On Jan. 20, President Donald Trump took the Oath of Office to be sworn in as America’s 45th president. Thousands stood along the National Mall to watch him offer his inaugural address. Meanwhile, behind the scenes of the inaugural festivities and mostly out of the public eye, frenetic activity has been taking place to plan and prepare for the transition to the next administration.

The president’s transition team must fill 4,000 political appointments to lay the groundwork for implementing the new administration’s policy agenda, and provide for the effective management of our civil service and military. This is a daunting task, and the administration’s future success will be a function of the people he selects. Ensuring that each incoming presidential administration is ready to lead is both a national security imperative and an obligation owed to the American people.

“Assuming governing responsibility for the most complex organization in the world is an enormous task,” said Kristine Simmons, who serves as the vice president for government affairs at the Partnership for Public Service and oversees the organization’s Center for Presidential Transition. “A new administration will need help—and lots of it—to manage the federal enterprise, implement policies effectively and find the very best people to serve.” CSG will monitor these appointments closely and engage early to forge constructive relationships that strengthen the federal and state partnership.

Of immediate interest to the states are the policy initiatives that the president said he would address during his first 100 days in office. Trump released a video outlining the executive actions envisioned
for this time period withdrawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership; canceling restrictions on the
energy industry, including shale energy and clean coal regulations; and requiring federal executive
branch agencies to abolish two existing regulations for each new regulation adopted. He showed
commitment to this vision by signing executive orders on some of these items during his first two
weeks in office. He plans to ask the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the chairman of the
Joint Chiefs of Staff to develop a comprehensive plan to protect America’s infrastructure from
cyberattacks and other threats. On immigration, he has vowed to direct the U.S. Department of Labor
to “investigate
all abuses of visa programs that undercut the American worker.”

Trump also has indicated an intent to work closely with Congress on certain other high-priority
matters, such as tax reform, infrastructure spending, health care and filling the U.S. Supreme Court
vacancy caused by the death of Justice Antonin Scalia. Although Trump will be working with a
Republican Congress, it is unclear how quickly acceptable solutions to these complex issues can be
found.

All of these initiatives have important implications for the states. State officials must engage early
with the new administration if they are to form constructive relationships and positively influence the
adoption of policies affecting the states. CSG is committed to supporting these efforts. At the 2016
CSG National Conference in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, CSG outlined its vision for fostering
effective cooperation with the federal government through a resolution titled, “Supporting a
Successful Transition Process.”

**Civic Education**

Civic education is fundamental to effective government and citizen engagement. It equips citizens
with the knowledge and capabilities to become community, state, national and international leaders.
It is also essential for building trust between citizens and elected officials—more important than ever
in today’s highly polarized society. States are taking important steps to improve civic education and,
in particular, to highlight the important role of the states in our republican form of government.

**Fiscal Uncertainty**

Inaction and delays associated with the appropriations process in Congress continue to cause
uncertainty and make it more difficult for state and local governments to manage fiscal resources and
strategically plan. Congress has not approved all 12 appropriations bills on time since 1996, and it has
relied on the use of stopgap continuing resolutions and omnibus bills to provide federal
appropriations. This pattern of patchwork funding and the recurring threat of government shutdowns
have made it difficult to predict the flow of funds to state and local governments.

**Strengthening States’ Role**

The diversity of policy experimentation and accountable governance made possible by the 10th
Amendment to the U.S. Constitution has enabled our nation to thrive despite the changing needs of
society and an increasingly global economy, and it is essential that the role of the states as the
“laboratories of democracy” is preserved. The states should work with the federal government to
adopt policies of constructive engagement to gather relevant information about existing issues, build
on innovative programs already in place at the state level, and ensure national policies are
implemented in the most effective and efficient manner possible. To that end, CSG is engaging the
new administration early to cultivate an atmosphere that will advance the notions of federalism.
Intergovernmental Relations

Absent the federal Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, which was closed in 1996 and was the framework for the state and federal relationship in the rulemaking process, both federal and state leaders must identify opportunities to increase their coordination and improve the intergovernmental relationship. CSG has been working with the other national state and local organizations to identify recommendations on how to improve the state-federal regulatory process, including: updating the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act, establishing consistent state-federal advisory committees within federal agencies and ensuring state legislators simply know who to contact in each federal agency. These efforts will remain a priority for the states and for CSG in 2017.

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