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## REPUBLICAN GOVERNORS

### PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

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#### Taxes and Budget

New Jersey Lawmakers Pass \$34.8 Billion Budget ([WSJ](#)) - The New Jersey Legislature on Monday approved a \$34.8 billion budget for the fiscal year beginning Friday, a modest increase in spending above what Gov. Chris Christie proposed for senior citizen tax relief, educational programs and aid to low-income residents. The Democratic-controlled Legislature's spending package is \$318 million higher than the Republican governor's budget recommendation. Lawmakers passed the budget without the fierce debate that marked last year's budget process. On Monday, lawmakers discussed a possible deal with the governor's office to decrease the state sales tax to 6% from 7% in exchange for a gas-tax increase. Talks continued late into the night. The budget approved by the Senate for the coming fiscal year would allocate \$45 million in additional property-tax relief for seniors, \$25 million to expand prekindergarten in state schools and \$16.5 million to boost state aid for needy families program. The bill now goes to Mr. Christie for his signature.

(North Carolina) State budget cuts income taxes, raises teacher and state worker salaries ([WRAL](#)) – House and Senate budget negotiators say they have crafted a \$22.34 billion state budget that cuts personal income taxes and raises salaries for both teachers and state employees. "It continues the commitment made by Republican state leaders to dramatically raise teacher pay," Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger said Monday night. The final budget, they said, adopts a Senate plan to expand the personal exemption, income on which North Carolinians pay no taxes. For a couple who are married filing jointly, that personal exemption expands from \$15,500 to \$16,500 for the current tax year and then to \$17,500 for the next tax year. Presuming both chambers approve the budget, it would next go to Gov. Pat McCrory for his signature or veto. The new budget year starts Friday.

#### Transportation and Infrastructure

60,000 repeat drunk drivers: What can Iowa do? ([The Des Moines Register](#)) – Iowa has made little headway in reducing the percentage of intoxicated drivers who are repeat offenders, a Des Moines Register analysis of state data shows. In 2015, 26 percent of the 11,628 motorists convicted of driving impaired had previously been caught driving while intoxicated, data from the Iowa Court Information System show. That's down just 3 percentage points in a dozen years. Since 2000, roughly 222,500 drivers have been convicted of operating a vehicle while intoxicated in Iowa. Nearly 60,000 were repeat offenders, according to Iowa Court Information System data. The numbers are an indication of the magnitude of the problem facing Iowa in its continued struggle to get drunken drivers off roads. It's a problem that has caught the attention of Gov. Terry Branstad, who has urged the Iowa Legislature to find more effective ways to keep impaired drivers off the state's roads.

Governor launches summer 'Drive Smart' campaign ([The Albuquerque Journal](#)) - "Drive Smart" is the theme of this year's 100 Days and Nights of Summer campaign to stop distracted driving and driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Gov. Susana Martinez helped start the campaign during a Monday news conference at the State Police headquarters in Albuquerque. The effort involves multiple law enforcement agencies around the state, who will increase DWI checkpoints, saturation patrols and put more officers on the roads. During last year's campaign, Martinez said, law enforcement officers made 82 DWI arrests, 36 drug arrests, issued 1,640 seat belt citations, 1,381 child restraint citations, 12,305 speeding citations, 20 reckless driving citations, 867 cellphone citations, and made 46 felony arrests.

Safety agency works to reduce drunken driving after FAST Act ([The Hill](#)) - A transportation bill has enabled expanded state grants for anti-drunken driving education efforts, but the federal government says it is still working to advance in-vehicle technology that can help prevent impaired driving. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) chief Mark Rosekind assured lawmakers in a recent letter that the agency is taking a series of steps to decrease the number of alcohol-impaired motorists who get behind the wheel. A bipartisan group of senators asked the agency last month how the NHTSA is implementing provisions on drunken driving and other safety issues included in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, which Congress passed in December 2015.

## Economic Development

Governor Bentley Announces Alabama Regional Job Fairs are Putting Alabamians Back to Work ([The Dothan First](#)) – Governor Robert Bentley received a presentation from Alabama Department of Labor Commissioner Fitzgerald Washington on the successful outcome of the Regional Job Fairs that are being hosted by the Department of Labor throughout the state. Approximately one year ago, the Department launched an effort aimed at bringing down unemployment rates in counties with traditionally high rates. By working with local government and education officials, ADOL was able to bring employers to these mostly rural areas and connect job seekers with jobs. Over the course of 2015, five job fairs were held in Dallas, Greene, Lowndes, Perry, and Wilcox Counties. "Putting Alabamians back to work is a key part of my Great State 2019 plan," Governor Robert Bentley said. "Anytime we have an opportunity to connect hundreds of employers with thousands of job seekers, everyone benefits. For an example, in Wilcox County the pre-job fair unemployment rate was 16.5%, now the post job fair unemployment rate is 13.5%."

Royal Canin announces 100 million dollar investment plan to expand their facility in South Dakota ([KCAU](#)) - Royal Canin has announced their \$100 billion plan to expand their company in North Sioux City. The tremendous growth of the company came along with the projected future demand they ultimately led to their decision to expand. During the public announcement Monday, many members from the community, Royal Canin's employees, and city officials came out to show their support for the company's expansion and future success. "It's a recognition that this is a great place to invest so here we are digging up the ground and getting started so we're excited about that," says Kevin Levy, president of Royal Canin. "We're very excited for the workforce here; it validates their productivity and it also validates that South Dakota is a great place to do business for Royal Canin and all businesses," says South Dakota Governor Dennis Daugaard.

## Public Safety

In Tampa, Rick Scott highlights the more than \$6 million going into programs combating human trafficking in Florida ([The Saint Peters Blog](#)) – Governor Rick Scott, Attorney General Pam Bondi and state Representative Ross Spano were among the public officials who gathered at an event in Tampa on Monday that celebrated legislation passed this year that will go into combating human trafficking in Florida over the next fiscal year. That includes \$1 million for Selah Freedom, a Sarasota based national nonprofit that focuses on ending sex trafficking and sexual exploitation. In addition to children, Selah Freedom has a program for women between the ages of 18-26, a demographic that frequently is overlooked, says Elizabeth Fisher, Selah Freedom's President and CEO. Selah Freedom also helped to create the Turn Your Life Around program (TYLA), a diversion program so that women involved in sex trafficking don't get charged with up to 3 charges of prosecution, which triggers a felony conviction. "With a felony, you can't get a job, you can't do anything, so our girls are stuck in the system," Fisher said.

## Education

Governor Rauner Pushes For Education Funding Plan ([Fox Illinois](#)) - The fight over school funding and whether or not to use the state's current formula seems to be the last sticking point in getting a budget deal in place. Senate Democrats say their plan will be filed Tuesday, but it will use the state's current school aid formula. Under the plan, no school loses money with that formula though. The price tag is an additional \$760 million which will go into education. Governor Rauner's education funding plan increases K-12 spending by \$240 million. Gov. Rauner saying Monday that he will not support sending taxpayer money to CPS without reforms. "People across the state should not be held up with their tax money to go bail out Chicago Public Schools. CPS has been financially mismanaged for years and years. They have been running massive deficits, massive debt and not funding their pensions," said Gov. Rauner.

Governor Brownback signs Kansas school funding bill, averting shutdown ([AP](#)) – Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback has signed legislation that would increase aid to poor school districts to meet a court mandate and end a threat that the state's public schools might shut down. The bill signed Monday increases poor districts' state funding by \$38 million for the 2016-17 school year by diverting funds from other parts of the budget. It also redistributes some funds from wealthier districts, which is in line with a state Supreme Court ruling last month. The court said Kansas' school funding system is still unfair to poor districts and gave lawmakers until Thursday to make further changes. It had warned schools might not be able to reopen otherwise. The bill had broad bipartisan support when the Republican-dominated Legislature passed it last week during a two-day special session.