

Badger Institute: Launches Center for Opportunity

Posted on Wednesday, Feb 14, 2018

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Institute welcomes first member of new Visiting Fellows program

CONTACT: Badger Institute President Mike Nichols at [262-389-8239](tel:262-389-8239) or mike@badgerinstitute.org

Feb. 14, 2018 — The [Badger Institute](#) today announced it is launching a Center for Opportunity that will focus on public policies related to poverty alleviation, criminal justice, upward mobility and occupational licensing. The Institute also announced the first member of its new Visiting Fellows program.

“The Badger Institute Center for Opportunity will build on the cutting-edge research and storytelling that we began more than a year ago in the areas of [corrections](#), criminal justice and [professional licensure reform](#) — all of which will help ensure opportunity for folks who want to work, want to contribute, want to prosper,” said Badger Institute President Mike Nichols.

“The Center will enable us to dive deeper into policy analysis in all these areas and truly advocate for all Wisconsinites who want to succeed through individual initiative,” Nichols added. “In the months to come, you will see more in-depth research, journalism and podcasts on these all-important topics.”

The first Visiting Fellow is [Kahryn Riley](#), who manages the [Mackinac Center for Public Policy](#)’s criminal justice reform initiative.

“The Visiting Fellows Program will bring the best minds in America to the Badger Institute,” said Nichols.

“The fellows will be frequent contributors on key topics and initiatives and will enable the Badger Institute to react more quickly to breaking news and urgent challenges. We are honored to welcome Kahryn as we launch the Center for Opportunity. Her background and expertise will be invaluable as we move ahead.” Riley studied in the honors programs at Hillsdale College and Regent University School of Law. She launched the Center’s criminal justice reform initiative in 2016 and publishes regularly on issues pertaining to the state penal code, law enforcement, the corrections system and other matters of public safety and civil rights. Her work has appeared in publications including The Detroit News, The Hill and USA Today, and she is a sought-after speaker on criminal justice reform issues.

“The Center for Opportunity will address issues that go to the heart of the free-market perspective,” said Riley. “Alleviating poverty, deconstructing barriers to work, fostering healthy communities, eliminating inequity in the justice system — all of these efforts bound together around the fundamental idea that the government has certain functions that it has to get right. But everything outside of that sphere is richer and healthier when it is free. The Badger Institute has done a tremendous job of articulating and advocating these principles, and I am honored by the opportunity to support its new endeavor.”

[Robert L. Woodson Sr.](#), founder and president of the [Woodson Center](#) in Washington, D.C., and a longtime civil rights and civil society advocate, welcomed the announcement.

“The Badger Institute has been a leading voice on corrections reform and upward mobility issues in Wisconsin,” said Woodson, a Bradley Prize winner. “I’ve seen firsthand how their work is making a difference for folks who are too often not given the chance they deserve. The more the Badger Institute can do in these areas, the more Wisconsin will benefit. I applaud the new initiative and look forward to seeing more of their work.”

“The Badger Institute has been an invaluable resource that provided me with a voice when I felt like I had nowhere to turn,” said [Albert Walker](#), a Green Bay barber who was prevented by state licensing restrictions from managing his own shop. “No one else would take the time to hear my story and work diligently to fight for the opportunity to get my business off the ground. I look forward to this initiative helping others in the same way they helped me.”

The mission of the Badger Institute, formerly WPRI, is to ensure opportunity and advance economic prosperity through free markets, individual initiative, limited and efficient government, and education reform.