

From: RGPPC <RGPPC@rgppc.org>
To: RGPPCRGPPC@rgppc.org
Date: 4/29/2016 8:52:55 AM
Subject: RGPPC Policy & Press



REPUBLICAN GOVERNORS

PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Policy & Press | April 29, 2016

Taxes and Budget

(North Dakota) Governor orders financial fixes after land board's audit ([The Bismarck Tribune](#)) – Gov. Jack Dalrymple has ordered the head of the North Dakota Department of Trust Lands on Thursday to fix areas highlighted in a recent performance audit that found accounting errors and noncompliance issues. "Whether you disagree with it or not, I've looked through it and I think you need to take their recommendations and make those changes," Gov. Jack Dalrymple, who chairs the five-member land board, said.

Governor Fallin signs civil asset forfeiture legislation ([AP](#)) - Oklahomans whose assets are unjustly seized through the civil asset forfeiture process can recover their attorney fees under a new state law. Gov. Mary Fallin on Thursday signed legislation passed by the House and Senate that allows for the recovery of attorney fees in forfeiture cases. Republican Sen. David Holt of Oklahoma City authored the bill and says he believes it will encourage people whose assets are unjustly taken to fight back. In the past, Holt says, some individuals who felt their assets were unjustly seized may not have fought to get them back because they couldn't afford a lawyer. He says the measure may also encourage lawyers to take on such cases.

Transportation and Infrastructure

Christie Announces Mandatory Customer Service Training For MVC Workers ([ABC 7](#)) - New Jersey Governor Chris Christie on Thursday announced additional customer service training for New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (MVC) employees, with all employees at every level, including Chief Administrator Raymond Martinez, being immediately required to undergo thorough customer service training during the course of the next year. "Providing outstanding customer service at the MVC and throughout state government has been a key component of my administration," Christie said. "While the MVC already has set the bar high for service, increased training can only make for a better experience for our residents." Christie said the enhanced training will focus on customer service fundamentals, such as treating people as valued customers, proper phone etiquette and calling back customers within a reasonable amount of time - at most, within one business day.

New House caucus will help keep hackers out of cars ([The Hill](#)) – Four House members on Thursday established a new caucus focused on connected and self-driving cars. The House Smart Transportation Caucus comes as autonomous driving is quickly becoming a reality, with internet-enabled devices within vehicles sparking fears of remote hacking. The bipartisan group said it will focus on identifying policies that make sure these new technologies are safe for drivers and secure from digital intruders. Together, the group will look at a wide range of new-age transportation tools, such as upcoming transit and parking technologies, alternative traffic and freight management systems, and "smart infrastructure," or structures such as buildings and roads that are embedded with sensors to collect and analyze data.

Economic Development

Iowa General Assembly passes anti-BDS legislation ([The Times of Israel](#)) – Iowa's senate passed a measure Wednesday aimed to deter corporate entities from participating in the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israel. The bill passed by a vote of 38-9, after advancing through the Iowa House of Representatives by a vote of 70-24 in February, and now moves to the office of Iowa's Republican governor, Terry Branstad, who must decide whether to sign it into law. "This law does not say a group cannot boycott Israel or advocate for boycotting Israel. It does not penalize any private party's exercise of free speech," Sabag said in a statement released by the Israel advocacy group StandWithUS, which also lobbied for the bill's passage. "What this law does say is that the legislature controls taxpayer money, and it decides where to invest it and where to spend it."

In Germany, Snyder highlights Michigan's industrial research ([AP](#)) - Gov. Rick Snyder said his visit to a massive industrial trade show in Germany and his planned stops in other European countries are helping him highlight Michigan as a site of cutting-edge manufacturing research that can attract foreign business to the state. The governor said Tuesday that he made 34 stops Monday at Hannover Messe, the world's largest industrial technology event. In visits with manufacturing

suppliers and organizations, he touted Detroit's turnaround and two federally-funded research facilities in the city — the Institute for Advanced Composites Manufacturing Innovation and the American Lightweight Materials Manufacturing Innovation Institute — that specialize in advanced composites and lightweight materials for automobiles and planes.

(Nevada) Tourism committee backs room tax increase for convention center upgrades ([The Las Vegas Review Journal](#)) – The Southern Nevada Tourism Infrastructure Committee all but signed off Thursday on a proposal to fund the expansion and improvement of the Las Vegas Convention Center. Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority officials have a \$1.4 billion plan they say is necessary to keep the center competitive with convention facilities in other cities, which are working to lure meetings and trade show business away from Southern Nevada. To pay for the upgrades, the committee would recommend adding 0.5 or 0.6 percentage points to the existing Southern Nevada room tax rate, which ranges from 10 percent to 12 percent, depending on the property, and removing a \$25 million cap on the total revenue the authority can receive above its approved budget. The committee, formed by Gov. Brian Sandoval to evaluate projects that support the region's tourism economy, must issue its nonbinding recommendations to the Nevada Legislature this summer. A tax increase would require the approval of the Legislature.

Raiders owner willing to spend \$500 million on move to Las Vegas ([The Las Vegas Sun](#)) - Oakland Raiders owner Mark Davis said today he was serious about moving his team to Las Vegas and offered a half-billion-dollar pledge for a proposed \$1.4 billion, 65,000-seat domed football stadium. Davis told an influential tourism committee gathered at UNLV that the Raiders would put up \$500 million toward the stadium if Nevada legislators approve public funding for the project and other NFL owners allow the team to relocate. Those significant obstacles would remain in the way of the stadium project, even after it's been thoroughly vetted by the tourism panel. "We do want to be your partners. We're not coming in looking for a free handout," Davis said. "I want to tell you what I told Gov. Sandoval a few weeks ago: Together, we can turn the Silver State into the Silver and Black State." Overall, the stadium would be paid for with \$750 million in public money and \$650 million in private funds, backers told the 11-member committee of leaders from Nevada's public and private sectors.

Public Safety

Governor Sam Brownback Announces Kansas Is Withdrawing From Refugee Resettlement Program ([The Sentinel Times](#)) – Governor Sam Brownback on Monday notified the Obama Administration that the State of Kansas is withdrawing from the federal government's refugee relocation program due to concerns for the safety of Kansans. Beginning in November 2015, the Governor attempted to work with the federal government to address security concerns related to resettlement of some refugees in Kansas. "We made a reasonable request of the Obama Administration to provide us with information we need to help protect the safety and security of Kansans," said Governor Brownback. "Because the federal government has failed to provide adequate assurances regarding refugees it is settling in Kansas, we have no option but to end our cooperation with and participation in the federal refugee resettlement program."

Education

Ducey, lawmakers looking to restore education cuts ([The Arizona Sun](#)) – Gov. Doug Ducey is counting on rank-and-file lawmakers to restore some of the cuts in public school funding -- cuts that are in the budget deal he negotiated with Republican legislative leaders. And there are signs that's going to happen. A tentative agreement being negotiated late Thursday would reverse a year-old decision by lawmakers to change how the state calculates aid to schools. The result would be to restore money that schools would have lost in the agreement announced earlier this week. The deal being worked on also would scrap a proposed change in law that would penalize districts which use their own taxpayer dollars to construct needed new schools.

(Tennessee) Database to track driving records of school bus drivers ([WKRN](#)) - Governor Bill Haslam signed a bill that would set up a process for alerting school districts and child care agencies when their drivers have issues with their driving history. Starting in July, the Department of Safety will create a database of all of the state's school bus drivers. Before your kids head to the bus stop every day, your school will be able to check and see if there has been an issue with anyone's driving record. School officials are very excited about this and worked closely with lawmakers as they were putting it together.

Healthcare

Gov. Pence signs new pharmacy laws to combat meth problem ([WNDU](#)) - Indiana lawmakers want to make it tougher for meth makers to get the products they need to make the drug. The new laws make it more difficult for convicted felons and first time pharmacy customers to buy drugs that contain pseudoephedrine. This week, governor Mike Pence signed three new laws related to the sale of cold medicines containing pseudoephedrine. The signing happened at Webb's Family Pharmacy in Rochester. Owner Harry Webb testified several times at the state capitol this year in favor of the new laws hoping to combat the meth problem in places like Fulton County. "But it's going to end the smurfing, which is repetitive sales. They come in in droves. Some stores have sold around 60 boxes of pseudoephedrine products in just a few short hours. It's going to put an end to that practice," Webb said. Under the law, anyone with a felony drug conviction will be reported on a national database if they're suspected of trying to buy large quantities of pseudoephedrine.

Synthetic Drugs Send States Scrambling ([Pew Stateline](#)) – It's been four months since anyone in Broward County,

Florida, has died from an overdose of alpha-PVP, known as flakka, a crystal-like synthetic drug meant to imitate cocaine or methamphetamine. But the drug has already taken a deadly toll, and left health and law enforcement officials scrambling to stem a new public health crisis. Flakka is among a growing number of addictive and dangerous synthetic drugs being produced easily and cheaply with man-made chemicals in clandestine labs in China. But because the drugs were largely unregulated when they first hit the market, some states have struggled to combat them. Now legislators, health professionals and police are trying to eradicate the drugs by making it easier to qualify them as illegal and ramping up the criminal penalties for selling them.

Medicare battle brewing on Capitol Hill ([The Hill](#)) - An Obama administration proposal aimed at fighting high drug prices is facing a backlash on Capitol Hill. Republicans say the pilot program that would change how Medicare pays for certain drugs should be scrapped, while congressional Democrats are expressing serious concerns and seeking changes, but generally do not want to terminate it completely. Rep. Larry Bucshon (R-Ind.) told *The Hill* that he plans to introduce a bill on Friday that would block the program; he expects some Democrats to support it. At issue is a five-year pilot program that would change the way Medicare Part B pays for drugs. Currently, Medicare pays doctors the average price of a drug plus 6 percent. The administration warns that system gives doctors an incentive to prescribe higher cost drugs so that they get paid more. The pilot program would reduce the 6 percent add-on to 2.5 percent plus a flat fee of about \$16.