

From: RGPPC <RGPPC@rgppc.org>
To: RGPPCRGPPC@rgppc.org
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REPUBLICAN GOVERNORS

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Taxes and Budget

Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan to cut 155 state fees, save \$60 million over five years ([The Washington Times](#)) – Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan on Thursday announced cuts to 155 state fees that are expected to save \$60 million in taxpayer funds over the next five years. Among the targeted fees are a \$1.50 reduction in E-ZPass prices, an elimination of the \$300 application fee for hospice care and a waived entrance charge to state parks for veterans on Veterans Day. Mr. Hogan said none of the reductions would diminish service at any affected agency. "We believe this money will do more good in the hands of the taxpayers than in the hands of the government," the Republican governor said during a press conference in Annapolis.

Energy and Environment

Herbert talks public lands, water conservation ([The Spectrum](#)) - Utah needs to take lessons from the past before jumping headlong into the future, Gov. Gary Herbert said Thursday as he spoke about a potential lawsuit against the federal government over control of public lands and other issues. During a daylong visit to the state's southwestern corner, Herbert interviewed with the editorial team of The Spectrum & Daily News and talked about his challenge against businessman Jonathan Johnson in the Republican Party's June primary. As critics, including Johnson, continue to push for Utah to move ahead with the lawsuit, Herbert has cautioned that such a push with a Democrat still controlling the White House could lead to the immediate designation of a new national monument in the state, waste taxpayer dollars tying up the issue in court and cause various other problems.

Senate passes \$37.5B energy and water bill ([The Hill](#)) – The Senate on Thursday passed a \$37.5 billion package to fund energy and water programs in 2017. Senators approved the bill in a 90-8 vote after weeks of work that included a protracted fight over an amendment related to Iran. With Thursday's vote, the energy and water funding becomes the first 2017 appropriations measure approved this year. "We know that this bill is the result of a great deal of effort, research and collaboration across the aisle," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said. "The energy security and water infrastructure bill is important for our country," he said. "We know it will support public safety, waterways infrastructure, energy innovation [and] our nuclear deterrence posture." Much of the legislation is uncontroversial. It increases funding \$355 million over 2016 levels, with a \$1.163 billion increase for the Department of Energy's defense-related programs and an \$808 million decrease for the nondefense portions of the bill, including other DOE programs and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Gov. Sam Brownback signs STAR bond reform, vehicle registration fee hike ([The Topeka Capital-Journal](#)) – Gov. Sam Brownback signed bills Thursday raising vehicle registration fees to finance state law enforcement activities and to improve oversight of economic development bonds backed by sales tax revenue. The governor convened at the Saline County Courthouse to enact House Bill 2696 providing new funding to the Kansas Highway Patrol and the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center. A \$2 fee hike will generate revenue to improve retention and hiring of troopers at the understaffed Kansas Highway Patrol. A \$1.25 increase in the fee will be credited to the state's training center for law enforcement officers.

Economic Development

Governor Ducey signs Airbnb bill, other sharing economy bills ([The Phoenix Business Journal](#)) – Arizona Governor Doug Ducey has signed three bills revolved around the sharing economy into action. The focal bill was Senate Bill 1350, which prohibits localities from banning short-term rentals, provides mechanisms to collect taxes and allows local governments to determine the details of short-term regulations. That bill, which is now law, was mostly directed toward debate around San Francisco-based, home-sharing service Airbnb. Ducey also signed House Bill 2652, which would "give new start-ups the freedom to choose how to structure their business model," rather than "punish companies for utilizing independent contractors," and Senate Bill 1524, which "will ensure that regulators can't rush to action and hamper

entrepreneurism by applying antiquated regulations to new, evolving ways of doing business."

(Indiana) State launches business web portal INBiz ([The Star Press](#)) – Gov. Mike Pence and Indiana Secretary of State Connie Lawson on May 9 announced the launch of INBiz, the first phase of the state's business one-stop web portal. "INBiz is aimed at streamlining the steps a business takes when registering with the state, including registration, filing, reporting, and making payments," a release stated. "This first phase of the project includes business services within the Secretary of State's office, and will include services from the Department of Revenue and Department of Workforce Development later this year. " The \$9.1 million in funding for the initiative was included in the most recent biennial budget. In March 2014, Governor Pence signed into law House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1198, which mandated executive agency participation in the Business One Stop (now INBiz) online portal.

(North Dakota) Bank breaks ground on \$40 million project ([The Bismarck Tribune](#)) - First International Bank & Trust, a company that started 106 years ago and is headquartered in Watford City, broke ground Wednesday for a six-story building, its largest bank, in Bismarck. Gov. Jack Dalrymple and Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem were among the dignitaries attending the ceremony. The \$40 million structure is set to open in fall 2017 and will be located across from the North Dakota Heritage Center near the intersection of State Street and Divide Avenue. The full-service bank will occupy the first three floors of the building, and there will be a restaurant on the main floor and a rooftop patio for events. A three-story parking garage will be built outside the facility.

Public Safety

Branstad signs criminal justice reforms into law ([The Sioux City Journal](#)) – Gov. Terry Branstad on Thursday signed into law a criminal justice reform package that provides more leniency in sentencing for some crimes and stiffens penalties for another. The bill requires individuals convicted of child endangerment resulting in death to serve at least 15 years of the 50-year sentence before becoming eligible for parole. In addition to the new mandatory minimum sentence for child endangerment causing death, the new law creates softer penalties for a pair of non-violent crimes. The new law makes certain non-violent drug offenders eligible for parole after serving half the mandatory minimum sentence, giving more discretion to the parole board; and it creates a new, third class of robbery, which would make non-violent robbery attempts an aggravated misdemeanor instead of a felony, allowing for lesser penalties in robberies that do not threaten or cause injury.

Governor Mary Fallin signs 'catfishing' legislation ([The Tulsa World](#)) – Legislation to give legal recourse to Oklahoma victims of "catfishing" was signed into law by the governor Wednesday. Catfishing is an online scheme where a predator impersonates someone else in order to trick a victim into giving out personal data and information. The legislation would be the first of its kind in the nation, the author said. House Bill 3024, the "Catfishing Liability Act of 2016" by state Rep. John Paul Jordan, would allow people whose photos or videos are stolen to request an automatic injunction against the person using them. It would also allow those victims to request monetary damages, including a \$500 minimum award in punitive damages.

(Oklahoma) Governor signs new defense bill into law ([The Shawnee News-Star](#)) - Gov. Mary Fallin has signed into law a bill creating a new criminal defense of guilty but with mental defect, a bill introduced this session because of a high-profile Pottawatomie County homicide case. The bill, which will become law on Nov. 1, modifies the state's not guilty by reason of insanity defense. It prohibits anyone diagnosed with anti-social personality disorder who is found guilty but with a mental illness from using the not guilty by reason of insanity defense. Under the law, a plea of guilty with mental defect would result in the same sentence that could be imposed on anyone else convicted of the same crime. Those found guilty under the new law would be examined by the state Department of Mental Health.

Education

Christie touts \$1.3B investment to N.J.'s colleges, universities ([NJ.com](#)) – With Thomas Edison State University's new nursing school as his backdrop, Gov. Chris Christie touted the state's investment in campus construction projects at its colleges and universities, saying it helps stem the tide of students leaving New Jersey for college. "We need our colleges and universities to be responsive to the needs of the folks in our community if we want to keep them here," he said. "Because if we don't respond, they'll go to another state that is responding and they'll not only get their education there, but they'll work there and that brain drain for the state of New Jersey is not something that we want to happen." In 2013, the state announced that it would provide financing to 176 projects at 46 institutions with the help of \$1.3 billion in bond proceeds, including the \$750 million Building Our Future Bond Act that was approved by voter referendum. It marked the first capital investment in higher education since 1988 under former Gov. Tom Kean.