

# Common Sense Policy Roundtable hires research leader for ‘critical’ Colorado issues

by [Joey Bunch](#) on August 25, 2017



Chris Brown (Photo courtesy of the Common Sense Policy Roundtable)

Diverse data in, the best policies out. That’s the view Chris Brown is bringing to Colorado from Washington, D.C., next month.

Brown was in Denver this week looking for a house before he officially becomes the director of policy and research for the [Common Sense Policy Roundtable](#), the right-leaning “free market” think tank.

While CSPR isn’t overtly political, it provides [data that furthers politics](#). The think tank was created by The Starboard Group and EIS Solutions, two firms with a political [a Republican history](#), and ties to the oil and gas industry.

The think tank’s board includes Republican politicians Heidi Ganahl, who was elected to the University of Colorado Board of Regents last November, and Jack Graham, who ran for U.S. Senate last year and is considering a run for governor next year.

One of its most prominent supporters is Mike Kopp, the Republican former state Senate minority leader and gubernatorial candidate who [leads the bipartisan business coalition](#) Colorado Concern.

Brown has worked for [Regional Economic Modeling Inc.](#) for nine years, starting as an assistant economist in the firm’s Amherst, Mass., office then opening its Washington office six years ago. REMI manages research projects with a diversity of partners on the right and left. That’s key to credibility in research projects, Brown told Colorado Politics.

“My role in working with REMI is supporting REMI’s diverse client base and the independent work

each client is doing,” he said. “I hope to, through this role, assist CSPR build on the expertise by working with diverse organizations across the county on a range of policy issues, to apply what I’ve learned in assessing critical policy issue here in Colorado.”

Analysis, such as that provided by REMI, helps policymakers better understand the macroeconomic cost of their decisions.

Brown said he intends to facilitate dynamic economic modeling on a range of policy issues to provide information in a nonpartisan way.

“CSPR and its leadership will continue to be a resource, but there’s also a diverse group of study partners, and I hope to reach out to other local subject-area experts. Really, this is an effort, the way I see it, to educate and inform on critical, critical policy issues that we have here in Colorado.”

CSPR doesn’t tell lawmakers what to think, but they provide data to think about.

In March, for example, lawmakers were considering legislation to make it harder to sue builders, which partisan said was driving up home prices, CSPR released a report on the high cost of housing and the barriers it creates for first-time or lower-income homebuyers.

In 2016, REMI provided economic analysis with the Leeds School of Business at the University of Colorado to CSPR on the [effect of 2,000-foot setbacks](#) on the oil and gas industry, which predicted such a rule would [cost the state \\$11 billion a year](#) in gross domestic product and 62,000 jobs.

CSPR also [provided a dim view](#) of a raising the minimum wage hike, noting in a last year report, “This increase would likely harm the Coloradans who need the most help with employment and income opportunities.”

Brown’s work for REMI has included modeling the fiscal and economic impacts of the Medicaid expansion in eight states, as well as providing an economic model to the state of California about a regulation program. He’s analyzed a federal tax proposal for the U.S. Senate and forecast the economic effects of budget sequestration for the [centrist think tank Third Way](#).

“Over the last six years, CSPR has established a sterling reputation in the public policy arena by providing dynamic modeling and fact based research impacting the Colorado economy,” Kristin Strohm, CSPR’s executive director, said. “Adding Chris to our team will immediately expand our capacity to engage in issues and offer policy makers additional models and studies.”