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REPUBLICAN GOVERNORS

PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Republican Governors Public Policy Committee
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Taxes and Budget

(Arkansas) Governor proposes \$5.3 billion budget for coming fiscal year ([AP](#)) – State finance officials on Tuesday presented to a legislative panel Gov. Asa Hutchinson's proposed \$5.3 billion budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1. The Joint Budget Committee discussed the budget plan on the opening day of budget hearings in advance of the fiscal session that begins April 13. The governor is proposing to increase state spending by \$142.7 million compared to this year, with boosts for public schools and the Department of Human Services but flat funding for most agencies. The budget proposal assumes the Legislature will approve Hutchinson's plan for replacing the private option with a new Medicaid expansion program to be known as Arkansas Works.

Governor Hogan Urges Legislators to Enact Common-Sense Mandate Reform ([WCBC](#)) - Governor Larry Hogan Tuesday unveiled new analysis by the Maryland Department of Budget and Management (DBM) that highlights what he calls the detrimental impact of \$3.7 billion in proposed new mandated spending from the General Assembly. Based on information from the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) – a branch of the General Assembly – Maryland lawmakers averaged \$80 million in newly proposed spending per day over the first half of the 90-day legislative session.

Energy and Environment

Gov. Martinez signs wildfire-related bills ([AP](#)) – Gov. Susana Martinez has signed legislation aimed at better positioning New Mexico to protect its forests from wildfires and flooding. One bill clears the way for the State Forestry Division to be reimbursed by the federal government for thinning and other conservation work done by state employees. Another measure allows New Mexico to become a member state of the Interstate Compact for the Prevention and Control of Forest Fires. The group shares strategies for preventing and fighting fires. New Mexico had back-to-back record fire seasons in 2011 and 2012. Thousands of square miles burned and communities are still living with the threat of post-fire flooding.

Transportation and Infrastructure

NM Gov. Martinez signs state REAL ID bill ([AP](#)) – New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez signed a bipartisan bill Tuesday that revises the state's immigrant driver's license law and puts New Mexico in compliance with tougher federal identification requirements. The Republican governor signed the measure during a ceremony at Sunport International Airport in Albuquerque and announced that state residents won't need a U.S. passport to board a commercial flight as initially feared. Under the new bill, New Mexico will stop issuing driver's licenses to new immigrant applicants regardless of legal status. Immigrants in the country illegally will be able to get a driver's authorization card by submitting fingerprints. Immigrants who already have licenses can skip the requirement.

Economic Development

Florida Basks in a Texas-Style Resurgence ([WSJ](#)) – Florida Gov. Rick Scott, only half-jokingly, offers a list of his "favorite governors": Andrew Cuomo in New York, Dannel Malloy in Connecticut and Tom Wolf in Pennsylvania. "Every time they raise taxes," Mr. Scott says, "it's basically a gift to Florida. More and more people are buying homes here and we get richer. It's just incredible to me that these liberals keep pretending that taxes don't matter." Incredible too, is Florida's economic comeback from the panic and recession in the past decade. Few states got pounded harder by the collapse of real-estate values than the Sunshine State.

Gov. Bentley to create Office of Minority Affairs ([WHNT](#)) - Governor Robert Bentley will sign an executive order today, creating the Governor's Office of Minority Affairs. The office will advise the governor on issues affecting minorities and women. It will focus on the improvement of the overall quality of life of minorities, specifically in education, health,

economics, political participation and empowerment, housing, employment, civil rights, criminal justice and race relations, according to a news release from the Governor's Office.

New Mexico governor signs liquor legislation ([AP](#)) - The New Mexico Spaceport Authority will be able to apply for a liquor license under legislation signed into law by Gov. Susana Martinez. The bill was among several signed Tuesday by the governor. The deadline for acting on legislation passed during the recent 30-day session is Wednesday. Under the legislation, the Spaceport Authority will be included in the list of government entities allowed to pursue liquor licenses. Supporters say it will help the spaceport diversify its customer base and revenue. Also signed was a measure that permits certain liquor license holders to fill and sell growlers. Tax officials estimate retail growler sales could reach \$1.6 million in 2018 if just 10 percent of eligible license holders take advantage of the change in law.

Public Safety

Body camera bill ready for Gov. Scott to sign into law ([WPTV](#)) – A body camera bill is on Governor Rick Scott's desk tonight. It would set rules for law enforcement agencies that use the devices and it has the support of the family of Corey Jones. Getting this bill passed is something the Jones family is passionate about. They've been fighting for this requirement since Corey Jones was shot and killed by a former Palm Beach Gardens police officer in October. "Not only will it help other families, I hope in the future that they would be more protected," said Clinton Jones, Sr., Corey Jones' father. "Hopefully, if anything like this should happen again, we would have evidence on what really took place." The governor's office says he's currently reviewing the bill, which requires police departments with body cameras to have specific rules and training for using them.

Proposed Tennessee law would increase safety seat requirements to 12-years-old ([WJHL](#)) - Tennessee is close to passing a law that would require kids to stay in a car or booster seat until 12-years-old. The bill is headed to Governor Bill Haslam's desk after the House and Senate passed it Monday night. Current Tennessee law requires rear-facing car seats until age one, forward-facing car seats until age three, and booster seats until age eight. The new requirements would increase the age requirement for each safety seat. Kids would be required to sit in a rear-facing car seat until two years-old, a forward-facing car seat until five years-old, and a booster seat until 12 years-old or until the child reaches 4-foot 9-inches.

Education

Legislation to let schools use tests other than AzMERIT passes ([The Arizona Republic](#)) - Legislation that would make Arizona the first in the nation to adopt a "menu" of standardized tests gained final approval in the Senate on Monday afternoon and now heads to Gov. Doug Ducey's desk ready to sign. That means schools would be able to use tests other than AzMERIT, the state's new standardized exam, to assess their students' proficiency of Arizona's College and Career Ready Standards so long as they meet or exceed the state's learning standards.

(South Dakota) House approves final piece of teacher pay plan ([The Argus Leader](#)) - A week after approving a half-cent sales tax hike for teacher pay, the Legislature agreed on how to divide that money up among schools. The House of Representatives approved the third and final bill in Gov. Dennis Daugaard's school funding package Tuesday. After considering half a dozen amendments, the House advanced the measure on a 55-12 vote. Changes included language to ensure 85 percent of new funds go to teacher pay and to underscore that the intent is for any new funding generated through the formula be used to boost teacher pay. The education funding plan overhauls a 20-year-old system that has been based largely on student enrollment. Daugaard and the Blue Ribbon Task Force called for the overhaul after determining that the state had a long-standing problem of paying public school teachers lowest-in-the-nation salaries among their peers.

SD college tuition freeze plan sent to governor ([The Rapid City Journal](#)) - In-state tuition at South Dakota universities and technical schools would be frozen or even lowered in the coming year under a legislative spending maneuver sent to the governor on Monday. Senators gave final approval Monday to paying some construction bonds early for the state universities and technical institutes and re-channeling the savings into a tuition subsidy for South Dakota students attending the campuses. Sen. Jim White, R-Huron, explained Monday the early pay-off would save \$14.6 million in future interest and fees and provide \$3.7 million annually on an ongoing basis that will be used for the tuition reduction. This is the second time the Legislature has agreed with Gov. Dennis Daugaard to pay for a tuition freeze in this manner. White said the two together would reduce a university student's expense by about \$1,000 per year and a tech student's by about \$300. White said more than 19,000 students would benefit.

(Wisconsin) Governor signs vocational teaching license law ([WSAU](#)) - Wisconsin has a new option for licensing vocational education teachers. Governor Scott Walker signed Senate Bill 449 into law during a ceremony at Brown Deer High School Tuesday. The new law creates an experience-based licensure process for teaching vocational education subjects similar to the process created for technical education subjects in the 2015-17 biennial budget. Under this new law, people teaching vocational education subjects like agriculture, child services, clothing services, food services, housing and equipment services, family and consumer education, family and consumer services, home economics-related occupations, health care-related occupations, business education, and marketing education can qualify for a teaching license.

Healthcare

(Massachusetts) Opioid bill would require student drug screenings ([The Boston Globe](#)) – The Legislature is poised to approve a bill this week that would require schools to conduct screenings of students for drug abuse and work to curb opioid use by limiting doctors' initial prescriptions to seven days. Parents and students would have the ability to opt out of the screen, which would come in the form of a confidential interview with children at two still-to-be-determined grade levels. The long-awaited legislation, the product of a compromise between House and Senate negotiators, is Beacon Hill's latest response to an opioid scourge that leaves about 100 Massachusetts residents dead every month.

Utah Senate Approves Limited Medicaid Expansion, Sends Legislation to Governor Herbert ([KUER](#)) - The Utah Senate voted Tuesday to expand the state's Medicaid program, but only to cover a small population living in extreme poverty. The legislation, originally sponsored by House Majority Leader Jim Dunnigan would cover a little more than sixteen thousand Utahns, including some who are chronically homeless and involved in the criminal justice system.