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Subject: Education Accountability; Media Relations; Justice Reform; the Medicaid Match; Immigration Deferred Action

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What the Every Student Succeeds Act Means for State Education Leaders

State officials are closely watching as the U. S. Department of Education releases more information on what the new Every Student Succeeds Act, or ESSA, changes in accountability system requirements and funding mechanisms. According to Missouri's top education official, Commissioner Margie Vandeven, the new act gives states greater flexibility.

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Six Keys to Journalists' Hearts

The relationship between state officials and the media can be both valuable and tricky to navigate. CSG Senior Fellows Katherine Barrett and Richard Greene share some tips to help state government officials improve their interactions with journalists and increase the likelihood that articles are written fairly and accurately.

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Is Criminal Justice Reform a Possibility in 2016?

Following on the heels of an active December that saw Congress avoid a government shutdown, extend tax breaks for Americans and pass education reform, there is hope that President Obama and Congress will carry this unexpected span of bipartisanship into 2016. Although impossible to know with certainty which issues will be tackled, criminal justice reform could be on the list.

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States to Watch 2016: Transportation Funding

Eight states passed gas tax increases in 2015, while several others took other actions to shore up transportation revenues. But 2016 could also see a large number of states join the club even after Congress approved a federal surface transportation bill late last year. Tune in Feb. 23 at 2 p.m. EST for this free eCademy webcast to hear from transportation experts, state house and transportation beat reporters, and legislators about how transportation funding might fare in 2016 legislative sessions across the country.

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State Spending Trends 2016

For states in the coming year, no news is good news when it comes to finances. For the last few years, states on the whole have seen a slow and steady increase in revenues. States collected \$912 billion in total tax revenues in fiscal year 2015—an increase of 5.6 percent over 2014 levels. Growth over this time was widespread—47 states reported growth—while three states, Alaska, Illinois and North Dakota, reported declines.

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SCOTUS to Decide Immigration Deferred Action Case

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to decide whether the president's deferred action immigration program violates federal law or is unconstitutional. The court will issue an opinion in *United States v. Texas* by the end of June 2016. The Deferred Action for Parents of Americans program allows certain undocumented immigrants who have lived in the United States for five years and either came here as children or already have children who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents to lawfully stay and work temporarily in the United States. About 5 million people are affected.

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Produced Water Reuse and Recycling: Challenges and Opportunities

Thursday, Jan. 28, 3 p.m. EST
Presented by CSG South/Southern
Legislative Conference

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Managing Solid Waste through Product Stewardship Laws

Tuesday, Feb. 2, 2 p.m. EST
FREE CSG eCademy Webcast

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States to Watch in 2016: Transportation Funding

Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2 p.m. EST
FREE CSG eCademy Webcast

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Funding the Match for Medicaid

States that expanded their Medicaid eligibility and took advantage of the 100 percent federal funding available for the first three years under the Affordable Care Act will find the free lunch gone as they build their budgets for the 2017 fiscal year during this year's legislative sessions. CSG Director of Health Policy Debra Miller outlines the top five issues in health policy for 2016.

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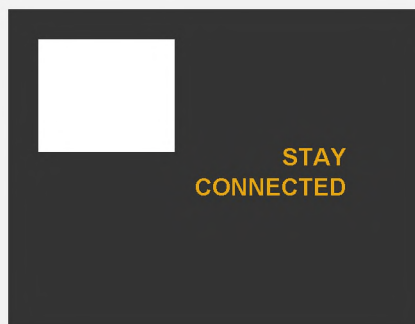
CSG 2015 National Conference Materials Available Online

The Council of State Governments hosted its 2015 National Conference Dec. 10-13 in Nashville, Tenn., providing state leaders with a robust agenda structured to tackle some of the most pressing issues facing state governments. Presentation materials from policy sessions at the conference are now available in the CSG Knowledge Center, including speakers' presentation slides, audio recordings and other materials.

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