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Date: 3/11/2016 8:43:35 AM
Subject: RGPPC Policy & Press

REPUBLICAN GOVERNORS

PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE

Republican Governors Public Policy Committee
Policy & Press | March 11, 2016

Taxes and Budget

Hogan proposes additional spending on education and drug addiction ([The Washington Post](#))- Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan announced new spending proposals Thursday that would boost funding for K-12 education, drug addiction treatment and new construction at five of the state's universities. The \$77 million plan is separate from the initial \$42 billion budget that Hogan (R) pitched to the state legislature in January. The Senate Budget and Taxation Committee is expected to approve the original budget with minor tweaks this week, sending it to the full Senate for consideration. Much of the additional money in Hogan's new proposals would come from an estimated \$58 million in savings from fewer Marylanders enrolling in Medicaid as the state economy improved, the administration said.

Energy and Environment

(Arkansas) 2 state agencies: Won't produce EPA power plan ([Arkansas Online](#))- The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality and the Arkansas Public Service Commission have halted planning meetings and will not issue a plan to comply with a new federal policy designed to combat climate change, citing the status of a federal lawsuit over the policy. Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge, along with several other states' attorneys general, filed lawsuits over the constitutionality of the Clean Power Plan, which was developed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at the direction of President Barack Obama to curb carbon dioxide emissions. In February, after an appeal of a decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit not to issue a stay on the Clean Power Plan, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a stay, halting enforcement of the plan.

Obama to expand methane leak crackdown in oil and gas industry ([The Hill](#))- The Obama administration is expanding its newest pollution crackdown for the oil and natural gas industry, now targeting existing wells for the first time. The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) effort was announced Thursday as part of a joint climate change declaration between the United States and Canada. McCarthy said the EPA will begin tackling the issue "immediately," beginning by asking oil and gas companies to provide the agency with information on methane emissions and reduction strategies. The EPA said companies will be required to report certain data about methane output next month.

Transportation and Infrastructure

(Michigan) State commission formed in response to Flint crisis ([The Detroit News](#))- Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder issued an executive order Thursday to create the "21st Century Infrastructure Commission," a 27-member body inspired by the Flint contaminated water crisis. The commission will be comprised of industry and government experts tasked with assessing and prioritizing infrastructure needs across the state, including underground water and sewerage systems, transportation, energy and communications networks. Snyder proposed the commission in his January State of the State address, saying the Flint drinking water crisis highlighted the need for a long-term plan to address aging infrastructure throughout the state.

Gov Ducey Appoints Self-Driving Vehicle Oversight Committee ([Prescott News](#))- Governor Doug Ducey today announced members of the Arizona Self-Driving Vehicle Oversight Committee – a team of transportation, public safety and policy experts who will support the state in the research and development of new "self-driving technology" that will allow vehicles to drive without direct or active human operation. The creation of this committee aligns with the governor's mission to boost economic growth, create new jobs and promote 21st-century innovation that improves the way Arizonans live.

(Indiana) Transportation, ISTEP bills headed to governor's desk ([RTV6](#))- State lawmakers worked late into the evening Thursday on the final day of the 2016 Legislative Session. A \$1 billion funding plan for state and local roads cleared a final hurdle. In one of their last acts in the session, legislators sent it to Gov. Mike Pence's desk. The General Assembly also approved bills to eliminate ISTEP and expand school vouchers. Bills for the release of police body camera video and curbing the reduction of meth are also headed to the governor's desk.

Economic Development

(Maryland) Auto imports continue to surge at port of Baltimore ([The Baltimore Sun](#))- The port of Baltimore's business as the nation's No. 1 point of entry for automobiles continued to boom in 2015 as the number of cars shipped through its public terminals surged 20 percent to yet another record. Shippers imported 399,618 cars last year, up from 331,746 in 2014, the Maryland Port Administration announced Wednesday. Overall, 753,265 vehicles were moved through the port, the highest volume among U.S. ports for the fifth consecutive year.

Idaho minimum wage ban headed to Gov. Otter's desk ([KBOI](#))- Idaho's local governments would be banned from increasing the minimum wage under legislation headed to the governor's desk. The Idaho Senate voted 27-8 on Thursday to prohibit cities and counties from instituting ordinances to raise the minimum wage, while also banning similar ballot initiatives.

Government Efficiency

Walker favors change to allow veterans IDs for voting ([WSAU](#))- Governor Scott Walker wants to change the state's voter ID law, so veterans can use their veterans ID. He says he'd like that to be in place for the April 5 election. Governor Walker says the Senate still has to take up the proposal, and he hopes that will happen in the next week or two. The governor says he's already talked with Government Accountability Board staffers, so they know the change should be coming soon.

Voting Easier For Iowa's Military Members Overseas ([9 ABC](#))- With the flourish of a signature, it's now easier for Iowa's overseas military members and citizens to vote. Thursday Governor Terry Branstad signed House File 2147 into law. It gives Iowans overseas an extra 30 days to request, receive and return special absentee ballots. That now gives them 120 days before an election.

Education

Texas will strive to expand broadband access to all students by 2018 ([The Dallas Morning News](#))- Texas Gov. Greg Abbott wants every one of the state's 5.2 million schoolchildren to have access to broadband Internet by 2018. Abbott announced the goal the day before the kickoff of South by Southwest, the 10-day music, film and Internet festival held in Austin. The state will partner with Education Superhighway, a national nonprofit that is working with 38 other states to upgrade infrastructure and find affordable ways to meet the connectivity goals of students and communities.

Healthcare

Gov. Charlie Baker expected to sign opioid bill ([Boston Herald](#))- The bill would limit initial opiate prescriptions to a seven-day supply, with exceptions for chronic pain, cancer and palliative care. It would let patients get fewer opioid pills from a pharmacist than a doctor prescribes. The bill also would require doctors to check a prescription monitoring database each time they prescribe opiates; hospitals to evaluate overdose patients for drug abuse disorders within 24 hours; and schools to question students at two grade levels about any drug problems.