defender system. Our investigation found these attorneys lack oversight and have disproportionately high levels of professional misconduct and criminal convictions. In response, Governor Janet Mills called for a bipartisan effort to reform Maine’s [defense system and executive director John Pelletier resigned from the Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services](#). In June 2021, reporters identified two





*After a July story revealed unemployment insurance fraud organized online, the messaging app Telegram removed several of the chat rooms mentioned in our reporting. (Cath Virginia, special to ProPublica)*

defense lawyers eligible to take cases who should have been ineligible to represent defendants due to their own criminal proceedings. One, a lawyer facing felony charges, was subsequently removed from service. In July 2021, Gov. Mills signed into law a bill for \$18.5 million in additional spending over the next two years to improve legal services for low-income residents.

### **California Levies Fine on Oil Company**

In March, an investigation into California's oversight of oil companies by ProPublica and Local Reporting Network partner the Desert Sun revealed tax enforcement and weakening transparency by the California Geologic Energy Management Division, including for wells that posed risks to drinking water aquifers and wells in urban neighborhoods in close proximity to homes and schools. In May, the agency ordered Nasco Petroleum, featured in our story, to pay almost

\$1.5 million in fines for nearly 600 violations of state regulations, including the continuing operation of dangerous wells.

### **Telegram Removes Fraudster Chat Rooms**

In July, ProPublica investigated what might turn out to be the biggest fraud wave in U.S. history: bogus claims for unemployment insurance benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our reporting revealed that much of the fraud was organized — in the U.S. and abroad — and enabled by a burgeoning online infrastructure of chat rooms, computer algorithms and human labor farms. On the messaging app Telegram, fraudsters trade tips and share step-by-step guides, or “sauces,” on how to exploit aging or obsolete state unemployment IT systems. Days after we published the story, Telegram removed several “secret sauce” chats mentioned in our reporting.

## **FEC Complaint Filed Against Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene**

In May, we [investigated an advertisement made by Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene for the Stop Socialism Now PAC](#). Greene worked with a Republican ad maker who has a history of racist remarks and ties to extremist gun groups. Our report revealed that Greene may have broken campaign finance rules by making an explicit request for funds. Immediately following our reporting, and citing ProPublica's investigation, [Common Cause filed a formal complaint with the Federal Election Commission](#).

## **Lawmakers Urge EPA to Investigate Air Quality Monitoring in Florida and Change National Pollution Standards**

In July, ProPublica and Local Reporting Network partner The Palm Beach Post published a joint investigation that found a series of shortcomings in [how authorities monitor the air in Florida's heartland](#), which is subject to regular pollution from pre-harvest crop burning of sugar cane. In August, leading members of [Congress called for the EPA to investigate air monitoring in Florida and to change national pollution standards](#). As The Post and ProPublica reported, the EPA allowed the state to continue for at least eight years to use a single malfunctioning monitor to track air quality across a 400,000-acre sugar growing region. Our reporting also found that current pollution standards fail to capture short-term spikes in pollution, a defining feature of Florida's sugar harvesting process, when burning releases bursts of harmful smoke into the atmosphere.

## **State Attorneys General Push Federal Regulators to Create and Mandate Side-Impact Tests for Kids' Car Seats**

In Feb. 2020, ProPublica published an investigation demonstrating that the child car-seat maker [Evenflo had put marketing above the safety of children using their "Big Kid" booster seats, using the company's own side-impact testing footage to illustrate the dangers](#). Our reporting revealed the corporate blindness and regulatory failures that allowed the seats to be sold, even after serious injuries to children, including paralysis, resulted. In July 2021, a group of [18 state attorneys general signed a letter to Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg criticizing the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for failing to mandate](#)

side-impact tests for children's car seats, despite a law requiring the agency to protect kids in such collisions.

## **Senate Banking Chair Calls For Oversight of Banking Apps**

In July, ProPublica investigated the banking app Chime after it [racked up an unusually large number of consumer complaints](#) about locked accounts, inaccessible funds and slow resolution time. In the months before the article's publication, Chime customers had filed 920 complaints with the federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. With an estimated 12 million customers, Chime is the largest in its highly competitive category of fintech companies that serve low- to moderate-income individuals underserved by traditional financial institutions. Later that month, [Senate Banking Chair Sherrod Brown cited our reporting when he asked the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to lay out a plan for overseeing neobanks like Chime and other banking apps](#).

## **Federal Election Commission Inspector General Urges Internal Ethics Review**

In Oct. 2020, ProPublica reported that a [top Federal Election Commission official, whose division regulates campaign cash, had undisclosed ties to Trump and his 2016 campaign attorney, raising questions over the agency's neutrality](#). In Aug. 2021, following our report, the FEC inspector general called for the agency to [review its policies and internal controls](#).

## **Lawmakers Question California Cap and Trade Program Design**

In April, a joint investigation by ProPublica and MIT Technology Review showed that the California Air Resource Board's landmark cap-and-trade program issued [tens of millions of carbon credits that may not have provided real climate change benefits](#). In August, California's Senate majority leader and two other legislators [urged the Air Resources Board, which is the state's top climate regulator, to review its forest offset program in a letter citing our report](#). "We're at risk of undermining the cap-and-trade market by allowing cheap, questionable offsets to substitute for real emissions reductions," said Sen. Josh Becker in an interview. "That keeps the market price artificially low and reduces the incentives for companies to make the change we need to drive down emissions."

# What People Are Saying

We ask donors why they gave to ProPublica. Here's a sampling of recent answers.

*"Thank you for the work you do. I don't make much but the team at ProPublica deserve every penny for their fearlessness in reporting, especially the recent IRA reports that your team has been 'translating' for those of us who would not otherwise understand them. Thank you!"* —**Yousma N. (New York)**

*"Due to my budget, I donate modest amounts occasionally. Today I was inspired by the webinar discussing the IRS trove of data and the stories coming from it. Thanks."* —**Chris (Washington)**

*"I just happily made another donation. I am very intentional about my charitable giving and there is no doubt that your organization is doing essential investigative reporting which serves the public good. Most recently your reporting on the abuses associated with PACE loans in Missouri was a good example. Your report was covered in the Post Dispatch and local TV news as well as social media. Incredibly, given the typical slowness and incompetence of the Missouri state legislature, legislation to address these abuses was signed into law in the past session. Bravo. Thank you so much."*  
—**Jane (Missouri)**

*"I just donated again because I appreciate the local reporting you supported last fall in the Oregonian. The Oregon State Dept. of Forestry is being examined by the state legislature, and the lobbying/'education' program, previously supported by taxes, has been disbanded. I also want to thank you for your recent reporting of the (lack of) taxes paid by the super-rich. Our U.S. Senator Wyden has introduced legislation to close loopholes. Carry on!"* —**Gloria K. (Oregon)**

*"Just made a small donation to support your amazing journalism. Thank you for the incredibly thorough, informative, and accessible article on wealth and taxation in the US, which will hopefully circulate widely and finally shift the discussion around inequality in this country. Taxes should be transparent, since, as you say, they are a collective sacrifice for the public good — it should be public information and there should be accountability, not to mention an entire rewriting of the tax code in light of current realities of wealth and power. Thank you to Jesse Eisinger, Jeff Ernsthausen, and Paul Kiel for your efforts and the risks you are taking on behalf of the people!"* —**Iona P. (Minnesota)**

# Recognition for Our Work

ProPublica was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize’s gold medal for Public Service, the nation’s highest journalistic honor, and our 13th Pulitzer finalist designation in 13 years of publishing. That and other awards received in the middle period of 2021 included the following:

ProPublica’s accountability journalism on the pandemic was a **finalist for the 2021 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service**. The package of articles addressed pressing problems of the pandemic, pinpointing how they occurred and who was responsible, from the earliest days of the coronavirus. Among the honored coverage was our first coronavirus investigation, published February 28, 2020, which unearthed grave early missteps in testing by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to track and contain the virus’s spread, putting the U.S. behind the rest of the world in responding to the coronavirus. ProPublica was one of the first newsrooms to report how the coronavirus disproportionately harmed Black communities nationwide. We also uncovered jaw-dropping instances of wasteful spending and bad judgment by the federal government, and il-

lustrated the cost of these failures, including leaving hospitals poorly equipped with personal protective equipment and failing to administer relief programs equitably.

Our reporting on the story of **Grace**, a Michigan teen jailed for failing to complete online schoolwork, won the National Magazine Award for social media. It won third place in the National Headliner Awards’ social media category and was also a finalist for the Chicago Headline Club’s Watchdog Award for Excellence in Public Interest Reporting and the Peter Lisagor Awards for best investigative reporting and best non-deadline reporting series. The first story in the series, **“A Teenager Didn’t Do Her Online Schoolwork. So A Judge Sentenced Her to Juvenile Detention,”** won the Lisagor Award for best non-deadline reporting in the online category.

**“Hawaii’s Beaches Are Disappearing,”** a ProPublica Local Reporting Network project by Sophie Cocke of the Honolulu Star-Advertiser and Ash Ngu of ProPublica, won the National Magazine Award for digital innovation. The story included interactive graphics and maps that showed, for the first time, the collective impact of shoreline armoring. The story also won Malofiej’s gold medal in the innovation format category and the Society of Environmental Journalists’ award for outstanding feature.

**“Unheard,”** a Local Reporting Network project with Anchorage Daily News, won the National Magazine Award for community journalism. “Unheard” set a new benchmark for survivor-focused reporting and featured the portraits and stories of 29 Alaskan sexual assault survivors who chose to talk about what they experienced. The story, which also



*A ProPublica documentary chronicled one woman's harrowing journey to rescue her father from an assisted living facility in the COVID-19 epicenter. (Katie Campbell/ProPublica)*

won the Dart Award for Excellence in Coverage of Trauma and Society of Professional Journalists' Ethics in Journalism Award, broke a pattern of silence that has persisted for generations and that predators have come to expect from survivors in Alaska, which has the highest rate of sexual assault and child sex abuse of any state in the U.S.

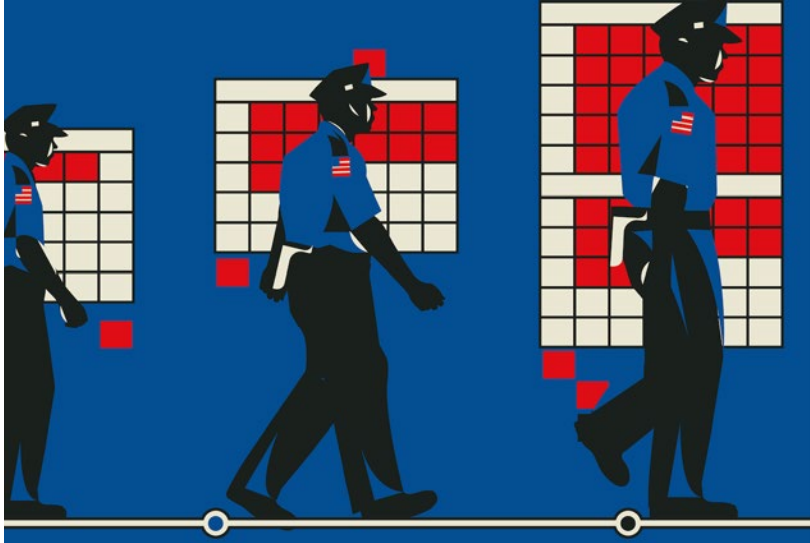
A series of articles that exposed racial disparities in kidney care and the startling rates at which diabetes has disabled or killed Black Americans won the National Magazine Award for public interest. **"The Black American Amputation Epidemic"** exposed how government failures and hospital neglect have affected millions

of Americans with diabetes and found that Black Americans lose limbs at a rate triple that of others to diabetes.

**"How COVID-19 Hollowed Out a Generation of Young Black Men,"** a blend of reporting and research that challenged prevalent ideas that entrenched comorbidities were to blame for the coronavirus's disparate impact on young Black men, won the National Magazine Award for coverage of race. After reviewing the autopsies of two dozen men who died, interviewing their families and speaking to health researchers, ProPublica's findings supported and succinctly illustrated the John Henryism theory, which holds that the daily racial stress

Black men endure snowballs into chronic conditions that affect their overall health, ultimately shortening their lives.

Our video **"Rescuing Her Father From an Assisted Living Facility in the Coronavirus Epicenter,"** which detailed one daughter's harrowing journey to rescue her dying father from a facility in Elmhurst, Queens, one of the hardest-hit New York neighborhoods, was named a finalist for a News & Documentary Emmy in the Outstanding Business, Consumer or Economic Coverage category. Produced in April 2020, this short film channeled the desperation of families across the nation who were siloed from elderly family members and left unable



*In some of the NYPD's most severe misconduct cases, officers merely lost vacation days. (Ola Jasionowska, special to ProPublica)*

to learn the truth about what was happening inside nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

**“Where Will Everyone Go?”** a story by ProPublica and The New York Times Magazine, with support from the Pulitzer Center, won first place for explanatory reporting from the Society for Environmental Journalists in the large newsroom category. It was also a finalist for the Columbia Journalism School’s John B. Oakes Award for Distinguished Environmental Journalism. An accompanying map, combining data on different kinds of climate risks to give a holistic picture of how climate change will affect the country, won the Sigma Delta Chi Award in the data visualization category.

**“The NYPD Files,”** a series that investigated abuse and impunity inside the New York Police Department using thousands of previously unpublished police disciplinary records, won the News Leader Association’s First

Amendment Award. After New York lawmakers repealed a law that kept police disciplinary records secret, ProPublica requested records of every active-duty police officer who had at least one substantiated complaint and transformed this vast trove of records into an online database available to the public. The series also won a Society of Professional Journalists Sunshine Award.

**“The Cutting,”** a ProPublica Local Reporting Network project with the Oregonian/OregonLive and Oregon Public Broadcasting, won the Columbia Journalism School’s John B. Oakes Award for Distinguished Environmental Journalism. It also received an honorable mention in the Society for Advancing Business Editing and Writing’s explanatory category.

**“On the Line: How the Meatpacking Industry Became a Hotbed of COVID-19,”** a series that investigated meat companies’

mismanagement of the pandemic and government’s failure to ensure plants took appropriate precautions, won the Society for Advancing Business Editing and Writing’s business investigative category. It was also a finalist for this year’s MOLLY National Journalism Prize.

Our investigative series on **“pandemic profiteers”** won the Society for Advancing Business Editing and Writing’s government category. These stories, which illustrated how the federal government’s reliance on private contractors severely hampered the nation’s response to the coronavirus during crucial early months of the pandemic, also won Sigma Delta Chi’s COVID-19 nondeadline reporting category.

Our reporting on Trump political appointees who blocked a criminal prosecution of Walmart over its **suspicious opioid prescriptions** won the Society for Advancing Business Editing and Writing’s retail category.

**“How Dollar Stores Became Magnets for Crime and Killing,”** co-published with The New Yorker, won the Society for Advancing Business Editing and Writing’s feature category. The article, which examined how the rise of dollar stores has been accompanied by about 200 violent incidents involving guns in a three-year period, also won honorable mention in the Society’s retail category.

The **“COVID-19 Inequities in Chicago”** series won second place in the Better Government Association’s Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Awards for Investigative Reporting. The series was also named a finalist for the Chicago Headline Club’s Watchdog Award

for Excellence in Public Interest Reporting. One story in the series, “COVID-19 Took Black Lives First. It Didn’t Have To,” was recognized as a finalist for the Headline Club’s Peter Lisagor Awards for best feature story and best online feature story or series.

“**What Coronavirus Job Losses Reveal About Racism in America**,” an interactive graphic that let users explore how demographic variables affect unemployment rates, won in Sigma Delta Chi’s COVID-19 data visualization category.

“**Inside the Lives of Immigrant Teens Working Dangerous Night Shifts in Suburban Factories**” won the Chicago Headline Club’s Peter Lisagor Award for best feature story and best illustration as well as best online feature story or series.

“**The Pandemic and Illinois Schools: A Digital Divide, Vulnerable Students and Hidden Data**,” a joint investigation with the Chicago Tribune, won the Chicago Headline Club’s Peter Lisagor Award for best education reporting in the newspaper category.

“**A Sundown Town Sees Its First Black Lives Matter Protest**” won the Chicago Headline Club’s Peter Lisagor Award for best individual affiliated blog post. ProPublica reporter Tony Briscoe also won the newspaper category for best science, health, technology or environment reporting for a story published in his previous position at the Tribune.

“**States Are Reopening: See How Coronavirus Cases Rise or Fall**,” a graphic that visualized and compared, at a glance, infection rates in various states, won



*A Local Reporting Network series with Maine Monitor confronted issues with the state’s system for providing indigent defense. (Chloe Cushman, special to ProPublica)*

Malofiej’s bronze medal in the features category.

For “**Defenseless**,” a ProPublica Local Reporting Network project that investigated how Maine handles legal services for the poor, Maine Monitor reporter Samantha Hogan and ProPublica data reporter Agnel Philip were named finalists for the 2021 Livingston Awards, which honors outstanding achievement by journalists under the age of 35.

“**Thousands of Foster Children Were Sent Out of State to Mental Health Facilities Where Some Faced Abuse and Neglect**” was named a finalist for the Better Government Association’s Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Awards for Investigative Reporting.

“**Grenades, Bread and Body Bags: How Illinois Has Spent \$1.6 Billion in Response to**

**COVID-19 So Far**,” a collaboration with the Chicago Tribune, was named a finalist for the Chicago Headline Club’s Peter Lisagor Awards for best data journalism and best illustration.

ProPublica’s Local Reporting Network partners were honored with numerous state and regional awards, including two National Magazine Awards, a Malofiej gold medal, Great Plains Award, Dart Award and more. **Local Reporting Network partner Amy Silverman** was named Arizona Journalist of the Year, the state’s most prestigious journalism award. Local Reporting Network partner **Andrew Ford of Asbury Park Press** and **Samantha Hogan and Agnel Philip of the Maine Monitor** were named finalists for the 2021 Livingston Awards for local reporting.

## ProPublica Partners, May–August, 2021

- Anchorage Daily News
- Arizona Republic
- Chicago Tribune
- **Cincinnati Enquirer**
- Desert Sun [Palm Springs, CA]
- Detroit Free Press
- El País
- Honolulu Star-Advertiser
- KQED
- **KUCB** [Unalaska, AK]
- Maine Monitor
- Miami Herald
- MIT Technology Review
- NBC News
- News & Observer [Raleigh, NC]
- Newsy
- New York Times
- Oregonian
- Oregon Public Broadcasting
- **Outlier** [Detroit]
- Palm Beach Post
- Philadelphia Inquirer
- Post and Courier [Charleston, SC]
- Spotlight PA
- Texas Tribune
- Univision
- Vox
- WBUR [Boston]

*New partners marked in **bold**.*

## ProPublica by the Numbers

<b>11,220,000</b>	Page views on ProPublica platforms per month on average	<b>UP</b>	<b>34%</b>	vs. 2020
<b>5,200,000</b>	Off-platform pages viewed on Apple News, Microsoft News, Google News and SmartNews per month on average	<b>DOWN</b>	<b>49%</b>	vs. 2020
<b>3,500,000</b>	Unique visitors to ProPublica.org per month on average	<b>DOWN</b>	<b>20%</b>	vs. 2020
<b>165,000</b>	Pages republished under Creative Commons per month on average	<b>DOWN</b>	<b>72%</b>	vs. 2020
<b>460,000</b>	Email subscribers	<b>UP</b>	<b>13%</b>	since April
<b>927,000</b>	Twitter followers	<b>UP</b>	<b>1%</b>	since April
<b>463,000</b>	Facebook followers	<b>FLAT</b>		since April
<b>7,000+</b>	Additional donors			