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REPUBLICAN GOVERNORS

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Republican Governors Public Policy Committee
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Transportation and Infrastructure

Gov. Rick Scott signs transportation policy bill ([The Tampa Bay Times](#)) – Republican Gov. Rick Scott today signed a bill that increases the amount of money available in the Florida Seaport and Economic Development Program and makes other changes to statewide transportation policy, such as laws affecting "self-driving" cars. Scott had until April 14 to sign HB 7027, but he approved it five days after the Legislature sent it to him last week. The bill requires the state to appropriate a minimum of \$25 million yearly into the seaport program, \$10 million more than the current annual requirement. It also changes laws affecting autonomous, or "self-driving," vehicles and who can operate them.

Christie Announces \$10 Million for Additional Lead Remediation ([WNYC](#)) - Amid criticism Gov. Christie has been diverting money away from lead abatement, the governor announced Tuesday that his staff has identified an additional \$10 million from this year's budget to prevent lead poisoning from paint in old homes. "That's the major problem that we have regarding lead in New Jersey," Christie said at a news conference in Trenton. "The outdated lead-based paint in our old housing stock, not water sources." The governor said the additional resources will nearly double lead abatement efforts, and go to low-and-moderate-income households.

Energy and Environment

Wyoming wolf population increases 15% in 2015 ([KBZK](#)) - The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently released its Northern Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery Program 2015 Interagency Annual Report. While wolves are no longer federally listed as an endangered species and are managed under state authority in Idaho, Montana, eastern Oregon, eastern Washington, and north central Utah, they remain federally listed in Wyoming as nonessential experimental and were managed by the USFWS, reports REBOOT. According to the report, there are 382 wolves in Wyoming, 48 packs and 30 breeding pairs. That is 14.7 percent increase in the number of wolves in 2014, which was 333.

EPA's 2016 agenda focused on methane, carbon emissions ([The Hill](#)) – Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Gina McCarthy will go to Ottawa this week for discussions on U.S.-Canadian climate change strategies, one of the many issues on the EPA's to-do list between now and the end of the Obama administration. McCarthy outlined her agenda during a meeting with reporters Tuesday, focusing on implementing existing Obama-era regulations, finalizing others and expanding her focus on international issues before Obama leaves office in January. The EPA is set to finalize a rule on methane leaks from new oil and gas drilling sites "this spring," McCarthy said. The agency proposed the rule last summer as part of Obama's goal to slash methane emissions by up to 45 percent from 2012 levels over the next decade.

Economic Development

Jobs bill aims to bridge skills gap, Baker says ([WWLP](#)) – If Massachusetts is to continue to nurture its economy and remain competitive on a national and international scale, Gov. Charlie Baker said Tuesday, it must address "the single most significant threat" to its economy: the workforce skills gap. "It was the number one issue that came up at the first National Governors Association I went to in February of 2015. Forty governors were asked what the primary impediment to the growth of their economy was, and literally 35 of them said building the kinds of skills that are going to be required to fill the jobs that are going to be available to drive our economy forward," Baker said. "This is a big issue nationally, and it's a big issue here." With an eye towards addressing that gap, Baker and Economic Development Secretary Jay Ash led the Joint Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies through a briefing on Baker's \$918 million, five-year economic development plan (H 3983), dubbed "Opportunities for All," which Baker said "unleashes the unmatched ingenuity of our citizens."

Public Safety

Gov. Ducey proclaims April 'Child Abuse Prevention Month' ([KPHO](#)) – The governor is partnering with the Department of Child Safety and non-profit organizations across the state to prevent child abuse and provide intervention and treatment to victims. "Every day across our country, nearly five children lose their lives as a result of child abuse and neglect," Ducey said. Last year in Arizona, DCS received more than 135,000 calls to the child abuse hotline, generating in excess of 51,000 reports for investigation of alleged abuse, Ducey noted. "We can and must do better to ensure that our most vulnerable children are protected and given safe, stable and nurturing environments," Ducey said.

Governor Snyder signs bill to increase awareness of human trafficking ([WLNS](#)) - Governor Snyder has signed a bill aimed at increasing awareness of human trafficking in Michigan. The bill includes the National Human Trafficking hotline number to be posted at welcome facilities, train stations, bus stations, rest stops, airports and other public areas. "Michigan has some of the strongest policies in the nation to help support trafficking victims and prevent this horrible crime," said Governor Rick Snyder. "Further increasing the visibility of important help line information and national support services goes one step further in encouraging an end to this dangerous and appalling practice."

Education

Gov. Brownback Proclaims April Financial Literacy Month ([KMUW](#)) – April is officially Financial Literacy Month in Kansas. Gov. Sam Brownback signed the proclamation on Monday as part of a national campaign to help people manage money, investments and debt. According to the Federal Reserve, total consumer debt in the United States is nearly \$3.4 trillion, and about 26 percent of that is in the form of credit cards. Financial Literacy Month has been recognized in other states for more than a decade, and is meant to help educate people on how to be smarter with their money. To do that, the state has created the website [KansasMoney.gov](#), where users can take interactive financial learning courses. It includes information about auto loans, mortgages, identity theft and student loans.

Gov. McCrory Reveals Plan for Teacher Pay Raises ([TWC News](#)) – In a press conference at Ragsdale High School on Tuesday, Gov. Pat McCrory began his 2017 budget roll out by focusing on education. The venue was fitting, since McCrory graduated from the high school in 1974. "I'm here to talk about our future in education, which ties directly to our quality of life and our economic development," he said. While the spending plan has six educational priorities, McCrory spent the bulk of his prepared remarks on the first: respecting and rewarding teachers. McCrory's plan seeks to provide an average five percent increase in pay, which would bring the average teacher salary in North Carolina to more than \$50,000. The plan also calls for an average 3.5 percent increase in teacher bonuses. "Which we think will help with some of the attrition that we're having with both experienced teachers and new teachers," McCrory said.

Healthcare

Special session called with only "Arkansas Works" on agenda ([THV 11](#)) - The idea of expanding Medicaid has been a political fight for nearly three years. It has come up again in a special session beginning on Wednesday and may have its easiest vote so far. But plans to fix other parts of the Medicaid system are obstructing the legislative works. Governor Asa Hutchinson made the call for lawmakers to enter a special session to vote on changes he wants to see made to the state's unique Medicaid expansion. If it passes with added work requirements and other changes, it will be rebranded as "Arkansas Works." After hearing from leadership in both houses of the legislature, the governor did not call for votes on bills to address care for the long-term disabled and mentally disabled. He wants a plan that uses private companies to manage their care. His supporters say it gets the government out of the business and reduces some of the financial risk if costs skyrocket.

Gov. Rauner Creates Health Care Fraud Elimination Task Force ([WAND](#)) - Governor Bruce Rauner announced Tuesday, April 5, that he signed Executive Order 16-05 to create the Health Care Fraud Elimination Task Force. The Governor made the announcement at the Annual Ethics Officer Conference. This Task Force will take a holistic and comprehensive approach in the prevention and elimination of health care fraud, waste and abuse in taxpayer-funded programs. He says this is the first time they are bringing program-specific and agency efforts together to collaborate and take this approach to eliminating health care fraud. "Reducing fraud and waste is critical in state government to ensure we are delivering the best value to consumers and taxpayers," Governor Rauner said.

Governor Branstad signs anti-heroin legislation ([KCCI](#)) - Governor Terry Branstad will sign a bill into a law Wednesday that will allow firefighters, paramedics and police officers to administer drugs to a person who is suffering a heroin overdose. The bill also states that those officers would not face legal liability. The death of a West Des Moines man Monday night is believed to be the result of an unintentional overdose. The number of people who have overdosed on heroin in Iowa has more than tripled since 2010. Paul Feddersen of the Iowa Division of Narcotics Enforcement said the rise in overdoses may be due in part to heroin's potency. The drug is often mixed with a synthetic opiate called fentanyl.

(Nebraska) Children's behavioral health care plan launched ([The Lincoln Journal-Star](#)) - Gov. Pete Ricketts on Tuesday announced that the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services is developing a newly coordinated system of mental health services and support for children and youth who have serious emotional disorders. The system is designed to provide "a complete system of care," the governor said at a news conference with HHS leaders and public and private partners. Courtney Phillips, CEO of HHS, said the partnership is targeted at providing "the right services at the right time and in the right place" with a goal of helping families stay together and thrive in their communities. "We have a heavy lift

ahead," she said, "but it's doable."