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Subject: Voting Right Restoration; Air Quality Regulations; Uninsured Americans; Women in Government

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Kentucky Becomes Latest State to Restore Voting Rights to Felons

On Nov. 24, with two weeks left in his second and final term, Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear signed an executive order that automatically restored the right to vote and hold public office to approximately 140,000 nonviolent felons who have completed their sentences. Nationwide, almost six million Americans are prohibited from voting because of a past felony offense, according to the Sentencing Project. State laws vary considerably on when--and if--felons can regain their voting rights.

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New Rules Soar for State Air Quality

Charged with keeping the nation's skies clean, state air quality regulators are discovering that their to-do lists are growing dramatically. During an already busy year for state environmental agencies, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released its final Clean Power Plan in August. This rule, developed under section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act, establishes carbon dioxide performance requirements for fossil fuel-fired power plants that reflect what the EPA has determined to be the "best system of emission reduction."

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The Congressional Wish List

Federal lawmakers are nearing the end of the year with many outstanding issues left on the congressional wish list. Priority centers around a spending bill to fund the federal government past mid-December. Other important issues being discussed include reforms to and reauthorizations of the No Child Left Behind Act, the Highway Trust Fund, Export-Import Bank and special tax credits and tax breaks, known as tax extenders, for certain groups and individuals.

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CSG eCademy Offers Crash Course on U. S. Judicial System

During a recent CSG eCademy webcast, two judicial experts described how the U.S. state and federal court systems work and how court decisions impact state governments. "Federalism and the U.S. Judicial Branch" was the third and final presentation in a series of webcasts about federalism's impact across the branches.

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Women in State Government

According to the Center for American Women and Politics, women currently hold 1,793, or 24.3 percent, of the 7,383 state legislative seats. Women hold 79 statewide elected executive offices, representing 25.3 percent of the 312 available positions—a significant increase from 1971 when women held only 7 percent of such positions. According to the National Association of Women Judges, 5,049 women served as state court judges, representing 29 percent of the total 17,156 positions, in 2014.

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States to Watch in 2016: Transportation Funding

Eight states—Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Michigan, Nebraska, South Dakota, Utah and Washington—raised their gas taxes in 2015. Two other states—Kentucky and North Carolina—made adjustments to their gas tax mechanisms to make revenues more reliable. Despite all that activity, 2016 also could see a large number of states join the club.

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2015 CSG National Conference Dec. 10-13, Nashville, Tenn. **REGISTER HERE**

Teacher Shortages--Midwest States' Approaches to Address the Challenge Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2 p.m. CST Presented by CSG Midwest/MLC **REGISTER HERE**

Will Public Sector Collective Bargaining Survive This Supreme Court Term? Tuesday, Jan. 12, 1 p.m. EST Presented by the State and Local Legal Center **REGISTER HERE**

States with Medicaid Expansion Have Larger Increases in Insured Rates

The Census Bureau's annual survey of health insurance coverage found that significantly fewer American adults remained without health insurance in 2014 compared to the year before. Poverty and median household income—factors that might influence insurance rates—showed no statistically significant changes from 2013 to 2014, which leads researchers to conclude that the reduction in the rate of the uninsured can be attributed to new health coverage options available under the Affordable Care Act.

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Important Information for 2015 CSG National Conference Attendees

Joining us in Nashville, Tenn.? Before you leave, here's a final checklist to make sure you're ready for the meeting. We look forward to seeing you there!

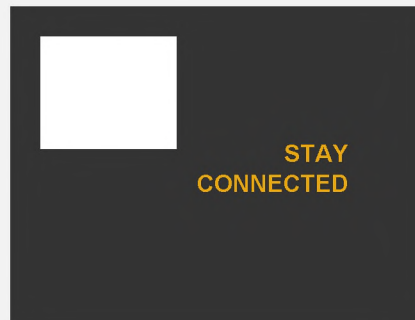
- ✓ Download the app
- ✓ Opt in to receive conference text message updates
- ✓ Join our Campaign Against Hunger Service Project, Dec. 13
- ✓ Enjoy the guest activities
- ✓ Check out the conference agenda

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Founded in 1933, The Council of State Governments is our nation's only organization serving all three branches of state government. CSG is a region-based forum that fosters the exchange of insights and ideas to help state officials shape public policy. This offers unparalleled regional, national and international opportunities to network, develop leaders, collaborate and create problem-solving partnerships.

See Full Calendar

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