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SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE CSG 2016 CHAIR

Dear state leaders,

As diverse and complex as our nation has become, Americans remain united by a national character that took root in the days before the Revolution, when our forebears chose liberty over subservience to a foreign ruler. Faced with the policies and tactics of an oppressive king, these early patriots responded with extraordinary courage, perseverance and resolve.

America's greatness began with a simple desire to live freely and chart our own path. But the end result of our quest for liberty and independence was not inevitable. Our early patriots faced a dangerous and uncertain future, risking their lives and livelihoods in the name of freedom.

Today, our states face uncertain futures and state leaders face complex challenges in governing the states. The same courage, heart, fight, resilience and perseverance that helped win the Revolution are very much alive today in the state capitols of our nation.

Sen. Beau McCoy
CSG 2016 National Chair

I am writing to invite you to join me at **The Council of State Governments' 2016 National Conference**, Dec. 8-11, in historic Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia.

For America, it all started in Williamsburg.

Williamsburg's patriots led the way in the 18th century capital of Virginia, by far the largest and most prosperous British colony. The city was the crucible of debate and activity, led by extraordinary visionaries including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry and James Madison.

This holiday season, I invite you to return to this special place and walk in the footsteps of these revolutionary leaders. After the sound and fury of the presidential election has subsided, we'll take stock of the trends that are shaping the future of the states and our nation. Through dozens of captivating sessions and informative programs, we hope to empower you to achieve even more.

The founders believed that a balance of ideas and opinions guided by shared principles would be vital to our young nation's future. The Council of State Governments believes the same is equally true today.

Those freedoms for which the earliest Americans fought and died—freedom of speech, of the press, of religion—could not be more important in today's complex world, where we continue to wrestle with debates and concerns that are deeply rooted in our history. Poverty, taxes, immigration, national defense, health care, race relations—these and so many other issues facing our nation today may be traced back to the earliest hours of America's founding.

In Williamsburg, we will offer many opportunities for us to create a better future by learning from the past. We are excited to announce that *New York Times* bestselling novelist Jeff Shaara will be among our national conference speakers. Shaara dazzled readers with his bestselling novels *Gods and Generals*, *The Last Full Measure*, and *Gone for Soldiers*. The acclaimed author brilliantly brought to life the American Revolution in *Rise to Rebellion*, creating a superb saga of the men who helped to forge the destiny of a nation.

CSG National Conference attendees also will be among the first groups granted after-hours access to the new American Revolution Museum in Yorktown, Virginia, where the history of the American Revolution is brought to life through amazing artifacts, including an early broadside copy of the Declaration of Independence and compelling multimedia, interactive exhibits. You won't want to miss this special Saturday evening event.

Registration for the conference is now open online at csg.org/2016nationalconference. I encourage you to register now and book your hotel early as availability is limited and I don't want you to miss your chance to be a part of all that we have planned. We expect our room block at the historic Colonial Williamsburg properties to sell out, so please act now.

Colonial Williamsburg is where America began. We hope you will begin planning to join us this December for a revolutionary meeting that is sure to make history. The Council of State Governments and I look forward to seeing you in Colonial Williamsburg this December.

Very truly yours,

Senator Beau McCoy, Nebraska
2016 National Chair
The Council of State Governments

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