

From: RGPPC <RGPPC@rgppc.org>
To: RGPPCRGPPC@rgppc.org
Date: 6/24/2016 8:44:27 AM
Subject: RGPPC Policy & Press



REPUBLICAN GOVERNORS

PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Policy & Press | June 24, 2016

Taxes and Budget

New Jersey passes \$15 minimum wage ... but Gov. Christie may veto ([CNN](#)) – The New Jersey Senate passed a bill Thursday that would gradually raise the state minimum wage to \$15 an hour. Currently it's \$8.38. The measure has already been approved by the state Assembly, so the next stop is Gov. Chris Christie's desk. The expectation, however, is that Christie will veto it. But his spokesman would only say that the governor has to see the final piece of legislation before making that call. Nevertheless, Christie has been highly critical of the proposal, citing it as "reckless." If Christie doesn't veto the bill, New Jersey would become the third state -- behind California and New York -- to be on track toward a \$15 minimum. And just last week, the District of Columbia passed a similar measure that the mayor is expected to sign. If he does veto it, advocates may get their way through other means. Proponents have said they will put the measure on the 2017 ballot to let voters decide whether the state should move toward a \$15 minimum wage.

Energy and Environment

(North Dakota) Governor requests details on land transfer ([The Bismarck Tribune](#)) - A pending transfer of 30,000 excess acres of federal land along Lake Sakakawea to the Three Affiliated Tribes is set to happen this year -- but some, including Gov. Jack Dalrymple, say too many questions remain unanswered. The lands, which were acquired by the federal government for operation of Garrison Dam, are to be restored in trust to the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation under a congressional act. Tribal chairman Mark Fox was not available for comment on the tribes' plans for the land after the transfer. Dalrymple asked U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officials Wednesday to address concerns the state has long had about the land transfer. The governor delivered a letter stating his concerns to corps officials from the agency's Omaha District prior to a public meeting Wednesday evening at the North Dakota Heritage Center. In his letter, Dalrymple said the state has had concerns and wanted clarification on the impacts of such a move for as long as those discussions have been taking place. He also asked for an updated map indicating the acreage identified for transfer.

Court strikes down Obama fracking rules for public lands ([Reuters](#)) – A federal judge has struck down the Obama administration's rules for hydraulic fracturing on public lands, a victory for oil and gas producers and state regulators who opposed the rules as an egregious overreach. The ruling, which the White House vowed to appeal, halts the administration's efforts to address what it sees as safety concerns in the industry and reverses what producers had seen as a first step toward full federal regulation of all fracking activity. The U.S. Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lacked Congressional authority to set fracking regulations for federal and Indian lands, U.S. District Judge Scott Skavdahl in Wyoming ruled late on Tuesday.

Economic Development

Kronospan creating 160 jobs in Alabama with \$362M expansion ([Made In Alabama](#)) - Austria-based Kronospan, a leading manufacturer of wood-based panel products, said today that it plans to invest \$362 million to expand its operations in Calhoun County, adding 160 jobs to its Alabama workforce. "I'm honored and pleased to see Kronospan embark on an expansion in Oxford that will create good jobs for the citizens of Calhoun County," Governor Bentley said. "Job creation is my No. 1 priority because it means new opportunities for Alabama residents."

Nebraska prepares to offer special savings accounts ([The Grand Island Independent](#)) – Nebraska will become one of the nation's first states to offer special tax-free savings accounts to people with disabilities, State Treasurer Don Stenberg announced Wednesday. The state is set to launch its Enable Savings Plan on June 30. The plan allows adults with disabilities and their families to save as much as \$100,000 without forsaking public benefits. Supporters say the plans will help them save for medical, housing and educational needs. Under previous state law, adults with disabilities could lose Medicaid coverage and Social Security benefits if they accumulated more than \$2,000 in assets. "Everybody deserves an opportunity to save for their future goals," said Sen. Kate Bolz of Lincoln, who sponsored a bill in the Legislature to establish the program in Nebraska.

Number of Homeless Vets In NC Drops ([NCNN](#)) - The number of homeless veterans in North Carolina has reached a record low according to a new report by Governor Pat McCrory's Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. North Carolina homeless veterans fell from 1,092 in 2015 to 888 in 2016, a 19 percent reduction over the year and a 37 percent reduction from 2012. Additionally, from 2015 to 2016, the number of chronically homeless veterans who experience enduring homelessness and have a disabling condition declined by 45 percent. "Supporting our veterans has been a top priority, especially those facing homelessness," said Governor McCrory in a press release. "Through new initiatives and a revamped veterans resource guide, we have sought to connect those who have served our country and their families with health care, education, jobs and other services they deserve. These efforts are paying off by getting veterans off the streets and helping to cut the unemployment rate among veterans in half."

(North Carolina) Governor signs house squatters bill ([The Winston-Salem Journal](#)) - Gov. Pat McCrory signed into law Wednesday House Bill 283, which makes it a felony for squatters to move back into a foreclosed home after being removed by law enforcement or other officials. The squatters bill, besides affecting individuals evicted from a residence, also targets individuals who present false documentation of a title of possession or lease in order to dwell in the home and to obtain utility services. The law goes into effect July 1. Sen. Stan Bingham, R-Davidson, submitted his bill in response to concerns expressed by banks, real-estate groups, law enforcement agencies and individuals about an increase in squatting activity, in particular in high-end neighborhoods in Mecklenburg and Union counties. He said he has received few complaints in the Triad.

Public Safety

Governor Baker's plan for inmates and their lives after prison ([WWLP](#)) – Governor Charlie Baker wants to expand a western Massachusetts system that helps inmates transition back into society. Governor Baker's proposed spending \$1-million to expand the re-entry model developed at the Hampden County House of Corrections in Ludlow. The Sheriff's Department works with the regional employment board to help released inmates find jobs, housing, and schooling. The goal is reducing the rate of inmates going back to jail. Richard Devine, from the after incarceration support system, explained, "We're excited about it because it's going to provide opportunities for many folks who really need a hand up. With bringing everybody on board, no matter where they live in the state, they'll be able to get the services they need as they transition back into the community."

Education

Kansas House, Senate taking separate paths to fix school funding ([KSNW](#)) – Kansas lawmakers met in special session Thursday to try to solve the school funding issue. They're facing a court-threatened school shutdown at the end of June if they fail. Thursday, the House and Senate considered separate plans. The two plans are very similar, but there's no word yet whether either will gain enough momentum to pass. Both plans would allocate \$38 million for schools. But, how they do that is very different. The House plan would take money from other government sources, including the Children's Initiative Fund, take fees from the Division of Motor Vehicles, and take money from a job creation fund. The Senate plan actually takes away one-half of one percent of funding given to school districts across Kansas, then determines how to reallocate that money to schools that need it. That means some schools would see more money and others would see a cut.

Healthcare

Bevin proposes major changes to Medicaid, including monthly premiums ([The Lexington Herald-Leader](#)) - Gov. Matt Bevin unveiled details Wednesday of his plan to overhaul Medicaid in Kentucky, saying it will impose monthly premiums of \$1 to \$15 and save taxpayers \$2.2 billion over the next five years. Bevin said his plan, which would cover all non-disabled adults receiving Medicaid, focuses on creating better health outcomes and personal responsibility for participants, and sustainability for the costly health insurance program that serves low-income and disabled individuals. Bevin said his plan, which would cover all non-disabled adults receiving Medicaid, focuses on creating better health outcomes and personal responsibility for participants, and sustainability for the costly health insurance program that serves low-income and disabled individuals. The monthly premiums would be based on income levels and would be for "able-bodied adults." Pregnant women and children would not be charged premiums. The premiums will encourage participants to "take ownership" of their health care, Bevin said, noting that the plan offers the opportunity to earn credits that can be used to purchase additional

(Nebraska) DHHS introduces mandatory prescription drug monitoring ([1101 NOW](#)) - Last year 54 Nebraskans died of opioid overdose and the problem is getting worse at a rapid rate. Part of the issue is a large number of prescriptions are over-prescribed. On Monday Governor Ricketts announced the first ever Department of Health and Human Services business plan. One of the major focal points of the plan is taking control of the nationwide issue of prescription drug abuse. DHHS plans to combat the problem with a new mandatory prescription drug monitoring system that will require physicians to submit detailed patient records to a DHHS database. The department hopes the patient data will help physicians better understand how they can treat each individual case properly and prevent abusers from taking advantage of the system.

Gov. Snyder creates commission to help curb drug and opioid abuse ([WILX](#)) - Thursday, Governor Rick Snyder created the Michigan Prescription Drug and Abuse Commission. It's made up of state and independent health experts. They'll

keep an eye on indications of controlled substance abuse in the state. The panel will also make recommendations to Governor Snyder for actions involving licensing, law enforcement, substance treatment and prevention, education, professional associations and pharmaceutical manufacturers.

White House threatens veto of GOP's Zika bill ([The Hill](#)) - The White House on Thursday officially rejected a \$1.1 billion Zika funding package from Republicans that would have forced the administration to pull most of the money from existing healthcare programs. "The president would veto it if it ever got to his desk," White House spokesman Eric Schultz told reporters, though he said the bill "doesn't look like it could even pass the United States Senate." The GOP bill passed the House along party lines early Thursday, and faces an uncertain fate as it heads to the Senate next week.