

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

PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

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Recommended Read

Gov. Kasich signs online voter registration bill into law ([The Vindicator](#)) - Eligible voters will be able to complete their registrations online starting next year, under legislation signed into law by Gov. John Kasich today. The governor added his signature to SB 63 without comment during a private ceremony at the Statehouse. Republican Secretary of State Jon Husted, an advocate of the move, and Sen. Frank LaRose (R-Copley), who sponsored the legislation, were among the invited guests on hand. "Today is a great day for voters as we can now move forward with implementing one of the most valuable new tools we have in our efforts to make it easier to vote and harder to cheat," Husted said in a released statement afterward. "Online voter registration is easy for voters, effective in fighting voter fraud and less costly than paper registrations alone." The legislation requires Husted's office to establish and launch the secure, online registration system in January 2017. Under the terms of the bill, applicants will have to provide their names, addresses, birth dates, the last four digits of their Social Security numbers and their driver's license or state identification card number to complete the process.

Energy and Environment

Wyoming and Feds Agree to Teton Land Deal ([KTWO](#)) - Representing an important step for Grand Teton National Park, its philanthropic partners, and the State of Wyoming, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and Wyoming Governor Matt Mead today announced an agreement to allow for the purchase and permanent protection of two State school land parcels located within the park. "I am pleased the sale of these state parcels inside the Park is moving forward," said Governor Mead. "This sale will fulfill our responsibility to realize the greatest return possible for the state lands involved and will bring revenue to the Common School Permanent Land Fund. The agreement still needs to be considered and approved by the Wyoming Board of Land Commissioners."

Senate sends pipeline safety bill to Obama ([The Hill](#)) – The Senate on Monday unanimously passed a bill to reauthorize the federal pipeline safety oversight board, sending the measure to President Obama for his signature. The bill extends the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). It also makes a handful of changes to PHMSA safety policies, including an effort to provide more insight into the regulatory process and giving the Department of Transportation more power in the event of pipeline emergencies. It also directs PHMSA to finalize regulations Congress directed it to write in its 2011 reauthorization measure. The bill was a bipartisan product in both the Senate and the House, which passed it unanimously last week.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Gov. Rauner reviewing bill aimed at capping tow fees ([The Telegraph](#)) - Gov. Bruce Rauner is reviewing a bill aimed at controlling costly tow fees in Illinois, a spokesperson for the governor said. The city of Alton charges tow-release fees for police-ordered impoundments ranging from \$100 to \$500, depending on why the vehicle was towed. On top of those administrative fees, vehicle owners often have to pay the tow company for towing and storage. The bill (SB2261) would limit municipal administrative fees to actual towing cost and would give owners 48 hours to move their car from illegal parking places before impoundment.

Michigan bike tragedy leads to introduction of bills ([The Detroit Free Press](#)) – The death of five bicyclists, who were among nine riders struck by a pickup during a group ride Tuesday near Kalamazoo, prompted state lawmakers to introduce legislation that would deal with such incidents. State Sens. Margaret O'Brien, R-Portage, and David Knezek, D-Dearborn Heights, introduced legislation last week that would expand existing law which makes it a felony punishable by 15 years in prison for a driver who is involved in a motor vehicle accident that causes serious physical injury or death. The law would be expanded to include injury or death to a "vulnerable roadway user," such as pedestrians, bicyclists or people in wheelchairs.

(New Jersey) Lawmakers outline tax 'shift' to rescue transportation fund ([NorthJersey.com](#)) - A package of proposed cuts to retirement and estate taxes in New Jersey would cost the state government \$1 billion a year in lost revenue, to be partially offset by \$500 million in tax increases to fund the state's transportation network, backers of the plan said

Monday. That package is part of a proposed grand bargain between Democratic and Republican state senators to reduce taxes on seniors, retirees and low-income residents while increasing taxes on motorists, including out-of-state drivers who use New Jersey's roads. "Everybody thinks we're raising a tax. Actually what we're doing is shifting" more of the tax burden onto out-of-state drivers, said Sen. Steve Oroho, R-Sussex. Governor Christie said Monday the plan would "be about a \$1.4 billion tax increase." During a speech to the Morris County Chamber of Commerce, Christie said proposals to phase out the estate tax in three years do not go quickly enough.

Economic Development

(Nebraska) Manufacturing company Geist previews new Lincoln headquarters ([The Omaha World-Herald](#)) – A company here that makes super-sized, complex power strips and other equipment for data centers is an example of an American manufacturer that can compete internationally, Gov. Pete Ricketts said Monday. He toured the new \$12.5 million, 87,000-square-foot headquarters of Geist, the largest division of PCE Inc. of Lincoln, getting a preview of the company's ribbon-cutting and open house scheduled for Friday. "As we look to grow jobs and create opportunities for people, especially our young people here in Nebraska, manufacturing offers wonderful opportunities to help do that," the governor said.

Gov. Scott Walker in Mexico for weeklong trade mission ([Fox 6](#)) - Gov. Scott Walker is in Mexico on a trade mission. Walker's office on Monday, June 13th announced that Walker held a variety of meetings in Mexico City at the start of the weeklong trade mission. Walker has met with governmental officials in Mexico's international trade and investment agency as well as Mexico's secretary for foreign relations. The governor is joined on the trip by members of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corp. and the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. The Walker administration says the purpose of the trade mission is to strengthen trade and investment ties between Wisconsin and Mexico. The state exported nearly \$3 billion worth of products to Mexico last year.

Supreme Court rules Puerto Rico can't restructure debt ([The Hill](#)) – The Supreme Court ruled Monday that Puerto Rico can't restructure the debts of its public utilities to avoid a financial crisis, closing off one of the island's last remaining options for avoiding default without help from Congress. In a 5-2 ruling, the justices said that although the government and people of Puerto Rico should not have to wait for possible congressional action to avert a financial crisis, the Constitution does not allow them to rewrite a statute that Congress enacted in 1984. While states can allow municipalities to seek such debt relief, the lower court said, Congress had not given Puerto Rico that right. "The plain text of the Bankruptcy Code begin and ends our analysis," Justice Clarence Thomas wrote in the majority opinion. "Resolving whether Puerto Rico is a 'state' for purposes of the pre-emption provisions begins 'with the language of the statute itself,' and that 'is also where the inquiry should end' for 'the statute's language is plain.' "

Public Safety

(Illinois) EpiPen Legislation Awaiting Governor's Signature ([WRSP](#)) – A bill awaiting Governor Rauner's signature would give Illinois police training and authorization to carry Epinephrine auto-injectors to help with severe allergic reactions. The measure is named after an Illinois girl who died after having a severe allergic reaction. Her mother has made it her mission to equip first responders with the injectors. She wants to allocate money raised by her non-profit organization to police departments in order for them to buy the equipment. The Governor's office says the bill is under review.

(Tennessee) Legislature focuses on public safety ([The Daily Herald](#)) - Public Safety headlined legislative action in the second session of the 109th General Assembly as lawmakers approved a major bill to reduce crime and provide for more efficient and effective sentencing. Highlights of the 2016-2017 budget includes giving the Department of Safety \$1.2 million to add 12 new Highway Patrol officers, plus an additional \$4.1 million for salary adjustments for its commissioned officers. The new budget also ensures troopers will receive 100 percent of their salary survey funding and provides \$1 million for communications systems improvements in the Department of Safety. The largest public safety expenditure, however, is \$20 million to help keep communities safe and prisons secure. Approximately \$18 million will be used to implement the "Public Safety Act," which will help to reduce the state's recidivism rate and more efficiently sentence violent offenders.

Education

FOCUS Act gives Tenn. public universities more control ([WCYB](#)) - Tennessee's governor was at ETSU to sign the FOCUS Act into law. The act will allow public universities to create its own governing board. Right now, 46 schools including ETSU fall under the Tennessee Board of Regents. But Governor Bill Haslam said each school is different. So he hopes this act will help schools get the individualized attention they need. With a stroke of a pen, the governor changed the direction of higher education in Tennessee. It's a move ETSU president Dr. Brian Noland said puts them on par with the rest of the country. "We have been an outlier in that we've not had a board that governs the institution," Dr. Noland said. The law allows six public universities in the state to create their own governing boards. Haslam said the new law empowers schools.

Healthcare

Kasich signs foster-care extension law ([The Columbus Dispatch](#)) - Hundreds of Ohio's most traumatized and vulnerable teens should soon have the chance to tap into a few more years of support before they have to make it on their own. Gov. John Kasich signed a bill into law Monday that extends foster-care eligibility to age 21, adding Ohio to the growing

number of states that have decided teens shouldn't automatically age out of the system when they turn 18. More than 1,000 Ohio foster youths exit foster care each year after their 18th birthdays, with many quickly falling into poverty and homelessness, early parenthood or legal trouble.