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# REPUBLICAN GOVERNORS

## PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Republican Governors Public Policy Committee  
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### Taxes and Budget

(Nebraska) School property tax bill advancing in Legislature ([KVNO News](#)) – The property tax bill changes several parts of the school aid formula. It does away with penalties for districts that don't levy property taxes of at least 95 cents per \$100 of valuation – that's \$950 a year on a \$100,000 house. Education Committee Chairwoman Sen. Kate Sullivan said doing away with that requirement makes sense. "We have had clear evidence from school board minutes and media reports that some school districts do in fact keep their levies at a higher amount so that they will qualify for that additional aid. (This amendment) does not take away the state aid. It simply removes the excuse to levy at a certain amount to qualify for that aid," Sullivan said.

### Transportation and Infrastructure

Md. Gov. Hogan plans to veto transportation 'scoring' bill ([WaPo](#)) – Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan (R) said Thursday that he plans to veto a bill that would create a new process for prioritizing transportation projects. The measure would make the Hogan administration justify why certain projects should be funded. It is one of several that Democratic legislative leaders hope to present to Hogan no later than Saturday so that if he issues a veto, they can attempt to override. Matthew Clark, a spokesman for Hogan, said the governor declared his intent to veto the transportation bill while announcing funding for a road project in Anne Arundel County. The bill has been approved by both the House and Senate.

### Energy and Environment

(New Mexico) Governor promotes wildfire prevention ([The Albuquerque Journal](#)) - Flanked by Smokey Bear, two dozen firefighters and the Rio Grande bosque, Gov. Susana Martinez on Thursday urged New Mexicans to prepare for the already-arrived wildfire season and to help prevent fires. At a morning news conference at the Rio Grande Nature Center State Park, the governor said this year's fire season is already proving to be an active one. "This week alone, firefighters have responded to fires in several counties throughout the state, and they continue to work around the clock to contain them," Martinez said. "That's what brings us here today – to mark Wildfire Awareness Week, a time to highlight the dangers of wildfires and our ongoing battle to prevent them.

Des Moines Fights to Keep Its Water Clean ([Bloomberg](#)) – In the early spring of 2014, two lab workers for the Des Moines Water Works climbed into a truck and drove north. They pulled over on Highway 20 where the road crosses Cedar Creek, made their way to the water's edge, dunked a cup attached to a pole, then poured the contents into a container. It was the first of 40 outings over the next nine months to collect samples from creeks, ditches, and drainage outlets—72 locations in all—amid the corn and soybean fields north of Des Moines.

### Veterans Initiatives

(Iowa) Governor signs Allen's veterans bill into law ([The Newton Daily News](#)) – Gov. Terry Branstad signed into law Wednesday a law that will give all veterans a final resting place. Sen. Chaz Allen (D-Newton) managed the bill through the Senate, where it was unanimously approved. HF 2266 will allow local veterans organizations to give the unclaimed remains of veterans a proper funeral with military honors and lay them to rest. "HF 2266 begins to help solve a problem that goes unnoticed to many of us — unclaimed remains of those poor souls who have died alone, away from or without their family or were homeless," Allen said. The law creates a process for funeral homes with unclaimed cremated remains to work with the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs to identify them, Allen said. If the remains of a veteran, their spouse or their dependent remain unclaimed, a veterans' organization will make arrangements for inurnment at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery, among other heroes who served our country.

## Economic Development

Pence, officials tout technology, community investment ([The Chicago Tribune](#)) – In May, Pratt Industries in Valparaiso produced enough corrugated cardboard to cover the town of Chesterton. That little-known fact was on a display during tours of the facility held Thursday in conjunction with a visit by Gov. Mike Pence for a ribbon-cutting for an adjacent paper mill. In all, state, local and Pratt officials said the side-by-side facilities on East Division Road provide more than 500 jobs and represent an investment by Pratt of about \$500 million. The 250,000-square-foot paper mill cost \$260 million to build and created 1,500 construction jobs and 100 green-collar manufacturing jobs.

## Education

Arkansas program is doubling college completion rates ([KTHV](#)) – Today, a new study titled College Count\$ demonstrates that low-income students who have participated in the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (CPI) earn associate degrees or technical certificates at more than double the rate of the general community college population in Arkansas. The findings are especially significant considering that students who participate in CPI must qualify for public assistance, live at 250 percent or less of the poverty level and support a family as a custodial parent.

Idaho State University pilots "Tuition Lock" program ([KPVI](#)) – Governor "Butch" Otter announced the program with ISU President Arthur Valias this morning. Idaho State University will be the first public school in the state with the program, but it won't benefit all students. ISU student Natahni Pfeifer says, "Looking back at my freshman years, tuition fees and everything, it has risen quite a bit." Otter gave the go-ahead Thursday morning for a test of a new college "Tuition Lock" pilot program. McKay Hallinan is a freshman at ISU he says, "It would definitely help me a lot more. Just with the fact that I would know what I'm going to spend each four years, and just have to account for books." To qualify students must be an Idaho resident, a first time freshman, take at least 15 credits, and maintain a 2.0 grade point average. If a student has completed at least one semester, he or she can defer and not lose the benefit, but only under certain circumstances. Those include military active duty, religious mission or humanitarian leave. Summers says, "This will be a huge benefit to students as they're trying to plan for their future and to be able to be successful at Idaho State University."

## Healthcare

Hutchinson to reduce disability waiting list by half ([The Stuttgart Daily Leader](#)) - Gov. Asa Hutchinson pledged Wednesday to use savings from his managed-care plan for Medicaid, if approved by the Legislature, to cut the state's waiting list for services for the developmentally disabled in half within three years. In a speech to the Governor's Medicaid Advisory Council, Hutchinson said nearly 3,000 developmentally disabled Arkansans are on the waiting list for home- and community-based services, and 125 of them have been on the list since 2007. "That's a long time," he said. "We have an obligation as a state to deal with that. Some people have even mentioned that we could be sued because we're not properly dealing with the waiting list."

As Fentanyl Deaths Spike, States and CDC Respond ([Pew Stateline](#)) - When Ohio tallied what many already knew was an alarming surge in overdose deaths from an opioid known as fentanyl, the state asked the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to investigate. The rash of fatal overdoses in Ohio — a more than fivefold increase in 2014 — was not an isolated outbreak. Fentanyl is killing more people than heroin in many parts of the country. And the death toll will likely keep growing, said CDC investigators Matt Gladden and John Halpin at the fifth annual Rx Drug Abuse and Heroin Summit here. Fentanyl, used in its legal pharmaceutical form to treat severe pain, represents the latest evolution of an epidemic of opioid addiction that began with prescription painkillers and moved to heroin, as users demanded cheaper drugs and greater highs.