HOT TOPIC: Children’s Issues

6 in 10
Students Suspended

18% of U.S. Children Live in Poverty

New Paths to the American Dream

Pecking Away at Obesity

Juvenile Offenses: Fix it Now or Fix it Later

“The reason you get involved in juvenile justice and children is because if you don’t fix it there, you have to fix it down the road …”

—Texas Sen. John Whitmire
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ON THE COVER
Texas state Sen. John Whitmire, chair of the Texas Criminal Justice Committee, believes states would be short-sighted in cutting programs that help youthful offenders. “If you don’t fix it there, you have to fix it down the road when they’re adults and it’s much more expensive,” he said of those programs.

COVER PHOTO BY DARREN CARROLL

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2011

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Idaho Senate Majority Leader Bart Davis is married to a long-time fourth grade teacher and knows the importance of a good education.
Children Are Our Future

“Children are the world’s most valuable resource and its best hope for the future.” — John F. Kennedy

Ten years ago my world forever changed with the birth of my daughter, Nell. Her presence in my life reoriented my priorities and changed the way I thought about so many things—including public policy. Suddenly, the quality of schools, access to health care, affordable higher education and safe communities became much more personal. Children's issues shape much of the agenda and consume a large part of the budgets approved in state capitols, and with good reason.

Close to one-quarter of all Americans are under age 18. That’s almost 74 million children and teens living in the states. The actions of state leaders have a big impact on their lives and consequently on the future. It’s why this issue of Capitol Ideas is focused on exploring some of the most interesting and pressing issues affecting children.

According to the Children’s Defense Fund, policymakers should focus on children’s issues for many reasons. Every day in America five children are killed by abuse or neglect, five children commit suicide, 32 children die from accidents, 80 babies die before their first birthday, 186 children are arrested for violent offenses, 368 children are arrested for drug offenses, 1,204 babies are born to teen mothers, 2,058 children are confirmed as abused or neglected, 2,573 babies are born into poverty, 3,312 high school students drop out, 4,133 children are arrested, 1,240 public school students are corporally punished and 18,493 public school students are suspended.

In an unprecedented study of nearly 1 million Texas public secondary school students followed for more than six years, nearly 60 percent were suspended or expelled, according to a report prepared by CSG’s Justice Center in partnership with the Public Policy Research Institute of Texas A&M University. You can read more about this report in this issue beginning on page 13. The findings are interesting in that among other things we learned that after a first suspension, a student was three times more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system the next year, compared to students with no such disciplinary referrals.

We hope these findings strengthen efforts underway in Texas to improve outcomes for students, and help other states’ policymakers in examining school discipline practices so they can enhance students’ academic performance and reduce juvenile justice system involvement.

Texas Sen. John Whitmire, chair of the Texas Criminal Justice Committee, featured on our cover and in our “10 Questions” feature found on pages 18–19, is among the state leaders examining the data and using it to shape better solutions for kids in Texas. He said, “We need to maintain realistic expectations of what educators alone can accomplish in today’s challenging classrooms. At the same time, this report demonstrates that if we want our kids to do better in school and reduce their involvement in the juvenile justice system, we in the legislature need to continue looking into how teachers can be better supported and how the school discipline system can be improved.”

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and Education Secretary Arne Duncan have taken note of the CSG report’s findings and recently announced an initiative to address the issues documented in the report.

I also encourage you to check out this issue’s “Straight Talk” feature on pages 40–41. We asked student leaders from around the nation to tell us why they think state government is important. We were pleased to partner with Girls Nation, a program of the American Legion Auxiliary, to help us obtain responses from the participants in this year’s Girls Nation program. It is refreshing and encouraging to see such capable and energetic young people with an interest in public service. I have good reason to believe the young women featured will be among the future members of CSG.

When my daughter, Nell, becomes an adult, I hope she will appreciate that the community, state and nation she lives in was shaped in part by today’s state leaders. Public servants who took seriously their obligation to govern for both today and for tomorrow. We are blessed in this nation to have thousands of such dedicated state leaders who work tirelessly to honor the admonition of the Native American saying, “We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.”

Very truly yours,

[Signature]

Children Are Our Future
“Those kids would just fall through the cracks.”

—Wyoming Kids Count Director Marc Homer, in an interview with the Laramie Boomerang, about what would happen if programs such as food stamps, health care coverage for poor kids, child subsidies, Head Start and the free-and-reduced lunch program were cut.

“These ACT results are another sign that states need to raise their academic standards and commit to education reforms that accelerate student achievement.”

—U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan, commenting on the latest ACT scores

“They're thinking about what are their prospects for the future—graduating from college knowing they've got a lot of debt, needing to find a job.”

—President Barack Obama, commenting on young people in the audience at a town hall meeting in Iowa Aug. 15

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—Patrick McCarthy, president and CEO of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, in an interview with National Public Radio following the foundation’s release of the 2011 KIDS COUNT Data Book

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“By bringing together government, law enforcement, academic, and community leaders, I’m confident that we can make certain that school discipline policies are enforced fairly and do not become obstacles to future growth, progress and achievement.”

—U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, announcing the launch of the Supportive School Discipline Initiative, a collaborative project to encourage effective disciplinary practices that help make classrooms safer and more conducive to learning

“That has tremendous implications for their future and ours.”

—Jane Zehnder-Merrell, Michigan Kids Count project director, in an interview with The Times-Herald in Port Huron, Mich., about the children living in poverty in her state

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The East

CYBER CAFE GAMBLING
Massachusetts State Police officers have conducted several raids at Internet cafes housing computer casino-style games since March. The cafes allow customers to use purchased Internet time cards on video gambling machines, which violates the state’s ban on gambling. Massachusetts House Speaker Robert DeLeo introduced a bill in July that would fine anyone running a cybercafe with video gaming $250,000 per computer terminal or subject them to a prison term of 15 years, reported The Boston Globe.

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE
Maryland Gov. Martin O’Malley announced in July he would request legislation legalizing same-sex marriage during the 2012 legislative session. The announcement came on the heels of the successful passage of legislation in New York, an effort O’Malley said he hopes to learn from. “The legislation we plan to introduce in the 2012 legislative session will protect religious freedom and equality of marital rights under the law,” the governor said.

HELMET SAFETY
Delaware Gov. Jack Markell in July vetoed House Bill 95, which would have allowed residents older than 19 to ride motorcycles without carrying a helmet. Current law allows riders over age 19 to operate a motorcycle without wearing a helmet, although a helmet must be attached to the bike, according to The News Journal of New Castle, Del. “Repealing a law that, for more than 30 years, has helped promote the use of helmets that have saved numerous lives is not something that I believe is in the best interest of our state,” Markell said.

PRIVATIZING LIQUOR SALES
Pennsylvania House Majority Leader Mike Turzai in July introduced a bill to privatize state liquor stores, according to the Pennsylvania Independent. The state Liquor Control Board operates 644 stores. Under the plan, the auctioning of licenses could generate up to $2 billion in revenue for the state, according to Turzai. House Bill 11 likely will be addressed when the general assembly reconvenes in September.

PUBLIC RECORDS LAW
The Vermont Public Records Legislative Study Committee, established through legislation earlier this year, held its first meeting in July. The committee is comprised of six legislators—three from the Senate and three from the House. The committee’s goal is to examine and eliminate some of the more than 200 exemptions to Vermont’s public records laws, reported the Burlington Free Press.

Rhode Island Job Training to Benefit Welfare Recipients

Welfare recipients in Rhode Island will be able to pursue activities other than an immediate job search in order to access their benefits, reported The Providence Journal. The legislature in June repealed a 2008 welfare reform law that required parents to look for a job for a set number of weeks before they could seek education and job-training options.

According to Linda Katz, policy director at the Poverty Institute, this “work first” emphasis was designed to fail given the tough economic times. In order to collect welfare benefits, parents were expected to seek employment in a weak job market without first having the opportunity to receive job training.

“It was an ideologically driven program that was not evidence-based, in terms of achieving good outcomes for families or meeting the federal program requirements,” Katz told the newspaper.

Rhode Island parents who are on welfare now will have the option of first seeking activities designed to help them obtain better jobs. The change, which took effect July 1, is designed to help more unemployed residents make the transition to long-term employment.

“If the goal is to reduce dependence on cash benefits and increase employability and earning capacity, then parents must have access to education, training, work experiences and support services,” Joseph Potenza, of the Family Resources Community Action in Woonsocket, said during a May legislative hearing on welfare.

According to the Rhode Island Department of Human Services, this change is not expected to increase the costs to Rhode Island Works, the state’s assistance program. The state will conduct a long-term assessment of the new approach to review its effectiveness.

“The real results will be in assessing how directing some participants to more effective activities yields better outcomes for this program. That assessment can only take place over the long term, but it will be measured,” Frederick J. Sneesby, communications officer for the Department of Human Services, told The Providence Journal.
Hydropower Developers Set Sights on the Mississippi River

The urgent need to develop domestic energy resources is moving to the top of the nation’s priorities. Renewable energy developers now are focusing on the vast resources of the Southern region, with particular attention paid to the Lower Mississippi River.

According to the Star Tribune, at least 74 pre-application proposals have been filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for hydrokinetic energy projects along the southern Mississippi; the projects call for underwater turbines to be secured with pilings attached to the river’s floor. The southern section of the Mississippi is more suited to hydrokinetic energy projects because of the depth of the water, the swiftness of currents and the lack of dams.

U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu said hydropower could add 70,000 megawatts to the grid, the equivalent of 70 nuclear power plants, by the use of improved turbines at current dams and the installation of hydropower systems at sites that currently produce no energy.

About 2,000 of the nation’s 79,000 dams are equipped with generators, leaving a great deal of potential energy untapped. Hydropower developers want to install enough systems on the Lower Mississippi River to generate 6,000 megawatts. While significant, that number is still small compared to the output of dams in the Pacific Northwest, which provide the majority of that region’s electricity.


MANDATORY VACCINATIONS
Alabama has begun to enforce mandatory vaccinations for whooping cough, also known as pertussis, for students in the sixth grade and older, The Birmingham Post reports. Pertussis is a highly contagious bacterial disease that causes severe coughing fits. After the state Department of Public Health noticed an increase in the number of students contracting the disease, the legislature passed the mandate for a diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine to protect more students. Previously, only those entering the ninth grade had to receive the vaccine.

GRANTS FOR HOMELESS VETERANS
The federal government has granted nonprofit community agencies in five Florida cities $5.5 million for programs to prevent homelessness among military veterans and secure housing for veterans living on the streets. The grants will assist 4,600 homeless and “at-risk” veterans and their families by providing services such as treatment for mental health and substance abuse issues, medical care and assistance applying for veterans benefits and transitional housing. Provisional subsidies also will be available to veterans facing eviction.

MANAGING GROWTH
The Atlanta Regional Commission recently authorized a 30-year plan to spend $60.9 billion on transportation improvements and to supervise growth. By 2040, the 10-county region anticipates the population will increase to 8.3 million. The initiative, Plan 2040, will allocate billions of local, state and federal dollars to road widening and mass transit. According to the commission, the plan is a “blueprint for improving mobility, protecting natural resources, promoting balanced and sustainable development and growing the economy.”

CRISIS COUNSELING
The Federal Emergency Management Agency has awarded an Immediate Services Program grant of more than $1.5 million to the Missouri Department of Mental Health for crisis counseling services for survivors of the state’s recent severe storms, flooding and tornadoes. The crisis counseling aims to assist survivors with the stress and trauma of recovery following a major disaster.

PLAIN LANGUAGE DIVORCES
The Tennessee Supreme Court approved the use of “plain language” divorce forms for couples without dependent children, shared land, businesses or retirement benefits. Lawyers will not be required to complete the proceedings, provided the couple reaches an agreement on the divorce terms. The rule and forms were suggested by the Access to Justice Commission, which the court selected to research methods to improve access to the justice system, particularly for low-income individuals.

To learn more about these and other developments in the Southern Region, visit: capitolideas.csg.org and www.scatlanta.org.
The Midwest

**BANKRUPTCY FILINGS**
Bankruptcy filings in Wisconsin are down this year as compared to 2010, according to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. Records from U.S. Bankruptcy Court show Wisconsin filings decreased by 8.4 percent in the first half of 2011. The state’s decrease is consistent with the nearly 8 percent decline in filings nationally. Nearly 80 percent of the filings were Chapter 7, which clears debt related to things such as credit cards and medical expenses.

**STEM EDUCATION**
Iowa’s newly created Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Council aims to improve the state’s science and technology education, the Sioux City Journal reported. The council, established in July by Executive Order 74, will include members from both the public and private sectors and will be headed up by Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds and University of Northern Iowa President Ben Allen. The council’s goal is to improve science and math programs in the state, ultimately leading to a higher performing, better educated and ultimately leading to a higher math programs in the state, goal is to improve science and technology education, the Capital Journal reported. The council, established in July by Executive Order 74, will include members from both the public and private sectors and will be headed up by Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds and University of Northern Iowa President Ben Allen. The council’s goal is to improve science and math programs in the state, ultimately leading to a higher performing, better educated and more competitive workforce.

**RURAL POPULATIONS**
The Nebraska legislature’s Planning Committee is studying the state’s rural areas to find ways of reinvesting and repopulating the growing number of smaller communities. The committee is considering several options, including tax incentives, regional models and endowments in rural areas, the Lincoln Journal Star reported. About 460 Nebraska towns and villages have populations less than 1,000 and nearly 300 of those have 300 or fewer residents.

**TEACHER TENURE**
Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder in July signed teacher tenure reform into law as part of his plan to reinvent the state’s educational system. The law ends the practice of making staffing decisions based exclusively on seniority by incorporating effectiveness ratings into those decisions. Under the new law, teachers will gain tenure after five years instead of four. Tenured teachers must sustain effective ratings every year to retain tenure, according to a release issued by Snyder’s office. Schools also will be required to inform parents if their child’s teacher has been rated as ineffective.

**BALLOT REFERENDUM**
South Dakota voters will decide in November 2012 whether Gov. Dennis Daugaard’s economic development plan stays or goes. In July, Secretary of State Jason Gant confirmed that enough signatures were acquired to refer the governor’s plan to a statewide vote. The legislation-approved plan would make $13 million in assistance available to large business projects at the discretion of the state Board of Economic Development, according to the Capital Journal. Opponents believe the state can’t afford additional economic development grants while funding is still short for areas such as public schools.

To learn more about these and other developments in the Midwestern Region, visit: capitolideas.csg.org and www.csgmidwest.org.

**Minnesota Government Shutdown Ends**

Minnesota’s state government shutdown came to an end when Gov. Mark Dayton signed a $35.7 billion budget July 20. After the two-week shutdown, which prompted the temporary layoff of more than 22,000 state government employees and the closure of state parks and rest stops, Minnesota lawmakers and the governor reached a compromise, The Associated Press reported.

In signing the budget, Dayton made it clear he was somewhat disappointed with the deal. “The final agreement was not entirely what I believed was best for Minnesota. However, I knew that it was the best option available to Minnesota,” Dayton said in a press release.

Under the new plan, Dayton unenthusiastically agreed to the Republican demands to not raise taxes in order to balance the two-year budget. The governor had hoped to raise taxes on the richest 2 percent of Minnesotans, but was unable to get Republicans to agree. Dayton also reluctantly agreed to the Republican plan to balance the budget by cutting various programs, delaying state aid to local school districts and by issuing tobacco bonds, according to the governor’s office.

Republicans backed down on some of their original requests. They agreed to increase the budget by $1.5 billion more than initially proposed. Dayton said these additional funds would prevent cuts in areas such as special education and health and human services. The budget also included a $500 million bonding bill Republicans had opposed throughout the 2011 legislative session.

Among the most crucial concessions was the Republicans’ agreement to remove social policy legislation. The budget will represent one of the smallest increases in the state’s recent history, according the St. Paul Pioneer Press. Over the past 50 years, the state has averaged 18 percent increases in its two-year budgets. The newly signed budget is only 4 percent more than the previous biennium.
Registered Independents Now Outnumber Democrats in Arizona

Independent voters continue to outnumber Democrats in Arizona.

Arizona Secretary of State Ken Bennett released numbers in July showing 13,149 voters registered with a party preference or designated an unrecognized party from April to July 2011. This brought the total number of Arizona Independent voters to 1,043,649, according to a press release from Bennett’s office.

In contrast, the number of registered Democrats decreased by 7,892 to 999,232 during the same time period.

The numbers released by Bennett in July showed total voter registration grew by 1,986 voters during the April to July period. The overall growth coupled with the declining Republican and Democrat numbers indicated that most of the increase in the number of Independent voters was a result of already-registered voters removing their party preference.

In Arizona, Independent voters cannot cast ballots in presidential primaries.

PAY RAISES

With the beginning of the fiscal year on July 1, 48 percent of Wyoming state government employees became eligible for salary increases, reported the Casper Star-Tribune. The legislature’s Joint Appropriations Committee allocated $7.1 million for the pay raises, which only benefit executive branch employees. According to state officials, the move will push these employees to within 91 percent of “market pay” salaries for comparable private-sector jobs.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber in July signed into law Senate Bill 242, making major changes in the state’s higher education structure. Under the new law, the Oregon University System will no longer be a state agency, according to the Oregon Daily Emerald. The law establishes a Higher Education Coordinating Commission, which will manage many aspects of the state’s community colleges and university system schools.

HIGHEST U.S. DAM

If everything goes as planned, Alaska will be the home of the highest dam in the U.S. by 2023. Alaska Gov. Sean Parnell said in July the state is moving forward with plans to build a 700-foot-high dam on the Susitna River. The $4.5 billion project would help the state reach its goal of halving its electricity generated from renewable energy sources by 2025, the Anchorage Daily News reported. The project is in its earliest stages and has yet to secure necessary permits and financing.

UTILITY RATE INCREASES

The Montana Public Service Commission in July voted 3-2 to approve a 6 percent increase in electric rates for 25,000 customers in eastern Montana, reported the Billings Gazette. The increase will help offset Montana-Dakota Utilities’ investment in two wind power projects along the Montana-North Dakota border. The company originally had requested a 13 percent increase.

IDaho Surplus

Idaho ended its 2011 fiscal year with more general fund tax revenue than expected, according to a press release from Gov. C.L. “Butch” Otter’s office. The state received $2.44 billion from all forms of tax receipts, a 7.95 percent increase from 2010. Much of the additional revenue will be given to Idaho public schools and community colleges to meet the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act’s “maintenance of effort” requirements in accordance with Senate Bill 1207, which the legislature passed this year.
The 2011 KIDS COUNT Data Book, published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, found five of the 10 key indicators of child well-being improved nationally since 2000, while three got worse. Two areas are not comparable based on the most recent year of data available.

The Great Recession hit children hard. In 2010, 11 percent of children had at least one unemployed parent, and 4 percent were affected by foreclosure since 2007. Many of the economic gains for children that occurred during the late 1990s were lost in the 2000s. The 18 percent increase in child poverty between 2000 and 2009, for instance, means that 2.4 million more children are living below the federal poverty line, effectively wiping out the gains in the 1990s, according to the Casey Foundation.

Top-Ranking States On Child Well-Being »
New Hampshire, Minnesota & Massachusetts

Lowest-Ranking States
Alabama, Louisiana & Mississippi

Biggest Improvements Between 2000 & Most Recent Years Of Data »
New York, Maryland, Connecticut, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oregon, Virginia & Wyoming

Biggest Drops In Rankings »
Montana, Hawaii, West Virginia, Maine & South Dakota

THE BOOK OF THE STATES
Since 1935, The Council of State Governments' The Book of the States has been the leading authority on information about the 50 states and territories.
Best rate » New Hampshire 5%
Worst rate » West Virginia 15%

Best rate » North Dakota 21%
Worst rate » Mississippi 39%

18% Best rate » New Hampshire
11% Worst rate » Mississippi

10% Best rate » Utah
48% Worst rate » Mississippi

18% Best rate » New Hampshire
31% Worst rate » Mississippi

8% Best rate » Alaska
11% Worst rate » Mississippi

7% Best rate » Vermont
10% Worst rate » Alaska

1% Best rate » Washington
4.8 Deaths per 1,000 Live Births
10 Deaths per 1,000 Live Births

7% Best rate » Vermont
35 Deaths per 100,000 Teens Ages 15–19
100 Deaths per 100,000 Teens Ages 15–19

14% Best rate » Rhode Island
9 Deaths per 100,000 Children Ages 1–14
34 Deaths per 100,000 Children Ages 1–14

15% Best rate » Massachusetts & New Hampshire
20 Births per 1,000 Females
66 Births per 1,000 Females

45% Best rate » New Hampshire & New Jersey
3% Worst rate » Nevada

9% TEENS NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL & NOT WORKING
Best rate » New Hampshire 5%
Worst rate » West Virginia 15%

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Best rate » New Hampshire 5%
Worst rate » West Virginia 15%

31% CHILDREN LIVING IN FAMILIES WHERE NO PARENT HAS FULL-TIME YEAR-ROUND EMPLOYMENT
Best rate » North Dakota 21%
Worst rate » Mississippi 39%
The current economic crisis might prompt policymakers to consider reducing funds or moving away from new programs to balance state budgets—including those in public education. But that would be a mistake. Now is the time to move forward with effective education policies and programs to ensure we graduate students with the skills and knowledge necessary to compete in a global market.

Schools have changed little since the mid-20th century and are not producing graduates ready to enter college or a high-tech workforce. Young men and women need advanced credentials to meet the high demands of business and industry. But the gap between what students know when they leave high school and what they need to know to be successful in college and careers is huge.

If states don’t drastically raise expectations and achievement in schools, America’s chances of being globally competitive are at risk of dropping even lower. Progress is being made, however.

State legislators play a vital role in education reform and should collaborate with education officials at the executive branch level to support their efforts, such as:

- **Common Academic Standards**
  Common Core State Standards are a set of rigorous standards in English language arts and mathematics that were developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators and experts to provide a clear and consistent framework for classroom instruction. Forty-four states and the District of Columbia have adopted Common Core to replace their own standards. Many states have begun to transition to the new standards, which have an impact on teacher professional development, teacher pre-service programs and curriculum alignment.
  States also will move to a common assessment program in the 2014–15 school year. This means current standards will be assessed in the interim, which will affect state and federal accountability measures.

- **College and Career Readiness**
  States are facing the challenge of increasing college access and success rates during a time of historic budget shortfalls. Students can’t be successful in college and careers without proper preparation in K–12 system. Education leaders are developing comprehensive high school reform models focused on turning around low-performing schools. States are looking to resources such as increased use of Advanced Placement courses, dropout prevention programs, early college high schools and career academies, which are showing promise in raising student achievement.

- **Teacher Preparation**
  In order to graduate students who are college- and career-ready, teachers must be properly trained, understand academic standards, and have the skills necessary to create effective lesson plans and to ensure that their students are prepared for the next grade level. Effective pre-service teacher education programs are a critical component.
  Experts agree that teachers must know their subject to be successful. Unfortunately, many teachers have been asked to teach outside their subject areas, particularly in math and science, because of shortages in these fields. As states implement academic standards, they must provide quality professional development to ensure teachers are prepared to successfully implement standards and assessments.

In order to maintain our nation’s economic competitiveness, students must be given an education that will enable them to succeed in a global economy. By focusing on early childhood education, investing in K–12 educational reform and ensuring higher education access and success, students will be given the rigorous education they deserve.

Ultimately, this investment will ensure the nation’s economic growth.
Large numbers of children in middle and high school in the nation’s second largest public school system are being suspended and expelled—and those disciplined students are more likely to repeat a grade, drop out and become involved in the juvenile justice system.

The numbers are startling.

• Nearly 60 percent of students in Texas received at least one disciplinary action—including in-school suspensions ranging from a single class period to several days, with no cap on how many suspensions they can receive in a school year;

• Approximately 8 percent were placed in Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs, averaging 73 days.

Those are some of the findings from a recent report, Breaking Schools’ Rules: A Statewide Study of How School Discipline Relates to Students’ Success and Juvenile Justice Involvement. The study, released July 19, was a partnership between The Council of State Governments Justice Center and the Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M.
54% of students were suspended or expelled at least once between seventh and 12th grades

3% of disciplinary actions were for conduct for which the state mandates suspensions or expulsions

97% of disciplinary actions were discretionary

The report was released at a Texas event—and webcast nationally—at which legislators, court and school officials, education and juvenile justice agency leaders, and school law enforcement representatives discussed its implications. Some of the findings seemed unexpected, such as nearly all the actions taken against students for misbehavior at school being at the discretion of school officials. Only about 3 percent of the disciplinary actions were for behaviors that have a mandated school response under state law.

The landmark study relied on data for nearly 1 million public secondary school students in Texas—every student in the state, not just a sample of students—who were in seventh grade in the 2000, 2001 and 2002 academic years. The students were followed from the seventh through 12th grades. The study drew from more than 6 million individual student records, school campus information and juvenile justice data.

“The study is remarkable for its size and scope,” said national school discipline expert Russ Skiba, director of the Equity Project at the Center for Evaluation and Education Policy at Indiana University. “The base data involving all students in the state of Texas for a six-year period represents the most complete data set that I’ve seen in the field of school discipline.”

Because of study population size and access to such comprehensive data, the researchers were able to use multivariate analyses to control for more than 80 variables, effectively isolating the impact that these factors had on the likelihood of a student being suspended and expelled. These analyses allowed researchers to delve into the relationship between the discipline of a student and that student’s academic performance—such as dropping out or repeating a grade—or involvement in the juvenile justice system.

Frequently Disciplined Students

Students who were repeatedly disciplined often experienced poor outcomes at particularly high rates. The Texas study found that 15 percent of Texas students had 11 or more disciplinary violations between seventh and 12th grades; about half of those frequent violators had subsequent contact with the juvenile justice system. Repeated suspensions and expulsions also predicted poor academic outcomes. Only 40 percent of students disciplined 11 times or more graduated from high school during the study period, and 31 percent of students disciplined one or more times repeated their grade at least once, compared with 5 percent of students who had not been disciplined.

Even students who were disciplined less frequently were still more likely to repeat a grade or drop out. A student who had experienced a discretionary disciplinary action was twice as likely to repeat a grade as a student who had the same characteristics and attended a similar school but was not suspended or expelled. The results were also troubling in regard to keeping students with disciplinary histories in school. Nearly 10 percent of students with at least one disciplinary contact dropped out of school.

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school discipline

hot topic

compared to just 2 percent of students with no disciplinary actions.

Sen. John Whitmire, chair of the Texas Criminal Justice Committee, said the legislature should find ways to better support teachers.

“We need to maintain realistic expectations of what educators alone can accomplish in today’s challenging classrooms,” he said. “At the same time, this report demonstrates that if we want our kids to do better in school and reduce their involvement in the juvenile justice system, we in the legislature need to continue looking into how teachers can be better supported and how the school discipline system can be improved.”

Disproportionate Impact

The Texas research found that African-American students were more likely to receive discretionary actions than Hispanic or white students. In fact, the complex analysis conducted by researchers found that African-American students had a 31 percent higher likelihood of a school discretionary action as compared to otherwise identical white and Hispanic students. Close examination of students with educational disabilities, also controlling for all study factors, showed that a disproportionate number of students with particular disabilities—especially those coded as emotionally disturbed—were highly involved in the disciplinary system.

“The numbers are heartbreaking,” Matt Cregor of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund said in a Washington Post article about the report. “What we’re seeing in Texas is no different than what we are seeing nationally.”

Juvenile Justice Involvement

The study found that 23 percent of disciplined students had contact with the juvenile justice system, while just 2 percent of nondisciplined students had juvenile justice contact. The suspension or expulsion of a student for a discretionary school disciplinary violation nearly tripled the likelihood of juvenile justice contact within the subsequent academic year.

More than one in seven Texas middle and high school students were involved with the juvenile justice system during the study period. That raised concerns with Texas Chief Justice Wallace B. Jefferson.

“We should ask whether teachers and principals, rather than police officers and judges, are best suited to discipline kids who commit minor infractions,” he said.

Schools Deal Differently

The study found that schools statistically similar on a large number of measures—such as expenditures per student, teacher experience, percentage economically disadvantaged, and teacher and student diversity—disciplined students at varying rates.

“The single most important finding may be that schools with similar demographic risk profiles use very different patterns of school discipline,” Skiba said. “That is a very hopeful finding. It says that school officials can learn from colleagues that have chosen to reduce exclusion in order to keep schools safe and orderly without resorting to high rates of suspension and expulsion.”

The report identifies schools that had significantly different rates of discipline but comparable attendance and grade completion rates. What that means is that lowering disciplinary rates, which some school officials are concerned could result in more misbehavior, did not doom a school to low attendance rates or large numbers of students being held back.

“One of the most important takeaways from the report is learning that the school a student attends largely influences how, when, or if a student is removed from the classroom for disciplinary reasons,” said Sen. Florence Shapiro, chair of the Texas Senate Education Committee, and one of the lawmakers who supported the study. “The data suggest that individual school campuses often have a pronounced influence over how often students are suspended or expelled.”

Next Steps

The report does not offer specific recommendations because additional extensive discussions of the results with teachers, other school officials and the many other stakeholder-
In implementing nontraditional strategies is Fowler, an author on school discipline issues. Texas Appleseed Deputy Director Deborah problems and encourage academic success,” said that do what they should—reduce disciplinary and put into place behavioral interventions justice stakeholders to intentionally seek out now for policymakers, educators and juvenile begin to move toward alternatives. It is time traditional disciplinary methods so that we can advance the discussion and implementation of promising practices in Texas and beyond. As examples from the report demonstrate, policymakers and practitioners in Texas are working to address school discipline issues. The report is meant to support those efforts. “This groundbreaking study finally moves us beyond the debate surrounding the efficacy of traditional disciplinary methods so that we can begin to move toward alternatives. It is time now for policymakers, educators and juvenile justice stakeholders to intentionally seek out and put into place behavioral interventions that do what they should—reduce disciplinary problems and encourage academic success,” said Texas Appleseed Deputy Director Deborah Fowler, an author on school discipline issues. In Texas and across the nation, interest in implementing nontraditional strategies is growing. For example, an increasing number of districts across the state have adopted School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, known as PBIS, an evidence-based disciplinary model to reduce disciplinary actions and dropout rates, and improve academic performance. “Part of the elegance of PBIS is that it uses widely accepted and easy-to-use behavioral techniques, developed and implemented with existing school structures and resources. PBIS is efficient, effective and also addresses concerns of inequality associated with traditional disciplinary practices,” said Brenda Scheuermann, a professor of special education at Texas State University and expert in that behavioral approach. According to Scheuermann, awareness and implementation of PBIS is growing; more than 14,000 schools are implementing the approach, including many schools in Texas. The Justice Center plans to convene a group of experts, opinion leaders and stakeholders representing multiple systems and perspectives to discuss recommendations for policymakers and practitioners. This follow-up effort is meant to reach consensus on approaches across various public systems to address the study findings and build on the strong foundation of work by academics and professionals in the field. The Justice Center’s work also is meant to support the efforts of federal agencies engaged in these issues. U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan in July announced the launch of the Supportive School Discipline Initiative, a collaborative project to encourage effective disciplinary practices and to promote research-driven strategies that reduce the likelihood that disciplined students will have subsequent contact with the juvenile justice system. “This joint initiative by the secretary of education and U.S. attorney general models the kind of leadership we need in local and state governments on this issue,” New York State Assemblyman Jeffrion Aubry, then-CSG Justice Center chair, said. “We look forward to working with the Departments of Justice and Education, as well as other agencies and individuals concerned with improving outcomes for all our school children.” “This collaborative initiative cannot come at a better time as states like mine work diligently to address school discipline issues,” said Texas State Rep Jerry Madden, a Justice Center board member.

What Makes This Study Different?

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, in a recent meeting of the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council, referred to The Council of State Governments Justice Center’s “Breaking Schools’ Rules” as a “landmark” report. Legislators from both parties, court and school officials, education and juvenile justice agency leaders, and school law enforcement praised the study and discussed the findings and potential next steps during the release of the study in Austin, Texas, on July 19. Here are a few facts about the study:

• Each student’s records—including students who moved from one Texas public school to another—were analyzed for a minimum of six years.
• The study drew from more than 6 million individual student records, school campus information and juvenile justice data.
• All information that could identify a particular student was removed and all privacy protocols were met.
• The study was supported by the Atlantic Philanthropies and Open Society Foundations. Because of the size of the study population and access to such comprehensive data, researchers used complex analyses to control for more than 80 student and campus variables, effectively isolating the impact these factors had on the likelihood of a student
**DROP OUTS**

10% of students with at least one disciplinary contact

2% of students with no disciplinary action

15% of students with 11 or more suspensions or expulsions

**PEAK PERFORMANCE**

DALLAS, TEXAS—Seventh grade students take a test in English class at Peak Preparatory Academy in east Dallas. Nearly 60 percent of all Texas seventh through 12th graders were suspended or expelled at least once, according to “Breaking Schools Rules,” a new report from The Council of State Governments Justice Center.

Being suspended and expelled. The analyses were able to provide insights into the relationship between a student being disciplined and his or her subsequent academic performance—dropping out or repeating a grade—or juvenile justice involvement.

**Examples of student factors:** demographics, attendance rate, race, economic status, disability status, English proficiency, disciplinary history, and whether the student repeated a grade.

**Examples of campus factors:** the percentage of students that met state test standards; dropout rates; percentage enrolled in special education, bilingual or vocational programs; spending per pupil; teacher and student racial diversity; teacher experience and salary; and percentage that were economically disadvantaged.

Visit www.justicecenter.csg.org/resources/juveniles to download the report; read FAQs, a release on the federal initiative and media coverage; view the Austin webcast; and find other related resources.
1. Why was the 2009 change in the way Texas deals with nonviolent juvenile offenders a good move for your state and the juveniles involved?

“The youth corrections system was in bad need of a fix. We were sending way too many kids there, kids that we proved could be helped in their community. That (old) model was back from the ‘50s, when you just kind of gave up on a kid and sent him to rural Texas—out of sight, out of mind. (Juvenile offenders) now are largely in juvenile probation department programs, work with them closer to home near the courts, near the family. In urban settings (where students are from) they would get better health care, mental health and education services. … The youth go there and come out better than when you sent them, unlike the past. And you save millions of dollars.”

2. Why is it important to you to be involved in juvenile issues?

“The reason you get involved in juvenile justice and children is because if you don’t fix it there, you have to fix it down the road when they’re adults and it’s so much more expensive. You pay now or you pay later. If you pay now, it’s much more affordable, plus you reduce human misery and you reduce the number of crime victims.”

3. That seemed to be a theme from the release of the CSG Justice Center’s report on school discipline in Texas.

“(If) you learn how to properly discipline these kids short of expelling them or suspending them through the regular school, where they probably run in contact with other troubled youth, you’ve got a better chance of turning them around, I believe. It’s not rocket science stuff or I wouldn’t understand it. It’s common sense, a lot of it.”

4. What was the most surprising thing from that school discipline report?

“The most surprising thing in the report was how extensive it was, the problem that across the state, such a large number of youth had been expelled. I didn’t know the extent that African-Americans were expelled or suspended at a greater rate than other ethnic groups. If you look at our criminal justice systems, juvenile or adult, it’s heavily weighted in terms of African-Americans. If you go back upstream to the schools and who gets in trouble, or who, through discretionary decisions, the administrators have decided are expelled, I guess it shouldn’t shock me that it’s African-Americans. It definitely alarmed me, though, because it’s just wrong.”

5. The study found that the number of times students were disciplined really impacts students’ success.

“It does impact them. They get labeled. They get an ID number. They get labeled to the point they’re ostracized. They’re observed, they’re punished and they get driven to the juvenile justice system and they graduate from there and go to the adult system. There’s a correlation there between being suspended and expelled and ending up in the criminal justice system.”

6. What does that say about the challenges facing Texas?

“Texas has a challenge to do something about it. We’ve documented the problem, now we’ve got to find some solutions. But let me quickly add, I don’t think it’s just a Texas phenomenon; it’s a national one. … We’ve got to find out from the school districts that are having good results what they’re doing right and I think it’s also a resource allocation problem. You can’t be cutting the education budget. You’ve got to support teachers, try to get good people to go teach and stay teaching. The fact that we’ve brought awareness to this issue is a good start.”
Texas Sen. John Whitmire, the dean of the Texas Senate, has served his state for nearly four decades—10 years in the state House of Representatives and 29 years in the Senate. The chair of the House Criminal Justice Committee believes early intervention—whether in the justice system or in schools—can help prevent many problems later on. That’s one reason children’s issues are important to him.

A lot of states passed zero tolerance laws in the late 80s, early 90s...

“I think the zero tolerance needs to be revisited; I think we need to put (in) some discretion. We all know what to do when somebody brings a gun or a knife or a weapon to school with the intent to harm someone. But I think you have to use some common sense. If some kid’s been hunting that weekend and he leaves a shotgun shell in his back seat, I’m not sure that it makes sense for him to be under some mandatory suspension or expulsion. Hear his story out and if it was just a mistake, that’s why they came up with that word.”

What advice would you give to states about strengthening public safety?

“Learn the issue. A little bit of knowledge is dangerous. Most legislators know just a little about their corrections system and all of its facets. Recognize locking somebody up is not always the toughest thing you can do. You can always lock somebody up. That’s a no brainer. And it’s not always the toughest thing. The toughest thing you can do, and probably the most conservative thing you can do, is prevent the next crime. … When you arrest somebody and prosecute them, you require or work with them to turn their lives around. You waste millions of dollars if you lock up people that don’t need to be there.”

What would you tell other states about adopting Justice Reinvestment initiatives like what Texas has adopted?

“It reduces crime because you don’t have the recidivism. If you treat people for their addictions and educate them, give them life-skill courses, have a re-entry program that works, you’ll not have recidivism. If you cut down on recidivism, you cut down on crime. Also you save billions of dollars. … It all goes to trying to release a better person than the one you received.”

What is your advice to younger generation of senators across the country as they begin their careers?

“Work hard, have fun, make a difference. Don’t be afraid to do the right thing. I think they can make a tremendous difference and show some leadership and they will be surprised how strong they become politically.” —Texas Sen. John Whitmire

READ THE FULL INTERVIEW WITH SEN. JOHN WHITMIRE AT CAPITOLIDEAS.CSG.ORG.
‘You’ve Got to Stay in the Race Every Day’

Rep. Steve Holland of Mississippi was 10 pounds, 15 ounces at birth and says one of the first lessons he learned in life dealt with food. “The first lesson I remember my mother and grandmother teaching me was eat everything on your plate,” he said. “It became a cultural phenomenon with me. … This whole attack on obesity, as I see it, is almost cultural.”

In 2007, Holland got a wake-up call. He was in the hospital with congestive heart failure. His doctor told him he had to do something quickly or he was going to die. Holland, chair of the House Public Health and Human Services Committee, is now an outspoken advocate for getting better food into schools and getting everyone moving more. He also happens to be 141 pounds lighter than he was four years ago.

“It is absolutely, absolutely mandatory,” Holland said of Mississippi’s childhood obesity efforts, which involve things such as getting more locally grown fruits and vegetables into school meals and helping teachers lose weight to serve as role models. “If you don’t get kids at a young age and change their habits, they’re doomed to a lifetime of health disparities.

Keeping Moving in Nebraska

The 30,000-resident town of Kearney, Neb., has had its own share of financial troubles. For the 2011–12 school year, the Kearney Public Schools suffered a $3.5 million funding cut in a $53 million budget. But that hasn’t kept them from moving forward on childhood obesity efforts.

Since receiving a federal physical education grant in 2008, the district hired a wellness coordinator, started walking and running clubs, changed what could be sold at bake sales and as fundraisers, eliminated using food as a reward in classes and stopped taking away recess as a punishment. At the elementary school with the highest student BMI scores in the district, the number of students who are overweight or obese dropped by almost 18 percent in the past year.

This year, four of the Kearney’s 11 elementary schools received bronze awards from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, a partnership of the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation. The Alliance’s Healthy Schools Program helps schools create healthier environments for children and recognizes the highest achievers each year.

“We knew we wanted to do certain things with increasing the physical activity of students, increasing their knowledge of nutrition … and trying to do something with our staff too, so they could be role models,” said Associate Superintendent Carol Renner. “The wonderful thing with the grant, it allowed us to organize groups from each building so they could be part of the Healthy Schools program. We just started working on monthly activities and we had leadership and we had funding, where we could pay them to plan and organize.”

Although the federal grant money has almost all been spent, Renner said the Kearney schools successes have brought in a lot of local support that will help them maintain the efforts this year. Community support, she said, is vital for keeping the town’s childhood obesity efforts going.

“Doing it alone just hasn’t worked,” she said. You’ve got to “look at outside resources, like universities, … like the Healthy Schools program, you need that. Doing it without training the staff doesn’t work. … It doesn’t work just giving the assignment of, ‘You make all this happen,’ to someone who already has a full-time job. You need somebody to coordinate so you can have an affect everywhere.”
“It’s this pecking away at the problem. We’ve got to hear about health every day, hear about obesity every day. People have got to tell their story every day. You just peck away at it.”

The State of Childhood Obesity

There’s still plenty of room to peck away. According to the 2011 “F as in Fat” report from the Trust for America’s Health, nearly one-third of children are overweight or obese. Among high school students, boys were more likely to be obese than girls—15.3 percent vs. 8.3 percent—and African-Americans and Latinos were more likely than whites to be obese—15.1 percent vs. 10.3 percent.

Dr. James Marks, a pediatrician and senior vice president in charge of the health group at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, does see a glimmer of hope: Childhood obesity rates appear to be stabilizing. Marks added that fewer states are showing significant yearly increases in adult obesity rates.

“It’s clear the epidemic hasn’t stopped,” said Marks, “but it may be slowing.”

He said the nation is making great strides toward reducing childhood obesity. States are passing legislation regulating the food offered in school vending machines, encouraging supermarkets to sell fresh fruits and vegetables, and encouraging grocery stores to move into food deserts.

For example, Chris Gindlesperger, director of communications at the American Beverage Association, said the group’s members have worked with schools across the country to pull full-sugar drinks from vending machines and replace them with healthier options. The result, he said, is reducing the number of calories consumed in drinks at school by 88 percent.

“Probably the areas we struggle the most in are schools and physical activity,” Marks said. “It’s not going to be solved just by better food. … That’s important, but we also have to have kids enjoying being active. … That’s where we see the slowest progress. Most states have standards for school P.E., but they’re unenforced and the schools don’t have to report on them.”

Severe budget cuts most states have had to make in the wake of the Great Recession, Marks noted, have hurt anti-obesity efforts.

“In any situation like this, money is always an issue,” he said. “There’s no question it affects the types of things communities can do. On the other hand, so much of this can be done relatively inexpensively. It’s also a place where public and private leaders can both step up … and help energize a community.”

But it will take a long-term outlook to address the problem. Holland said childhood obesity is not an issue that is going to go away quickly.

“You’ve got to have patience,” he said. “You’ve got to have perseverance as well. You’ve got to stay in the race every day. It is easy to burn out. I get very tired mentally and physically fighting this battle. But I just cannot (give up); there is something deep in my identity telling me to battle every day. One by one, it is making a difference.”

Here’s a look at how three areas of the country are dealing with the fight against childhood obesity and the constraints they face.
Philadelphia School District

Philadelphia, Penn. — The Philadelphia School District faced a $629 million budget shortfall for the 2011-12 school year. Part of the district’s money-saving measures includes closing full-service cafeterias in 26 schools, which will be using prepackaged meals shipped from an off-site facility. Philadelphia is the eighth-largest school district in the country, serving 65,000 breakfasts and 115,000 lunches daily.

Wayne Grasela, senior vice president for the district’s Division of Food Services, said prepackaged meals will be shipped to schools that are losing their cafeterias. The district is the eighth-largest in the country, and its food service department serves 65,000 breakfasts and 115,000 lunches daily.

“… We were not breaking even.”

Grasela said the prepackaged meals will meet federal guidelines regulating school lunches, but trying to reduce costs by so much has been tough. Mostly, it involves finding ways to save on labor, meaning more prepackaged foods.

Some schools found savings in limiting menu options. In New York, for instance, schools that offered three main dish choices are offering two, while those that offered two have cut back to one option, Grasela said.

“Most of our urban centers are being forced into the same situation,” he said. “Ultimately, you’ve got to find a way to put the most nutritious meals out there that are as labor-friendly as possible.”

Grasela understands why people like British chef Jamie Oliver advocate that schools do more cooking from scratch to improve student nutrition, but it’s unrealistic.

“They want to do more scratch cookery, they want to do more fresh chicken breasts,” he said. “It requires labor. It requires training. It requires a significant amount of preparation and production. It increases the risk of food-borne illnesses. … When you have 350 feeding sites, you have to do everything you can to provide the most healthy, nutritious meals you can. That’s what we’re trying to do.”

Susan Cooper, commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Health, said her state has stayed focused on childhood obesity despite the recession. State policymakers have worked with childcare centers to increase the amount of physical activity and the quality of food for the state’s youngest residents. Legislators have mandated an increased amount of time for physical activity in the schools and the state’s school nutrition guidelines are tougher than the federal guidelines. The state even has a Get Fit Tennessee website (http://www.getfittn.com), which offers free tools to help people become more active.

Cooper said even though states are facing some “pretty dire fiscal realities,” they have to remain focused on childhood obesity to prevent the dire consequences of a morbidly obese generation.

“This is really about leadership,” she said. “It’s about prioritizing. … We talk about health in all of our policy discussions. Health is not just for the Department of Health. If we look at transportation, what about sidewalks, greenways, strategic urban design? What’s the impact of our agricultural or cultural policies?

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The CSG National Conference is designed to provide state leaders with the opportunity to discuss state government trends, share cutting-edge solutions and debate what’s next on the political horizon.

Within this year’s National Conference, CSG will host its first international summit. We’ll discuss our shared opportunities and challenges with friends and partners to the north in Canada and to the south in Mexico.

Don’t miss your chance to discuss issues with colleagues from your state, your country and the world!

EARLY REGISTRATION & HOTEL CUT-OFF SEPT. 26
GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS: HOW DO WE CREATE A COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE?  
3:30–5 P.M.

Much attention has been placed on academic standards, state assessments, teacher training and effective leadership in schools. All are vital to preparing students for college and careers. But if no avenue to get students to higher education and no structure or means to assist students exist, many will end up in low-wage jobs for life. This interactive session will address how public/private partnerships and legislative strategies can serve as the catalyst for a culture change that will ensure students reach their goal of college completion and degree attainment.

THINKING GLOBALLY, ACTING LOCALLY 3:30–5 P.M.

In today’s globalized economy, state leaders must look beyond traditional borders in seeking solutions to shared challenges in North America. CSG is committed to providing state leaders with a practical understanding of the local impacts of global trends. In addition to hearing from leaders about issues impacting North American states and provinces, participants will learn about ongoing cooperative working relationships between state legislators and their counterparts in neighboring Canadian provinces and Mexican states.
LOOKING FOR MEDICAID RELIEF IN ALL THE RIGHT PLACES 3:30–5 P.M.
For years, states have been looking for ways to cut the costs of their Medicaid programs. The pressure is exacerbated by recent increased enrollment, decreased state revenues and the loss of enhanced federal matching funds as all states face mandated program expansion in 2014 under federal health reform. While the federal government offers some suggestions for relief, many states are already tackling cost cutting in aggressive and innovative ways. This session will explore where federal Medicaid flexibility starts and stops for states, discuss states’ successes in instituting cost-saving measures and examine various federal proposals working to dramatically reshape Medicaid for states.

MAXIMIZING OIL PARTNERSHIPS IN NORTH AMERICA 2–3:30 P.M.
America runs on oil will likely continue to do so well into the future. While technological and cultural shifts impacting our dependence on oil are steadily gaining ground, the United States consumes more than 19 million barrels of oil each day with half coming from imports—Canada and Mexico being two of our largest energy partners. If the U.S. is looking to boost energy security, create jobs and lower the price at the pump for consumers, we must work with our continental neighbors to maximize North American oil production. Join us to discuss current and future partnerships across our Northern and Southern borders and learn about the new ways our countries are cooperating to ensure a more secure and reliable resource future.

MANAGING WESTERN WATER IN EVOLVING CLIMATE CONDITIONS
2–3:30 P.M.
The West is running out of water … well, almost. Northwestern and Northcentral Western states are seeing an increase in precipitation and the Southwestern and Southcentral areas are, as expected, experiencing decreased rain. Add to this a temperature increase of five to seven degrees Fahrenheit in key river basins and a lower-than-predicted snowpack, a key feeder of Western water, and you end up with the perfect mixture of short-term events and long-term impacts that are likely to decrease Western stream flow up to 20 percent across several river basins. This session will focus on the critical issue of Western water, how states can work and are working together, and what the federal government is doing to assist.

GOVERNING IN NORTH AMERICA: STRENGTHENING GLOBAL RELATIONS THROUGH INTERGOVERNMENTAL ENGAGEMENT 8–9:30 A.M.
In the age of the global economy, state leaders must understand and learn from the strengths our neighbors have to offer—and that doesn’t stop at the geographic border. Canadian provinces and U.S. states have many similarities, but also much to learn from each other. Join us as executive branch leaders convene to discuss successful stories of intergovernmental cooperation, offer opportunities to collaborate and share best practices, and pose solutions to shared obstacles.

IF YOU BUILD IT, WILL THEY COME? A NORTH AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE ON ELECTRICAL TRANSMISSION LINE SITING 10–11:30 A.M.
As demand for energy continues to grow—especially electricity generated from renewable sources—so, too, does the need to efficiently move energy across state lines and boost the ability to move resources across international borders. But state, national and international interests often do not align. This lack of a cohesive plan is leading to underdeveloped markets and an overstressed transmission system. This session will explore effective tools used in Canada and Mexico, as well as potential domestic policy solutions, all designed to more efficiently move power from where it is generated to where it is needed.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM JAPAN’S EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI PRESENTED BY THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION 10–11:30 A.M.
The tsunami that followed a devastating earthquake in Japan in March threatened to impact the U.S. Pacific Coast, causing emergency management officials to issue tsunami warnings, make evacuation decisions and implement emergency operations plans. While states were able to handle the event, a larger tsunami could have required international mutual aid assistance. The Pacific Northwest and Canada already have an agreement in place to provide resources and assistance. This session will explore lessons learned from the tragedy in Japan and ways the U.S. might respond to such a catastrophic disaster.

NEIGHBORS, FRIENDS & ALLIES: NORTH AMERICAN COOPERATION AND THE ROLES OF STATES NOON–1:30 P.M.
As neighbors, friends and allies, the U.S., Canada and Mexico share boundaries, a history and core values. Yet unintended consequences from well-intended initiatives can create havoc on the international diplomatic stage. Join our panelists as they discuss the delicate art of diplomacy and learn what state decision-makers can do to support and strengthen the trilateral relationship.

CSG Committee & Task Forces Schedule

21ST CENTURY FOUNDATION
Friday, Oct. 21 | 4–5:30 p.m.
(open to committee members only)
ASSOCIATES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, Oct. 19 | 3:30–5 p.m.
COMMITTEE ON SUGGESTED STATE LEGISLATION
Thursday, Oct. 20 | 9:30 a.m.—Noon
Saturday, Oct. 22 | 4–5:30 p.m.
EDUCATION POLICY TASK FORCE
Saturday, Oct. 22 | 8–9:30 a.m.
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE
Saturday, Oct. 22 | 8–9:30 a.m.
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND GOVERNING BOARD
Sunday, Oct. 23 | 8–10:30 a.m.
FINANCE COMMITTEE
Saturday, Oct. 22 | 2–4 p.m.
HEALTH POLICY TASK FORCE
Saturday, Oct. 22 | 8–9:30 a.m.
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
Saturday, Oct. 22 | 2–4 p.m.
INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE
Thursday, Oct. 20 | 3:30–5 p.m.
INVESTMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
Friday, Oct. 21 | 2–3:30 p.m.
MIDWESTERN LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Saturday, Oct. 22 | 1–5 p.m.
NATIONAL CONFERENCE COMMITTEE (FORMERLY ANNUAL MEETING COMMITTEE)
Friday, Oct. 21 | 2–3:30 p.m.
TRANSPORTATION POLICY TASK FORCE
Saturday, Oct. 22 | 8–9:30 a.m.
REGISTRATION
Attendees may register online at www.csg.org/2011nationalconference.

ATTENDEE CATEGORIES & FEES

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HOTEL INFORMATION
HYATT REGENCY BELLEVUE
900 Bellevue Way, N.E.
Bellevue, WA 98004
Phone: (425) 462-1234
Guest Fax: (425) 646-7567
Rate: $139 plus 14.4 percent tax
Cutoff date: Sept. 26, 2011

The Hyatt Regency Bellevue is located on Seattle’s Eastside between two mountain ranges, nine miles from downtown Seattle and 17 miles from the Seattle airport. This four-diamond hotel has more than 700 guest rooms and is situated within The Bellevue Collection, with a variety of shopping and restaurants that are conveniently connected by sky bridges.

Reservations can be made by calling (888) 421-1442 and asking for the CSG room block or online at https://resweb.passkey.com/go/csgattendee.

TRANSPORTATION

Airport Information
Seattle/Tacoma International Airport (SEA)
To Hyatt Bellevue: Seattle, Wash. | 17 miles—25 minutes
To Seattle Downtown: Seattle, Wash. | 9 miles—17 minutes

Ground Transportation
The Hyatt Bellevue does not provide airport shuttle service. Shuttle Express offers quality service from the Seattle airport to Hyatt Bellevue at the estimated cost of $20/per person/one way. Reservations can be made by calling (425) 981-7000 or via the website at www.shuttleexpress.com. Taxi service is also available at $40/one way.

Hyatt Regency Parking
Self parking is $16 per day; valet parking is $18 per day.

Rental Car Option
Hertz will offer special rates. Reservations can be made by calling (800) 654-2240 or online at www.hertz.com and providing CV# 02JR0053.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ABOUT BELLEVUE
Nestled between two mountain ranges on the shores of glittering Lake Washington, Bellevue is just 17 miles from Seattle-Tacoma International Airport and 10 miles from Seattle. A cosmopolitan urban center where more than 30 languages can be heard on our tree-lined pedestrian corridors, Bellevue is surrounded by innovative global corporations and three national parks.

To learn more about Bellevue, Wash., visit http://www.visitbellevuewashington.com.
NEW EPA POWER PLANT REGULATIONS WILL COST A LOT OF JOBS. ESPECIALLY OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is anxious to finalize some of the most expensive regulations the agency has ever written for coal-fueled power plants. The timing couldn’t be worse. As our economy struggles to recover, new EPA regulations could hinder our ability to create jobs.

According to a preliminary analysis by National Economic Research Associates (NERA), just two proposed EPA regulations would cost over $180 billion and cause huge U.S. job losses – over 1.4 million job-years to be exact. And these are net job losses that take into account so-called “green jobs” that might result from these regulations. In fact, the analysis found that for each “green job” created, four jobs would be lost.

NERA’s preliminary analysis suggests the loss of American jobs would be heaviest over the next three years – over 980,000 job-years of lost employment. In addition, escalating electricity rates and an $8 billion a year hike in natural gas prices because of the regulations would further jeopardize our economic recovery.

Just recently, the EPA finalized one of these rules, and NERA’s analysis is being updated to include the new 1300-page final rule.

We should all be able to agree on how to achieve environmental progress without harming our economy and destroying jobs. That’s why the EPA needs to make major changes to its regulations. Many others have also called on the EPA to take a more balanced approach to protecting the environment. These include Democratic and Republican members of Congress, labor unions, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, major manufacturers, state lawmakers, and governors...to name just a few.

To learn more about these regulations and NERA’s preliminary analysis, visit AmericasPower.org.
Washington Sen. Karen Keiser tried for years to strengthen the requirements that allow parents to opt their children out of immunizations. A vocal group of opposition stalled her efforts. Things changed when lawmakers considered her bill, Senate Bill 5005, this year.

“We had two people die from whooping cough last year, for heaven’s sake. Totally preventable,” Keiser said. “The current practice (of exemption allowance) has been so convenient for parents that it was just easy for individuals to not get their children immunized.”

The law, which took effect in July, requires parents to talk with their pediatrician about the risks of not immunizing their children before they could get an exemption for medical, philosophical or religious reasons.

Washington’s rate of immunization exemptions has steadily been rising, and in June, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report confirmed the state had the country’s highest immunization exemption rate for kindergartners. More than 5,000 children—a full 6.2 percent of kindergarten students—lacked the immunizations the state requires for new students.

“It’s just a real alarming trend,” said Keiser.

Opting Out
In some cases, parents’ religious affiliation—such as Christian Scientists—prompt them to seek an exemption.

States Take a Shot at Vaccine Opt-Outs
‘Herd Immunity’Threatened with Immunization Exemptions by Debra Miller

Rates of Vaccination Exemptions (2009–10 School Year)

Washington 6.2 %
Vermont 5.8 %
Alaska 5.5 %
Oregon 5.4 %

© AP Images for the American Lung Association in California/Steve Yeater

VACCINATION STATION
SACRAMENTO, CALIF.—The American Lung Association in California sponsored an influenza vaccination clinic at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Sacramento, Raley Branch. While the influenza vaccine is not a requirement for school, other vaccines are, and states are looking at the policies that allow parents to opt their children out of vaccines.
In other cases, it’s misinformation, such as the now-discredited stories of a link between immunizations and autism.

Dr. Andrew Wakefield of Great Britain, in a 1998 paper, linked the MMR—measles, mumps and rubella—vaccine to autism. That paper, published in The Lancet, a well-respected British medical journal, garnered a lot of attention. But in January 2010, the General Medical Council ruled Wakefield had committed “serious professional misconduct” for inappropriate actions related to the study and banned him from practicing medicine. The Lancet officially retracted that study from publication.

But Wakefield’s misinformation lives on. Michael Weinstein, director of communications for the New Jersey Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said the link is “lessening but is still part of the dialogue.”

Keiser said Wakefield “did terrible damage.”

She said many people still use that reasoning to prevent immunization of their children. “People who are really convinced of their point of view will go online somewhere on the Internet to find information that supports their point of view,” she said. “People don’t believe science anymore.”

In the U.S., the National Institute of Medicine reviewed the extensive available research and concluded in 2004 a link between autism and vaccines did not exist.

Now immunization opponents are finding other reasons to support exemptions.

“They are shifting to public rights—‘can the government tell us to do this?’” Weinstein said of the opposition.

New Jersey lawmakers are considering two bills addressing vaccination exemptions for children. One makes exemptions stricter and the other would make it easier for parents to skip their child’s vaccinations.

In March, a Senate committee passed Senate Bill 2625, sponsored by Sen. Loretta Weinberg. The bill would establish stricter guidelines for parents to obtain a religious exemption. It requires parents to submit a letter to their child’s school explaining how the state’s vaccine requirements conflict with the “bona fide religious tenets or practices of the student.” Weinstein expects legislators to pick up the dialogue on the bill in November.

The other bill under consideration, Assembly Bill 243, would create a conscientious objection to vaccination. New Jersey only allows exemptions for medical or religious reasons. The bill has been in the hopper for seven years and finally got a hearing this spring. Assembly Health and Senior Services Chair Herb Conaway, a medical doctor, refused to hold a vote on the bill after powerful testimony from pediatrician Dr. Jeanne Craft, who has treated children with vaccine-preventable diseases.

Importance of Immunizations

Vaccinations protect individuals from acquiring a disease, but also prevent them from transmitting the disease to others who may not be able to be vaccinated. This so-called “herd immunity” protects the entire community. But experts say this group protection is only effective if immunization rates are at or above a certain level.

That specific rate can change according to the disease. For example, diphtheria requires 85 percent of the population to be vaccinated, while pertussis and measles vaccination rates must approach 94 percent before herd immunity becomes effective. A high rate of exemption among children can become a public health threat, experts say.

“It’s really scary, because people become ill-informed and they risk not only their children’s health but also the health of other children,” said Keiser.

Consider this: In October, a 6-week-old California child died of whooping cough. It was the 10th child to die last year in a resurgence of whooping cough in California. According to the CDC, nearly 10,000 cases of pertussis, commonly called whooping cough, were reported in California in 2010, the highest number of cases in 65 years.

Prevention & Savings

42,000 deaths and 20 million cases of disease prevented

$14 billion in direct costs and $69 billion in total societal costs.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The infants who died from whooping cough were too young to have received their vaccinations, but experts point to these episodes as examples of how herd immunity might work to protect everyone in a community. Unimmunized children can pass on the disease to those too young to receive the immunizations. The same is true of adults.

For this reason, CDC is now recommending adults who are around very young children receive a whooping cough booster.

In the measles outbreaks in the early part of this year, 105 of the 118 people who came down with the disease were unvaccinated. That included 24 children whose parents claimed a religious or personal exemption and six adults who declined vaccination because of philosophical objections to vaccination.
“First and foremost, we need to look at what it means to the children who are growing up in households where they don’t have two parents to support them.”

—Ohio Sen. Charleta B. Taveras, on proposal for Family Stability Commission
With 69 percent of her students in poverty, Principal Donna Hall sees their hardship every day of school at Otter Creek Elementary in Little Rock, Ark.

“Students of poverty face many challenges, from lack of concentration in their classrooms to worrying about what’s going on at home with their family, as well as being accepted by their peers,” she said. “And just everyday problems … even being able to cope with just surviving.”

Those challenges are growing across the country. The 2011 Kids Count report found the child poverty rate increased to 20 percent nationwide in 2009. That rise, which in large part can be attributed to the recession, wiped out all the gains the country made during the 1990s, said Laura Speer, associate director of Policy Reform and Data at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, which released the report in August.

“It’s really disheartening and even more so because a lot of experts are projecting that’s going to go up,” Speer said.

The child poverty rate is a key indicator in the Kids Count report, which measures child well-being nationwide and in individual states. “When a child spends a lot of time in poverty during their childhood, they’re more likely to have lots of issues as they grow up,” Speer said. They’re less likely to be ready for school, to perform well there and to graduate. They’re also more likely to have issues with nutrition and concentration at school, she said.

School success, many believe, is essential to breaking the cycle of poverty. That’s one reason many states focus on early childhood education and many organizations tout the importance of high-quality preschool.

**Progress in Education**

“Very high quality preschool programs, whether they’re subsidized child care, Head Start or state-funded pre-K, can really make a difference for children’s school readiness, but programs of mediocre or lower quality are not going to have those effects,” said Sheila Smith, director of Early Childhood at the National Center for Children in Poverty.

Smith said many states offer subsidies for low-income families for child care. While that serves an important purpose in helping parents to work, it’s just not enough.

“If they’re high quality, they won’t serve that other goal of children’s school readiness, so it may not help break that cycle of poverty,” she said.

The Kids Count report found some good news on the education front. The percent of teens not in school and not high school graduates dropped to 6 percent in 2009; it was 11 percent in 2000. But the number of teens neither enrolled in school nor working rose 13 percent from 2008 to 2009, according to Kids Count.

“Something is happening that is right in terms of how we are working to keep kids in school and helping them get that diploma,” said Speer. “There’s a sense that they have to get that high school diploma. That’s critical to anybody who wants to get a job that supports themselves and their family.”

As Speer noted, many states are tackling the systemic issues of poverty, including the challenges kids face in doing well in school. Schools like Hall’s in Little Rock offer supplemental nutrition programs for students, and many organizations and corporations are involved in efforts to fight hunger in the U.S. Walmart, for instance, has launched a $2 billion commitment to fight hunger that includes a partnership with several school-affiliated groups to offer a Breakfast in the Classroom program.

“Statistics show that if children aren’t properly nourished ... throughout the day, it has an impact on their learning,” said Deisha Galberth, Walmart’s corporate communications director.

**The Root of the Problem**

States also are working on other components that affect child poverty. The Casey Foundation, in its new report, focuses on the need to develop a two-generation strategy — preparing the students of today to compete in the global workforce tomorrow and helping...
parents to get the education they need to have a good job to support their families, Speer said.

Many involved in the child poverty issue acknowledge it all comes down to jobs.

“To us, one of the very basic things is the job market and the lack of, basically, living-wage jobs,” said Curtis Skinner, director of Family Economic Security for the National Center for Children in Poverty. “There’s an insufficient number of jobs out there.”

Scott Cooper, executive director of the Partnership to End Poverty in Oregon, knows that all too well. Median wages in the state have fallen and the state has not found a way to diversify its economy after the collapse of rural timber industry, and changes in the agricultural and fishing industries.

“The pace of economic change has overwhelmed all of the efforts we made to try and deal with poverty issues,” Cooper said. “Adequate income cures all poverty.”

While Oregon is in the middle of the pack of states in child poverty, it is making a renewed effort to address the problem. Its Commission on Children and Families issued a Poverty Action Team Report that looked at the state of child poverty in Oregon in April. It included effective and promising policy and program initiatives that Oregon has implemented.

Skinner said poverty and unemployment rates run in tandem. But, he said, addressing the job issue is just one part of a three-pronged answer to the problem of poverty. He believes states also should provide work supports—such as child care assistance and transportation—to help parents work, as well as a robust safety net for those who legitimately cannot work.

“Of course, it costs money, but if you address those three components, you’ll reduce the poverty rate both for children and for adults,” he said.

Skinner believes a rush to save state budget money by cutting support programs is shortsighted.

“First and foremost, we need to look at what it means to the children who are growing up in households where they don’t have two parents to support them.”

Among the committee’s recommendations: Encourage premarital counseling for every couple and offer the incentive of a lower fee for a marriage license to increase the number of couples seeking counseling; establish

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**IMPORTANT OF NUTRITION**

BRATTLEBORO, VT.—Good nutrition is a key to helping children in poverty. The Community Action Brattleboro Area participated in a pilot program subsidized by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide nutritious suppers to children in communities where more than half of households fall below the poverty level.

© AP Photo/Jason R. Henske
timeout mechanisms for couples considering separation, especially those who have children under age 18; and legislating more stringent requirements for divorce when children are involved.

Taveras said the efforts also would include a media campaign strengthening the image of a two-parent family and communicating information about available support services, such as those that might help couples deal with financial issues, one of the major factors in divorce.

“We don’t want families to have stress on them,” she said.

Taveras expects the legislature to consider her bill when it returns after its fall recess.

Thinking Long-Term

While states are looking at individual pieces to address child poverty issues, they’re really just small pieces of a larger pie, Cooper and others say. But, Cooper said, all the pieces are necessary to really make a dent in the problem.

“At the end of the day, if you have jobs, if you have education and access to postsecondary training and assistance to help people to get out of situations that they’ve gotten into, … you can begin to make progress on the poverty issue,” he said.

Cooper, for one, would like to see the federal government make a renewed push in the matter as well.

“Those of us who work in the poverty field agree that the so-called war on poverty model from the ’60s has pretty well run its course,” he said. “We’ve seen a stabilization in the poverty numbers and we’ve seen some improvements, but we’ve probably wrung about as much out of that model as we’re going to get.”

Long-term, he said, a new model would include a renewed national commitment to core principles like job creation, education and housing.

Some states have made inroads in the fight against poverty. Some states have been able to reduce the rates of child poverty from 2000 to 2009, while other states have lost ground. New Hampshire still has the lowest rate of child poverty, at 11 percent, but that rate has increased 2 percentage points over the last decade. Mississippi, with the highest rate of child poverty at 31 percent, maintained its child poverty rate over the decade. Meanwhile, in the states with the biggest changes in child poverty—Louisiana with its drop of 4 percentage points, and Kentucky and Michigan with their 4 percentage points increase—about one-quarter of all children in the state lived in poverty.

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hot topic | AMERICAN DREAM CASE STUDIES

WHO EARN THE DEGREES?

WOMEN
Undergraduate » 57 % Graduate » 60 %

MEN
Undergraduate » 43 % Graduate » 40 %

Source: Harvard University’s Pathways to Prosperity Report

JOB FORECAST

EDUCATIONAL DEMAND FOR JOBS TO 2018

High School Diploma or Less » 36 %

Some College/Associate Degree » 30 %

Bachelor’s Degree or Higher » 33 %

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce

PROVIDING NEW PATHS TO THE AMERICAN DREAM

WHO EARNs THE DEGREES?

WOMEN »
Undergraduate » 57 % Graduate » 60 %

MEN »
Undergraduate » 43 % Graduate » 40 %

Source: Harvard University’s Pathways to Prosperity Report

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce
In 1973, a high school graduate could make a pretty good living. In fact, about 60 percent of those with a high school diploma earned enough to be considered in the middle class, according to a 2010 report from Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce.

What’s more, nearly half the high school dropouts at that time were considered middle class. Times have changed.

“The high school diploma is more and more like confederate money. It has very little intrinsic or extrinsic value,” said Florida Sen. Don Gaetz, a former superintendent of Okaloosa County Schools.

By 2007, according to the Georgetown report, only 45 percent of high school graduates and only 33 percent of high school dropouts were considered middle class. Many believe that portends the fading of the American Dream. Just 41 percent of parents responding to an Ipsos survey released May 26 believe U.S. children will have a better standard of living than their parents.

The need for postsecondary education will only continue to grow, according to Harvard University’s Pathways to Prosperity report, released in February 2011. The report found that postsecondary education—ranging from professional certificates to bachelor’s degrees—increasingly determines access to the middle class.

But that doesn’t mean everyone should go to college. Far from it. In fact, the report found that 27 percent of those with professional certificates will earn more than someone with a bachelor’s degree.

Still, education after high school is important. The Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce estimates two-thirds of the 47 million job openings over a 10-year period ending in 2018 will require some postsecondary education.

“Our nation’s adolescents and young adults must be better prepared for today’s and tomorrow’s more technical jobs,” George Boggs, president and CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges, said in the introduction to the Harvard report. “We cannot afford to leave anyone behind.”

Many states are offering different pathways to the American Dream, starting with how they offer career and technical education for those students who may not necessarily be college-bound. The Harvard report highlighted several states’ efforts to put students on the pathway to prosperity; four of these are highlighted here.

### PROVIDING NEW PATHS TO THE AMERICAN DREAM

by Mary Branham

In 1973, a high school graduate could make a pretty good living. In fact, about 60 percent of those with a high school diploma earned enough to be considered in the middle class, according to a 2010 report from Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce.

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“The high school diploma is more and more like confederate money. It has very little intrinsic or extrinsic value,” said Florida Sen. Don Gaetz, a former superintendent of Okaloosa County Schools.

By 2007, according to the Georgetown report, only 45 percent of high school graduates and only 33 percent of high school dropouts were considered middle class. Many believe that portends the fading of the American Dream. Just 41 percent of parents responding to an Ipsos survey released May 26 believe U.S. children will have a better standard of living than their parents.

The need for postsecondary education will only continue to grow, according to Harvard University’s Pathways to Prosperity report, released in February 2011. The report found that postsecondary education—ranging from professional certificates to bachelor’s degrees—increasingly determines access to the middle class.

But that doesn’t mean everyone should go to college. Far from it. In fact, the report found that 27 percent of those with professional certificates will earn more than someone with a bachelor’s degree.

Still, education after high school is important. The Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce estimates two-thirds of the 47 million job openings over a 10-year period ending in 2018 will require some postsecondary education.

“Our nation’s adolescents and young adults must be better prepared for today’s and tomorrow’s more technical jobs,” George Boggs, president and CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges, said in the introduction to the Harvard report. “We cannot afford to leave anyone behind.”

Many states are offering different pathways to the American Dream, starting with how they offer career and technical education for those students who may not necessarily be college-bound. The Harvard report highlighted several states’ efforts to put students on the pathway to prosperity; four of these are highlighted here.

### READY FOR WORK

NEW YORK—Bayside High School held its graduation in June. Many states are making changes to ensure every student is prepared to enter the 21st century workforce. © Getty Images/Robert Nickelsberg

### COLLEGE COMPLETERS WORLDWIDE

Percent of 25- to 34-year-olds with an Associate Degree or higher, 2007

- Canada, 55.8 %
- Korea, 55.5 %
- Russian Federation, 55.5 %
- Japan, 53.7 %
- New Zealand, 47.3 %
- Ireland, 43.9 %
- Norway, 42.7 %
- Israel, 41.5 %
- France, 41.4 %
- Belgium, 41.3 %
- Australia, 40.7 %
- United States, 40.4 %
- Denmark, 40.1 %
- Sweden, 40 %
- Finland, 39.3 %
- Spain, 38.9 %
- Netherlands, 37.7 %
- United Kingdom, 37.1 %
- Luxembourg, 35.7 %
- Switzerland, 35 %
- Estonia, 34.6 %
- OECD Average, 34.2 %
- Iceland, 31 %
- Slovenia, 30.1 %
- Poland, 30 %

**CALIFORNIA PARTNERSHIP ACADEMIES**

**BEGAN** The California Partnership Academies started in the mid-1980s, modeled after the Philadelphia academies that began in the 1960s. They originally were targeting only students at risk of not graduating high school on time. The enrollment goal of those students is now 50 percent. The state has more than 500 career academies, and is looking into a Linked Learning Initiative, which combines demanding technical education, work-based learning and support services.

**SETUP** Students are enrolled in academic and career tech classes and enter the academies as sophomores. The programs run in grades 10-12. Each academy has about 150 students. Seven or eight teachers volunteer to work in each of the academies, which all have a career theme and business partners. Academic classes use material relevant to the career study. Students must have a mentor from the business community in their junior year and the opportunity for an internship between their junior and senior year or during their senior year, said Jerry Winthrop, who manages the Partnership Academies.

**SUCCESS** “I’ve seen kids that were absolutely on the road to prison or death change their lives around completely,” Winthrop said. “Being at the academy changed their lives and gave them a view of what their future could be as opposed to the way that it was going that they weren’t very happy with.”

**PROMPTING CHANGE** “Industry changes faster than, historically, education has changed,” Winthrop said. “So it’s necessary for us to continually update (career and technical education) standards.”

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**MASSACHUSETTS REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOLS**

**BEGAN** Massachusetts created the regional vocational technical high school system in 1962. That long history has brought the state accolades; its system has been dubbed the Cadillac of CTE, or career and technical education, according to Harvard University’s “Pathways to Prosperity” report. “These schools have evolved over time,” said Mitchell Chester, Massachusetts’ education commissioner. “They certainly don’t look the same as they did in 1962.”

**SETUP** Massachusetts requires every school district to offer students a career vocational technical education option, either by providing it themselves—as some larger districts do—or as part of a regional career vocational technical high school system. But it’s not just career and technical education. Every student must meet the same rigorous graduation standards students in a traditional high school setting meet.

**SUCCESS** The schools have a lower dropout rate than the state average and some of the state’s highest graduation rates. In 2008, 96 percent of students at these schools passed the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System test, surpassing the average at conventional high schools. More than half the students in these schools go on to postsecondary education.

**PROMPTING CHANGE** When the state adopted more stringent standards for core academic subjects, these schools embraced the change and targeted learning to the career track students are pursuing. “I do think one of the things our regional technical high schools do well is demonstrating the relevance of learning for students because students are pursuing some type of career track, some type of career credential as part of their program,” Chester said.
ILLINOIS STEM LEARNING EXCHANGES

BEGAN » Illinois developed STEM—Science, Technology, Engineering and Math—Learning Exchanges as part of its application process in rounds one and two for the federal education funding known as Race to the Top, according to Jason Tyszko, deputy chief of staff in the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. As a finalist in the second round of funding for the program, Illinois will receive funding in Round 3.

SETUP » The learning exchange, Tyszko said, is a network built of educators and businesses involved in a particular career field. Illinois will build its network targeting eight of the 16 national career clusters, plus the energy sector. Anyone involved in a particular career area—including community colleges, employers, school districts, students, labor unions and professional associations—can get involved in these career clusters.

GOALS » Illinois’ goal is to coordinate the investment across areas such as aggregating e-learning resources, expanding access to available classroom and lab space, providing a way to help form statewide student organizations in career areas and providing access to career development.

PROMPTING CHANGE » The state looks at the learning exchanges as a way to promote student choice. “If you look at how the education system plays out right now, you’re really stuck in a particular silo in your community and you have a limited college readiness agenda being driven where a significant portion of students aren’t going to meet that objective,” Tyszko said. The learning exchange network allows students to come from a variety of different pathways to connect in ways they might not be able to otherwise.

Read more about these projects at capitolideas.csg.org.

FLORIDA CHOICE INSTITUTES

BEGAN » Okaloosa County Schools opened the first Choice Institute in 2004. Sen. Don Gaetz, the former Okaloosa County school superintendent, in 2007 wrote and the Florida legislature passed the Career and Professional Education Act, which enshrined the Choice model in statute and opened the program to students in all 67 Florida school districts.

SETUP » The original institute was built around particular industries in northwest Florida that represent high-needs, high-paying jobs, such as aeronautics, information technology, culinary arts and construction management. Schools partner with business and industry, as well as institutes of higher education, to meet their goals. It allows students to earn national industry certifications, university and college credits, and scholarships as they are earning their high school diploma. “They can walk off the graduation stage into real jobs or, if they want, they are far better prepared for higher education,” said Gaetz.

SUCCESS » More than 20,000 young people have graduated high school with an industry-recognized certificate.

PROMPTING CHANGE » “Our educational offerings were not matching either the interests and aptitudes of the students, or the needs of the regional economy,” Gaetz said. “In secondary education, we were in an echo chamber listening to the sounds of our own voices thinking we were hearing the voice of God, but it was just an echo of our own preconceptions about what education ought to be.”

Read more about these projects at capitolideas.csg.org.
Success & Challenges in Privatizing Child Services

by Jennifer Burnett

David Wilkins believes the carefully managed privatization of many of Florida’s child welfare services has been key to the success the state has seen in recent years.

“Our model works, and it works well,” said Wilkins, secretary of Florida’s Department of Children and Families. Florida was one of the first states to venture into contracting with private organizations for services in child welfare in a significant way.

In Florida, as in all states, protecting children from abusers is job number one. Next, getting kids back into a healthy, stable and familiar environment is the ultimate goal.

“If you ask a child in foster care what they want to happen, first and foremost, they will tell you they want to go home,” said Wilkins. “Our goal remains reunification with a child’s family.”

The Successes

Florida’s foray into privatization began in Gov. Jeb Bush’s administration, which started a series of pilot programs. For the past six years, several aspects of the state’s child welfare programs have been fully privatized, including foster care and adoption. And according to Wilkins, “the results have been staggeringly successful.”

Since privatizing, the state has reduced the number of children in foster care from 30,000 to 20,000. The state also has one of the highest adoption rates in the country and facilitated more than 3,000 adoptions last year.

But the state hasn’t privatized all functions. Florida draws the line at the investigation of reports of abuse and neglect, which is seen as a critical function of the state, Wilkins said.

The program works for a reason: “Community involvement is key,” he said.

The state contracts several aspects of case management, such as foster care, to 20 nonprofit vendors throughout the state. Each of those vendors works closely with the state and community leaders and has a significant amount of autonomy.

Privatizing services has not only improved outcomes in Florida, but it also has helped keep costs down. “Our cost
structure has remained relatively flat, even as population has increased,” said Wilkins.

The successes in this area are important because of the high number of children across the country that need services. In 2009, the most recent year for which statistics are available, state child protective services agencies throughout the country received an estimated 3.3 million referrals involving the alleged mistreatment of approximately 6 million children, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. That same year, an estimated 1,770 children died from abuse and neglect.

Florida isn’t the only state to contract these services, according to Jennifer Hall, project manager at the Quality Improvement Center on the Privatization of Child Welfare Services, funded by the U.S. Administration on Children and Families.

“Kansas, Illinois and Florida have each heavily privatized certain areas of child welfare services, although there is significant variation in how case management functions are handled in each state,” said Hall.

The Challenges

Nebraska is a newcomer to privatizing child welfare services, but the road to reform so far has been a bumpy one. Just 20 months into a plan to privatize services in the state, some parts already have been put on hold and the plan itself has received some prominent criticism.

Nebraska state Sen. Kathy Campbell, chairperson for the state’s Health and Human Services Committee, said the process has had difficulties from the beginning. In 2009, she said, the state accepted proposals and signed contracts with five “lead agencies” that were responsible for coordinating services.

“By April 2010, one of those agencies had already declared bankruptcy,” said Campbell. “Another told the state they could finish out the fiscal year, but would not continue the contract after that. In October 2010, the state and a third agency mutually agreed to terminate their contract.”

That means only two of the original five agencies are still functioning.

“That kind of volatility leads to caseworker turnover, insecurity among existing staff and ultimately, instability for the children receiving services, like those in foster care,” said Hall, who has been following the process in Nebraska.

In addition to instability, the abrupt decrease in the number of lead agencies left gaps in services and put financial strain on providers.

“In some rural areas of our state, people are now driving a child 200 miles just to get to counseling services,” said Campbell.

“And when some of the agencies went bankrupt, it left many providers unpaid. Some providers, large and small, couldn’t handle the financial strain and have been forced to close their doors.”

Both Hall and Wilkins say a transition like the one in which Nebraska is currently engaged takes time and patience. “Florida learned throughout their process that you can’t put some arbitrary time limit on how quickly the privatization changeover will take,” said Hall.

Wilkins agrees. “You can’t just jump into this process. It takes years of planning, learning and continual improvement. For us, it took a tough 10 years to make the full transformation.”

Campbell understands those sentiments, but believes the state should take a step back to make sure it is on the right track.

“Privatization takes a while. I can understand that, but we have just had so much change in such a short amount of time that it is very difficult to try to figure out where this system is going,” said Campbell. “A major concern is that we don’t really have a comprehensive plan. We haven’t really stopped to ask, what’s the big picture here? What is this going to look like in two, five or 10 years from now?”

To help answer some of those questions, Campbell is spearheading a legislative effort to evaluate the state’s recent reforms; that evaluation will include financial and performance audits and a series of public hearings.

“We are taking a collaborative approach to our evaluation, getting input from all three branches of government,” said Campbell. “We need to get a better understanding of where this process is taking us. We need to know what the fiscal sustainability of this effort is before moving forward.”

“Privatization takes a while. I can understand that, but we have just had so much change in such a short amount of time that it is very difficult to try to figure out where this system is going.”

—Nebraska Sen. Kathy Campbell
MORE CITIZEN INTERACTION

"Thirteen original colonies sparked the beginning of an extraordinary nation. Decades later, 50 unique, individual states constitute the United States of America. State government gives us the opportunity to see the political process on a more personal level. The representatives of each district interact with their constituents and often are closely knitted with the ideas and opinions of the people. Working collaboratively, the state officials hear, feel and speak for their respective populations."

CAROLYN MALONE
Senator
Arizona Girls State Representative

POLICIES BETTER TAILORED

"It is difficult for the federal government to make its policies one-size-fits-all. Through state government, these policies can be tailored to better represent the people of each region. Additionally, state governments often start new programs and implement new ideas. In fact, many pieces of federal legislation were based off of pre-existing state programs. The policies of the state governments provide empirical examples for the federal government to emulate."

LUCY LIU
Senator
Kansas Girls State Representative

THE NEXT GENERATION RESPONDS

The Council of State Governments is proud to feature young people involved in learning about government. CSG asked this next generation of leaders—senators from Girls Nation—to share their thoughts on the importance of state government. CSG commends the American Legion Auxiliary for boosting the interest of these high school students in government. Two high school girls are selected from each Girls State program to attend Girls Nation, where they become “senators” who meet for a weeklong immersive learning in Washington, D.C. After running for office, electing a mock U.S. Girls Nation president, and campaigning for the passage of mock legislation, the participants meet with national government leaders. The highlight of the week includes a visit to the White House, where for most years, the American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation senators have visited with the president. Read more responses from Girls State representatives online.
CITIZENS CAN BE HEARD

“State government is crucial because it is a more direct representation of the people. It allows citizens easy access to have their voices heard. Representatives at the state level have the ability to directly hear views and concerns from their state, which allows them to more accurately represent the people they serve. Without state government, a government ‘by the people’ would be next to impossible.”

DIFFERENT REGIONS, DIFFERENT GOALS

“The state government is important in our democratic society because it allows Americans the ability to handle matters specifically in their region. Because the United States is so widespread, every corner of the country has different goals, priorities and way of life, therefore different legislation and executive leadership is a necessity. It allows us not only to have pride in our country as a whole, but pride in our state as well. We have a local voice and a national voice, and this is one of our greatest qualities of our society.”

INDIVIDUALS MATTER

“State government matters because the individual voice of each city, county and locality matters. State government is the forum through which the concerns of the everyday are addressed. Without state government, the democratic ideas of equal representation would be all but lost.”
New NLGA Leaders

Nebraska Lt. Gov. Rick Sheehy is now chair of the National Lieutenant Governors Association, an affiliate of the Council of State Governments. Massachusetts Lt. Gov. Tim Murray is chair-elect, Oklahoma Lt. Gov. Todd Lamb is treasurer, and Florida Lt. Gov. Jennifer Carroll is South region chair. The Nebraska governor is serving as chair of the National Governors Association just as the state’s lieutenant governor chairs the NLGA.

How Many Compacts Is Your State a Member Of?

States, on average, belong to 25 compacts. If you want to know which compacts your state belongs to, check out the database on the National Center for Interstate Compacts’ new website, www.csg.org/NEIC. The Compacts Center’s website provides the most up-to-date information about what is happening in the world of interstate compacts, including information about ongoing projects, resources for state policymakers and a new section about compacts. Check out the updated database—http://apps.csg.org/neic—for compacts by name, subject area, statutory information and the years of joining for Interstate compact agreements.

Innovative States

When you’re looking for solutions, sometimes it’s good to see what other people are doing to address a problem. The CSG Innovations program shares good ideas states have developed to avoid having to reinvent the wheel. The 2011 Innovations Awards Winners are no different. Here they are:

South

North Carolina: GLEADS Program
The Criminal Justice Law Enforcement Automated Data Services Program is an integrated data system.

North Carolina: Probation/Parole Officers’ Dashboard
The dashboard is a computer program that compiles vital information about each inmate in every facility’s custody.

East

Maryland: Security Integration Initiative
The program aggregates state data to provide agencies in making critical decisions in the fight against violent crime.

New Hampshire: Adult Protective Services
Structured Decision Making System
The system consists of four assessors designed to establish consistency of decision-making at critical points in the life of a report to adult protective services.

West

Colorado: eForm
A Web-based software to automate the processes to apply for, receive, and approve permits to sell oil and gas wells in the state.

Washington: SECTOR - the Statewide Electronic Collision and Ticket Online Records System
This program developed by Washington State Patrol automates the traditionally paper-based process of processing collision and citation information.

Midwest

A program that lowers costs and improves efficiency when setting up a server for any program under development by state agencies.

Nebraska: State of Nebraska Wellness Program
A program that integrates wellness of state employees into the overall health plan for state government.
DIG DEEPER | STATE ECONOMIC PICTURE

CSG Releases Special Capitol Research Policy Series Based on 2011 Book of the States Data

Visit knowledgecenter/csg.org

State Employee Health Care Benefits

The National Association of State Personnel Executives recently released a whitepaper, Expert Views on State Employee Healthcare, which provides an overview of three key components in state government employee health care benefit programs—wellness and disease management programs, employee engagement, and measurement and return on investment. State employee benefits directors and state government human resource management directors, as well as United Healthcare and the University of Chicago, contributed to the whitepaper. Read Expert Views on State Employee Healthcare at www.naspre.net.

The World of Water


More than 150 parliamentarians representing 35 countries gathered at the meeting to prepare for the 6th World Water Forum, which will be held in Marseille, France in March 2012. The World Water Forum is the largest gathering in the world focused on water. Johnson and Fraser were the only U.S. legislators, and the only state representatives of any country, who attended the preparatory meeting.

The Parliamentary Process at the World Water Forum was created to give a greater voice to parliamentarians in the global debate on water and to prepare contributions on a series of key issues, such as transboundary water management, adaptation to global climate change and water rights. Participating lawmakers also had the opportunity to discuss the creation of a “water legislation helpdesk” aimed at serving as a mechanism of sharing legal frameworks for water management.

CSG West, in partnership with other regional organizations such as the Western Governors Association and the Western States Water Council, along with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, is preparing a policy report to highlight water management efforts in the West to share with the international community. It also is exploring ways to formally or informally participate in the World Water Forum.

Many new governors look at their 100th day in office as an opportunity to measure what they’ve accomplished. For the governors of Alabama and Oklahoma, that marker was instead defined by destruction and a cold hard truth—a disaster can strike a state at any time, whether a new governor is prepared for it or not.

On April 14, a little more than three months after Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin was sworn in, an estimated five tornadoes, including one with a multiple-vortex and winds between 138 and 167 miles per hour, tore across several small towns, causing two deaths and dozens of injuries. Less than two weeks later, Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley faced one of the worst natural disasters in that state’s history when 63 tornadoes ripped through Birmingham, Tuscaloosa and numerous other cities, killing 244 people.

Both Fallin and Bentley had done their homework beforehand, though, and were prepared. They had met with their emergency management staff prior to inauguration, understanding their full authorities under the law, learning how to activate their state’s disaster plans and procedures, and knowing what federal assistance was available. Because of this preparation, they were able to work effectively with the federal government in getting the help they needed, coordinate state resources and guide their residents through the trauma any disaster creates.

For any governor who believes a disaster is a remote possibility, the statistics tell a different story. The decade of 2000-09 concluded with the most presidential disaster declarations since recordkeeping began more than 50 years ago, averaging 56 a year. A presidential declaration is the highest designation a disaster can receive from the federal government. It indicates the severity and destruction of an event, and makes available the greatest amount of federal assistance. Last year, the number stood at 81 and 2011 is on pace to match it.

**FEMA Planned for Changes**

This growing activity is further complicated by the large contingent of new governors who took office this year and who may have little or no experience with disasters. According to the National Governors Association, the 40 gubernatorial elections held in November 2010 resulted in 24 new governors who had never served in the office before. Two governors were appointed late in 2010 to fill unexpired terms, for a total of 26 new governors.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency started planning for the widespread turnover months ahead of time. As the federal entity with primary responsibility and authority for disaster management, FEMA developed a comprehensive strategy to educate new governors on every facet of disasters. Partnering with NGA and working through FEMA regional offices, the agency met with the new governors and their transition teams, conducting extensive briefings on the entire disaster declaration process.

In addition, since all areas of disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation are usually coordinated by a state’s emergency management agency, FEMA worked with the National Emergency Management Association, an affiliate of The Council of State Governments, in providing new state emergency management director training.

Several months after those in-depth sessions, 17 of the 26 governors with no prior executive experience—roughly one-third of all sitting governors—had already faced a disaster as of July 27.

“One of the things that we pointed out to them
is whatever your agenda is, … whatever you hope to accomplish in office, the one thing you cannot predict is when your next disaster is going to strike,” said FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate. “When you’re sworn in, you’ve got to be ready.”

**Oklahoma, Alabama Face Disasters**

For her part, Fallin was ready. Even though she was a new governor, she had substantial disaster knowledge from the mid-1990s when she served as Oklahoma’s lieutenant governor. On April 19, 1995, a bomb-laden van exploded in front of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma City, killing 168 people, including 19 children.

Fallin watched then-Gov. Frank Keating and learned many lessons, such as the importance of having a highly qualified disaster management team and participating in mock drills. She also understood how critical it is for a governor to take control, make good decisions and care about the public throughout the crisis.

She continues to apply those lessons today. In late May, another tornado was predicted to hit downtown Oklahoma City, the state capital, during the afternoon rush hour. Fallin dismissed all state employees at 3 p.m. to decrease the number of drivers on the road. As expected, the tornado came through the city along one of its major interstates at around 4:45 p.m. Some people died, but far fewer than if the highways had been full with commuters.

Bentley started thinking about managing a possible disaster shortly after winning his gubernatorial election. As a lifelong Alabamian and a former U.S. congressman, he was very familiar with the state’s long record of natural hazards.

“No one teaches you how to become a governor,” he said. “You just have to use your life experiences in leading the state.”

Part of that life experience, he said, is anticipating what could go wrong and having a plan to deal with it. On April 27 — Bentley’s 100th day in office — when the first tornado crossed the state line, he immediately declared a state of emergency to expedite state resources in the response. Later, he called up the National Guard to ensure safety and security in those communities hardest hit. He stayed in regular contact with all the affected mayors, county commissioners, sheriffs and local emergency management offices.

“Nobody expects governors to know disasters inside and out, but when you fail your citizens in their time of need … because you weren’t ready and your team wasn’t ready,” Fugate said, it can be “unforgiveable.”

Bentley agrees. “The people … look to the governor to be the leader. I think this administration will be judged by how we handled the disaster. That’s what people remember you for.”

Fallin adds the public must see “that a governor (is) hands on” and “that the governor is taking charge. It gives much comfort to the communities and certainly moral support to the emergency response organizations to know that the governor will actually get involved and be right there.”

Fugate, who served as the director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management under three different governors prior to taking the FEMA administrator position, said it comes down to one simple principle. “A lot of governors say, ‘Disasters aren’t really a big issue in my state.’ And they’re probably right — until they’re wrong. And that could cost them their career. But more importantly, it’s going to cost their citizens.”

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**OKLAHOMA STORMS**

Oklahoma Gov. Mary Fallin toured a mobile home park devastated by a tornado in Chickasha, Okla., in May. One person died at the mobile home park due to the tornado. Fallin had prepared for what her administration would do if a disaster struck, and it helped that she had previously served as the state’s lieutenant governor.

©AP Photo/Sue Ogrocki
**BRINGING HISTORY TO LIFE UNDER THE CAPITOL DOME**

John O’Brien is the assistant director of statehouse tours at the Massachusetts State House, where he has worked for 16 years. A former teacher who began giving tours during the summer, O’Brien says about 100,000 people visit the statehouse each year. It’s his job to share the commonwealth’s rich history and keep visitors engaged. Here’s how he does it.

**APPRECIATE THE VIEW.**
Tour guides should know the history and be able to share the sights with visitors. The Massachusetts Statehouse has several must-sees for any visitor. Many want to see the Bullfinch section, dating back to 1798 and named after the building’s architect, Charles Bullfinch. Memorial Hall and the Great Hall also are popular with their collections of regimental battle flags and city flags from across the commonwealth.

**KNOW THE DETAILS.**
Tour guides can tell some interesting stories with objects from a state’s history. The Sacred Cod of Massachusetts is a particular draw during the state capitol tour. “It’s a 5-foot long wooden cod sculpted and given to House members in Massachusetts in 1780 to remind them of the fishing industry,” O’Brien said. It has hung in the House chambers with two major exceptions—once during the final days of the American Revolution, when it was hidden, and once in 1931 when a group of Harvard students stole it. The cod was returned three days later.

**MIX IT UP.**
O’Brien tries to make sure no two tours are exactly alike. “We have plenty of things to talk about within the building,” he said. “If you keep the tour interesting for yourself, that has to at least increase the enjoyment for the audience. They sense your engagement.”

**APPRECIATE THE HISTORY.**
Every state has a story to tell through its capitol. Massachusetts is especially lucky, O’Brien said. “A lot of the Revolutionary history, which students across the country study, it all happened here…. It comes up not just in history lessons in schools, but all around them.”

**APPRECIATE THE PRESENT, TOO.**
O’Brien said statehouse tours are important to keep people in touch with democracy. He likes the capitol best when activity is percolating. “We’re talking a lot about history and here’s Washington and Hancock,” he said. “But this is a state capitol and there are laws being made here that will affect them. …. It’s an actual place where business is still conducted. …. It’s not just walking through, looking at this painting and telling them what you see.”

**EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED.**
Unusual things can happen during a capitol tour. O’Brien found that in the early days of his tenure as a tour guide. Students were listening to a senator talking in the chambers, which can get pretty hot when the heat is turned on in the winter. “He was a little bit long winded I would have to say,” O’Brien said of the senator. “He was just talking and talking and talking. He said, ‘I better stop talking, because I don’t want to bore you to death.’ With that, the girl in the front row just passed out and hit the ground. …. There was a little bit of pandemonium to make sure she was OK.”
National and Regional Meetings

Registration and application deadlines may apply. Visit www.csg.org/events for complete details.

The Council of State Governments—
2011 National Conference & North American Summit

ICAOS—Annual Business Meeting
Sept. 12–14 | Montgomery, Ala.

Interstate Commission for Juveniles
2011 Annual Business Meeting

The Debt Deal and the States

Former U.S. Sen. Alan Simpson, co-chair of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, will discuss the recent federal debt-ceiling deal and how deficit reduction efforts in Congress will affect the states during The Council of State Governments National Conference and North American Summit Oct. 19–23 in Bellevue, Wash. In addition, state leaders will consider how Mexico and Canada play a role in their economic future.

For more information and to register, visit www.csg.org/2011nationalconference.

Toll Fellows: Developing Leaders

Forty-eight rising state leaders will be back in class Sept. 9–14 at one of the nation’s premier leadership development programs for state government officials. The 2011 class of the Henry Toll Fellowship program will hear from communications experts Arch Lustberg and Ben Self, as well as participate in leadership building activities. The program includes distinguished alumni serving in a wide spectrum of offices, ranging from governors to congressmen to federal cabinet secretaries. Applications for next year’s program will be available in the spring.
BART DAVIS
Idaho Senate Majority Leader

Bart Davis, the former national chair of The Council of State Governments, jokingly says, “My mother raised me to be in the Senate.” He’s served in the Idaho Senate for more than a decade and is the Senate majority leader. His wife Marion, a fourth-grade teacher, often speaks about the challenges she and her colleagues face in education today. As father of the six and are grandfather of 11, Davis knows those challenges all too well. He worries the current economic crisis may hurt the strides made in education. “I worry what this might do to discourage those university students with a desire to teach,” said Davis. “Further, I worry that we are not able to provide sufficient classroom aides or other technology advances that assist the modern teacher and help deal with today’s classroom challenges.” But Davis has served through recessions before and can use that experience to help Idaho weather today’s economic storm. That easily makes him the second teacher in the family.

Do you know someone in state government who deserves a shout out? Email Krista Rinehart at krinehart@csg.org.
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Within this year’s National Conference, CSG will host its first international summit. We’ll discuss our shared opportunities and challenges with friends and partners to the north in Canada and to the south in Mexico.

Don’t miss your chance to discuss issues with colleagues from your state, your country and the world!

For more information, visit www.csg.org or call (800) 800-1910.