

## Mississippi Speaker Philip Gunn Embraces Diversity as SLC Chair



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Mississippi House Speaker Philip Gunn credits his ability to reach across the aisle in the legislature to his time spent at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. While earning his Bachelor of Business Administration, Gunn met students from every state in the nation and from countries around the world. Being exposed to this diversity set the foundation for Gunn’s career.

Now, as the 2017 CSG South/Southern Legislative Conference chair, Gunn will continue to reach across the aisle to support The Council of State Governments’ nonpartisan efforts.

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After graduating from Baylor, Gunn earned a J.D. from The University of Mississippi School of Law, where he was elected student body president. He is currently a practicing attorney at Wells Marble & Hurst PLLC in Ridgeland, Mississippi. In 2010, Gunn was named “One of Mississippi’s Top 50 Leading Attorneys” in the *Mississippi Business Journal’s* Leadership in Law Class of 2010. In 2012, Gunn received the State Legislative Achievement Award from the U.S. Chamber Institute for Legal Reform, as a result of the Attorney General “Sunshine” Act passed during the 2012 legislative session.

Gunn began serving in the Mississippi House of Representatives in 2004. On Jan. 3, 2012, he became the 61st speaker of the House; it was the first time in 136 years that a Republican held the post.

During his time in the Legislature, Gunn has been a leader not only in the House of Representatives but

also throughout the state, serving on the Executive Committee of the Mississippi Republican Party and as chair of the Republican House Conference since it was formed in 2006.

Through bipartisan committee chair appointments, Gunn created a functional House of Representatives in his first session as speaker, ensuring the approval of the House redistricting map by the U.S. Department of Justice. Business-friendly legislation was passed, along with many other laws that focused on education, health care and keeping Mississippi’s government running within its budgetary means.

Gunn has been active in the Southern Legislative Conference, or SLC, since he was elected. He served as vice chair in 2014, and is continuing his active membership on the SLC Executive Committee as the 2017 chair. The new chair said he was looking forward to the coming year and the 71st Annual Meeting of the Southern Legislative Conference in Biloxi, Mississippi.

“As chair of the SLC, I am pleased to host the 71st SLC Annual Meeting—typically the largest gathering within The Council of Governments’ meetings—and showcase our beautiful state,” he said.

Gunn is actively involved in his community. Before being elected to the House of Representatives, he served on the Clinton Public School Board. He currently serves as an elder at Morrison Heights Baptist Church in Clinton, a member of the Clinton Chamber of Commerce and as a trustee of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

Gunn met his wife Lisa while attending Baylor. They are the parents of Meredith, Alex, Andrew and John David.

## 2017 EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



### Long-Term Care: Challenges and Solutions for States webinar

Feb. 16, 2017 | 2 p.m. EST  
Contact: [rmoore@csg.org](mailto:rmoore@csg.org)

### SLC Delegation on U.S.-Canada Automotive Trade Relations

May 2017 | Detroit Windsor Tunnel, U.S.-Canada Border  
Contact: [scanagaretna@csg.org](mailto:scanagaretna@csg.org)

## 71st Annual Meeting of the Southern Legislative Conference



July 29–Aug. 2 | Biloxi, Mississippi  
Contact: [slc@csg.org](mailto:slc@csg.org)

The annual meeting of the Southern Legislative Conference is the largest regional gathering of state legislators, legislative staff, policy experts and governmental officials and is convened as the focal point and culmination of the SLC’s yearly activities. Throughout the year, programs administered by the Southern Office and the SLC allow policymakers to share knowledge in their area of expertise with colleagues from across the South. By working together, through the forums created by the Southern Office and by participating in SLC standing committees, Southern state policymakers are able to speak in a distinctive, unified voice to address issues that affect their states and the entire region.

### State Transformation in Action Recognition

Aug. 1, 2017 | Biloxi, Mississippi  
Contact: [nbowman@csg.org](mailto:nbowman@csg.org)



### Center for the Advancement of Leadership Skills

Oct. 14–18, 2017 | Little Rock, Arkansas  
Contact: [Imoore@csg.org](mailto:Imoore@csg.org)

### Workshop convening selected SLC member states’ legislators, addressing emerging insurance policy issues

September 2017  
Contact: [scanagaretna@csg.org](mailto:scanagaretna@csg.org)

## PUBLICATIONS & RESOURCES



Prepared under the auspices of SLC’s six standing committees, *SLC Regional Resources* provide a regional analysis on the background and current status of the most prevalent and unique state government policy issues facing Southern states. Focusing on policy issues, trends and developments particular to the South, these reports provide a point of reference that allows SLC members to view their state’s governmental policies in relation to their closest neighbors.

*SLC Special Series Reports* provide an in-depth analysis of key policy issues facing Southern states. Focusing on governmental issues with multiple layers and highly nuanced solutions, these reports provide an extensive analysis of national, economic and political trends, with a focus on how these developments relate to the SLC member states and the region as a whole.



*SLC Issue Alerts* comprise concise reports on recent and quickly approaching state and federal developments of importance to the Southern region. These communications keep SLC members apprised of forthcoming opportunities, concerns and deadlines related to policy issues.

*Comparative Data Reports*, or CDRs, are prepared annually by select SLC states’ fiscal research departments. Prepared under the auspices of the SLC Fiscal Affairs & Government Operations Committee, CDRs track revenue sources and appropriations levels in Southern states and are a useful tool to legislators and legislative staff in determining their respective state spending.

Reports for 2016 and previous years are available through the SLC website at: [www.slcatlanta.org/Publications/](http://www.slcatlanta.org/Publications/).

## INITIATIVES



**SLC Delegations**—In order to better facilitate information sharing among its member states, the U.S. federal government and foreign nations, the SLC arranges delegations comprising committee chairs and legislative leaders to domestic and international points of innovation to observe programs or services first-hand, communicate member states’ positions on federal legislation and regulations, and enhance economic relations with countries important to the Southern region.



Through the **State Transformation in Action Recognition**, or **STAR**, award the CSG South office affirms that states are the best problem solvers. Submissions outlining innovative state government policies, programs and initiatives are accepted from an array of state agencies, departments and institutions operating within the executive, legislative and judicial governmental branches. The deadline for submitting your program for consideration is May 26, 2017. The SLC office has begun accepting applications for its 2017 STAR award for creative, impactful, transferable and effective state government solutions.

**Legislative Staff Exchange Program**, or LSEP, provides opportunities for legislative staff in SLC member states to participate in peer-to-peer briefings and exchanges to develop effective strategies, identify best practices and share innovative ideas across a broad spectrum of legislative processes. Tailored for the particular needs and schedules of the participants, LSEPs are held in both formal and informal group settings, with funding provided by the SLC.

Through **SouthTrain**, the SLC periodically arranges for policy experts to visit member state capitols and conduct workshops on pre-selected topics for legislators and legislative staff. The topics and presenters are decided in close consultation with leadership and senior staff in the respective legislative offices. All costs related to the workshop are borne by the SLC.

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