

From: RGPPC <RGPPC@rgppc.org>
To: RGPPCRGPPC@rgppc.org
Date: 6/20/2016 8:44:23 AM
Subject: RGPPC Policy & Press



REPUBLICAN GOVERNORS

PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Policy & Press | June 20, 2016

Transportation and Infrastructure

(Maryland) New Bus Routes To Connect Riders To Suburbs More Quickly ([CBS Baltimore](#)) – Come Monday morning, there will be a new way to travel in and around Baltimore. Express BusLink is the first phase of the BaltimoreLink program, creating new bus routes around the city and giving MTA riders an easier way to travel. It's the beginning of the biggest change Baltimore's mass transit system has seen in more than 50 years. The new routes have less stops and use roadways where traffic moves more quickly, giving riders an easier suburb to suburb connection. "This plan says that you don't have to come downtown if you're not going downtown... You can just go to where you want to go," said Comfort. Announced in October of 2015 as part of Governor Larry Hogan's \$135 million transit plan, the new routes will give commuters better access to jobs and opportunities. "There are about 145,000 jobs in the downtown business district of Baltimore, but there are 600,000 other jobs around this metro area. So this is allowing people to get to those jobs as well," Comfort said.

Tech Mahindra to help modernize Nevada's Department of Motor Vehicles ([Enterprise Innovation](#)) - The Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) of the US State of Nevada has selected Tech Mahindra to be the prime systems integrator for a system modernization project that would modernize its operations. The proposed digital solution, MOVES, will provide better customer service, reduce transaction processing time, and increase speed-to-market of offered NV DMV products and services. "This is not just a technology upgrade. We are creating a motor vehicle agency that will be second to none in delivering fast and efficient service to the public," said Department of Motor Vehicles Director Terri L. Albertson. "It is also a great example of innovation and responsive state government under Governor Brian Sandoval's Nevada Strategic Planning Framework for the next five years."

Economic Development

Alabama Office of Minority Affairs is second of its kind in U.S. ([The Tuscaloosa News](#)) – Alabama is the second state in the country to have a cabinet level position for minority affairs, the first being Maryland. "Alabama has a unique history in promoting civil rights for minorities, and the courage and boldness of our citizens is a testament to the principles on which our state and country were founded," Bentley said in his announcement about the office. "The newly created Governor's Office of Minority Affairs will be a great resource and a new perspective on addressing minority and women's issues. My goal is to make Alabama stronger, and minorities and women are an important component of the Great State 2019 Plan." In the last decade, the number of minorities in Alabama has grown. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, women made up 51.5 percent of the population. In 2000, the number was 48.5 percent.

Indiana's Unemployment Rate Drops ([WIMS](#)) - Governor Mike Pence praised the news about Indiana's unemployment rate dropping 0.2 percent in May, from 5.2 percent to 5.0 percent. The report, issued by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, showed that Indiana's economy made strong gains in Trade, Transportation and Utilities. Indiana's economy continues to grow stronger, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics report released by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. The state has added 38,300 new jobs over the last year and 147,800 new jobs since January 2013, with employment growing at a rate of 5.9 percent.

The Regional Job Credentials Gap ([Governing](#)) - Regional differences in education requirements are vast. A review of 2015 occupational employment data and Census estimates of educational attainment for each occupation suggests that smaller metro areas aligned with manufacturing or tourism in the Sun Belt and Midwest tend to have the fewest jobs needing postsecondary education. By comparison, jobs in tech-heavy areas such as North Carolina's Research Triangle; San Jose, Calif.; or metropolitan Washington, D.C., are up to twice as likely to require at least a bachelor's degree. When there's a mismatch of jobs and education, the consequences can be detrimental for a region. Areas lose population and risk a "brain drain" of college graduates. "If you don't have the workforce, you certainly won't get the industry," Carnevale says. "If you don't have the industry, you don't need the workforce. It's a race to the bottom."

Public Safety

(Nebraska) Corrections Department to use one-time \$1.5 million in funding to retain, recruit staff ([The Omaha World-Herald](#)) – State corrections officials will use a one-time, extra allocation of \$1.5 million to improve recruitment and retention of staff by paying employees for continuing education and paying bonuses to those who commute long distances. A department spokesman said that providing salary increases for long service — long sought by corrections officers — will be discussed during collective bargaining talks that begin later this year. On Wednesday, State Corrections Director Scott Frakes announced several steps in response to state lawmakers' concerns that his agency wasn't doing enough to address excessive employee turnover and job vacancies.

Education

(Oklahoma) Educators look at why fewer third-graders are failing state reading exam ([The Tulsa World](#)) – The number of third-graders meeting minimum reading benchmarks has continued to tick upward in the three years since Oklahoma tied reading scores to advancement to the fourth grade, preliminary results from the state Department of Education show. That raises the question of whether the controversial high-stakes exam is working by forcing schools and parents to ensure more third-graders read better. The goal of the approach, which is used in other states, is to push students from a "learn to read" to a "read to learn" level by fourth grade. Whether the testing itself make a difference remains unclear. Oklahoma Watch talked to a state Department of Education official and two educators about their view on what is nudging up the scores. Statewide, 88 percent of students qualified for automatic promotion to the fourth grade, leaving 12 percent at risk of being held back unless they qualify for an exemption. That compares to 14.6 percent of students who did not pass the exam in 2015 and 16.3 percent who failed to pass in 2014.

Healthcare

Florida's Mosquito Control Forces Mobilize Against Zika Threat ([KHN](#)) - "We are not just killing mosquitoes, we are disease hunters," said Miqueli, a biologist for Broward County Mosquito Control, which is based west of Fort Lauderdale. Miqueli is on the front line in the ground war against this year's two most-feared urban mosquitoes — *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* (also known as the yellow fever mosquito and Asian tiger mosquito, respectively). Both can spread the dangerous Zika virus, which causes devastating birth defects in babies and has been called a global health emergency by the World Health Organization. The United States has seen more than 700 Zika cases in the past year, all of them related to people traveling from Brazil and countries in Latin America and the Caribbean where they were infected. Florida, the main U. S. gateway to those regions, leads all other states with 185 cases as of June 16. Broward County's 24 cases is second only to neighboring Miami-Dade's tally of 55.

(Massachusetts) States could get funds to battle opioid abuse ([The Eagle Tribune](#)) - The state could be in line for \$20 million in federal money to widen treatment for opioid addiction as part of a White House proposal. If approved by Congress, the plan would send money to states based on their fatal overdoses in 2014 and their "treatment gap" -- a measure of the number of addicts seeking treatment but who cannot get it due to scarcity or cost. President Barack Obama's fiscal year 2017 budget includes \$920 million for states to expand opioid prevention, treatment and recovery. Massachusetts could be eligible to apply for up to \$20 million over two years. Massachusetts had the nation's 13th highest rate of fatal overdoses in 2014, according to the White House, with nearly 20 people in every 100,000 dying from drug poisoning. That's slightly higher than the national average of 14.7 for every 100,000 people.

Wisconsin Needs More Health Care Workers For Aging Population ([WPR](#)) - As the population in the U.S. ages, additional health care workers are vital to supporting the growing number of people with Alzheimer's and dementia, according to a report released earlier this week. Alzheimer's and dementia rates continue to rise, putting Wisconsin on path to double the more than 110,000 people affected by the disease in the next 10 to 15 years, according to the report released by Rep. Mike Rohrkaste, R-Neenah, chair of the Speaker's Task Force on Alzheimer's and Dementia. Alzheimer's and dementia are the sixth-leading cause of death in Wisconsin and the only top 10 cause with growing rates, the report said. The diseases continues to increase in the state for a couple of reasons, Rohrkaste said. "You have a large population of baby boomers who are getting older, and age is where it starts to show up more," Rohrkaste said. "We are living longer as well." The task force identified two main areas of needed improvement: greater respite care services and resources for those in a crisis situation.

GOP to unveil ObamaCare replacement plan ([The Hill](#)) - House Republicans will unveil their long-awaited ObamaCare replacement plan on Wednesday. The plan is part of Speaker Paul Ryan's (R-Wis.) broader effort to show that Republicans have policy ideas and a positive agenda. Ryan will speak on the plan at an event on Wednesday at the American Enterprise Institute, alongside the committee chairmen who helped draft it. The plan will include a tax credit to help people afford insurance and a cap on the current exclusion of employer-based health insurance plans from taxation. However, it will not include specific dollar amounts on how large the tax credit would be, nor will it note which employer health insurance plans would be subject to taxation, lobbyists and aides said. On more bipartisan terrain, the Senate finally voted last week to go to conference with the House on opioid legislation and lawmakers expressed hope that they are nearing a deal.