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REPUBLICAN GOVERNORS

PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Republican Governors Public Policy Committee
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Recommended Read

Why Hogan is so Popular ([Southern Maryland News Net](#)) – Poll after poll shows Governor Larry Hogan with stunningly high approval ratings among Maryland voters. He had done a skillful job of building on what was widely seen as an upset victory in the 2014 election to position himself as a formidable candidate for reelection in 2018. What are the ingredients of his popularity? For one, Hogan ran a campaign that took advantage of voter fatigue with eight years of Democratic Gov. Martin O'Malley. Perhaps even more important was the remarkably inept campaign run by Lt. Gov. Anthony Brown. Rather than run on the positive accomplishments of the prior eight years, Brown ran a timid, apologetic campaign that never offered an effective rebuttal to Hogan's focus on increased taxes and regulation and a "hostile" business climate. Additionally, because Hogan's campaign was light on any specific policy proposals, he was able to take office with a relatively clean slate and an absence of concrete expectations.

Taxes and Budget

(Georgia) Budget passed to help children and family organizations ([Fox 31](#)) – County organizations that help improve the lives of children and families in Georgia could soon see a boost in funds for 2017. The Georgia House passed the fiscal year 2017 budget for Georgia Family Connection Partnership Collaborative to restore \$1000 dollars to each county's collaborative. "We are extremely excited about this kind of support. Each year the Georgia general assembly appropriates state funds for the family connection collaborative in all 159 counties," said Gaye Smith, Executive Director for Georgia Family Connection Partnership. The budget passed by the house would mean counties will see an increase from \$46,000 to \$47,000. The fund increase could help counties with staffing and data.

Energy and Environment

Herbert stops state-led efforts to meet EPA standards while courts battle ([KUTV](#)) – Gov. Gary Herbert has stopped all state-led efforts aimed at clean energy standards set out by the Environmental Protection Agency. The temporary halt comes in the wake of a fight with the U.S. Supreme Court over clean energy expectations and standards. Utah is one of 27 states challenging the EPA in court arguing their expectations for states are not reasonable. The governor has said there is no sense wasting government resources on a plan to implement clean energy that is caught in the courts. Clean air, advocates say, litigation or not, is important and Utah needs to keep working on clean power which will lead to clean air and reduction of emissions that fuel global warming. The governor says the EPA's expectations are simply not realistic and until they are, state funds will not be used.

Economic Development

Ricketts urges business community to do all it can to recruit, retain Nebraska's young workers ([Omaha.com](#)) – Running state government like a business has cut growth in the state budget and even cut hold times at a help center for food stamp recipients, Gov. Pete Ricketts told a business audience Thursday in Omaha. He pitched Nebraska as "the best place in the world to live" but said it remains a challenge to keep college-educated young Nebraskans in the state. To that end, he is trying to make Nebraska a more attractive place to do business through a combination of tax relief, infrastructure investment and reforming state government programs, including the requirements to receive unemployment insurance payments.

Disabled South Dakotans tops in nation for jobs ([KELO](#)) - South Dakota has the highest employment rate in the nation for people with disabilities. The 2015 Disability Statistics Annual Report from the Federal Government shows that the employment rate for disabled South Dakotans is 50.1 percent. State Department of Human Services Secretary Gloria Pearson said, "Employment for people with disabilities is one of the prime initiatives of the department and we are pleased to see

these statistics." The reports shows that 34.4 percent of U.S. civilians with disabilities ages 18-64 were employed, compared to 75.4 percent for people without disabilities – a gap of 41 percentage points. There is state variation in the rates of employment for persons with disabilities, from South Dakota's high of 50.1 percent to a low of 25.6 percent. For people without disabilities, state rates ranged from 83.9 percent to 70.4 percent.

Public Safety

Oklahoma Gov. Fallin order removes felony convictions from state job applications ([AP](#)) – Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin has issued an executive order directing state agencies to eliminate questions about prior felony convictions from state job applications. Fallin says the order issued Wednesday will give applicants for state jobs who have criminal records at least an initial opportunity to be considered for employment without the stigma of a conviction record. The governor's order does not prevent state agencies from conducting background checks on prospective employees or inquiring about their histories during the interview process.

Education

(Arkansas) Coding With the Governor ([KARK](#)) – In 2015, Arkansas became the first to pass a law requiring Coding to be taught in every high school. The man behind the mandate, Governor Asa Hutchinson. KARK's Ashley Ketz joined the nearly 4,000 Arkansas students currently enrolled in Computer Science courses to take a crash course of her own. With the Governor as her classmate, they picked up on a few things in an hour. Third period was especially quiet in the North Little Rock classroom we visited, because it's not every day the Governor is sitting next to you. Having a live Coding Instructor, like Justin Cobb, isn't the norm, especially in Arkansas' rural schools where students take courses online through a program called "Virtual Arkansas". "As you can see here, the teacher makes the difference," Governor Hutchinson said. That is why the state's new Coding mandate has set aside \$5 million to train teachers. "It's probably one of the most rewarding things I've done in public service, is to see this kind of change in a school environment, motivating young people, giving them greater opportunities and moving Arkansas a step up nationally and to be a leader. " Governor Hutchinson said.

Gov. Otter announces private medical school ([CDA Press](#)) - Gov. Butch Otter announced plans Thursday for a \$105 million private medical school on Idaho State University's Meridian Health Care Campus. Moments after the State Board of Education approved the public-private partnership the governor held a press conference to announce the project. "This is an exciting day for the entire state of Idaho," Otter said, adding he has always been a strong supporter of medical education and joked about the political drubbing he took in 2007 for suggesting Idaho build its own medical school. Otter said the state has agreed to negotiate a public-private agreement with Burrell, which includes the investors spending \$32 million to build the new school on land leased on Idaho State University's Meridian Health Care Campus. "The best part is it's all funded with private investment," Otter said. The state will not provide any operating funds to the college either, but the state still has a significant investment in the project with an estimated \$3.9 million in tax reimbursements over a 10-year period. The new college is expected to employ 90 people at an average salary of \$88,300 per year.

Healthcare

Kentucky Governor Revamping Medicaid and Taking a Cue from Indiana ([WKYU](#)) - When the federal Affordable Care Act was rolled out, Indiana was faced with the same dilemma as other states: give health coverage to more of the uninsured by expanding Medicaid, while taking on hundreds of millions of dollars in costs. Indiana Governor Mike Pence persuaded the federal government to approve an alternative for his state. Just over a year ago, the state implemented the Healthy Indiana Plan 2.0. Kentucky Governor Matt Bevin wants to launch a similar program as he looks to revamp his state's Medicaid system. In the year since Indiana implemented the Healthy Indiana Plan 2.0, or HIP, more than 370,000 Hoosiers have enrolled in the program. Among them is Mary Buchanan, who is self-employed. A shoulder injury no longer allows her to work full-time. By working less, the 63-year-old from Rockport couldn't afford the private insurance she used to carry. She picked up the Healthy Indiana Plan 2.0, or HIP, about a year ago.

Christie Administration Continues Investment in New Jersey's Healthcare System ([Cape May County Herald](#)) - Governor Christie's Fiscal Year 2017 budget supports New Jersey's healthcare system with \$775.1 million in hospital funding including charity care, medical education and quality improvement. The proposed budget includes \$352 million for charity care, \$166.6 million for the hospital incentive program known as Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment (DSRIP) and \$188 million for Graduate Medical Education (GME), a \$60.7 million increase from last year's budget to support our teaching hospitals. The Governor's proposed budget also includes \$24.7 million for Hospital Mental Health Offset Payments and \$43.8 million for the support of University Hospital. A total of 49 hospitals are participating in DSRIP, which rewards hospitals for achieving measurable improvement in quality. All 42 hospitals with teaching programs for interns and residents will benefit from the GME program. The Christie administration has increased funding for the GME program by \$128 million since 2010.

McConnell moving forward with drug abuse bill ([The Hill](#)) - Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said Thursday that he plans to bring forward a bipartisan bill to fight the opioid crisis "in the coming days," but a partisan fight lurks over the question of funding. McConnell said that he is planning to bring up the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) soon. The bill has bipartisan support and passed the Judiciary Committee on a voice vote. CARA authorizes funding for a range of programs to fight the epidemic of prescription drug and heroin abuse, including education

and prevention, as well as boosting the availability of naloxone, a drug to treat overdoses.