The Council of State Governments’ 2018 national leaders were announced Saturday, Dec. 16, during the CSG 2017 National Conference in Las Vegas after confirmation by the CSG Executive Committee.

Utah Gov. Gary Herbert will serve as the CSG 2018 national president and Kentucky Senate President Robert Stivers will serve as the CSG 2018 national chair. In addition, Delaware state Rep. Helene Keeley becomes the chair-elect and Wisconsin state Rep. Joan Ballweg will serve as the vice chair.

“State officials trust CSG because our priorities are their priorities,” CSG Executive Director/CEO David Adkins said. “CSG’s national officers lead the work of CSG, bringing together all three branches of state governments to advance the common good. Our slate of officers for 2018 represents a talented, bipartisan cross section of the dedicated public servants who govern the states. They bring remarkable energy and proven leadership to their roles with CSG.”

Herbert became Utah’s 17th governor in August 2009. Prior to taking that oath of office, Herbert served as lieutenant governor for five years. As Utah’s chief executive, one of Herbert’s priorities has been leading Utah's recovery from the Great Recession. His efforts on economic development include attracting businesses and investment to the state while helping homegrown businesses flourish.

"As CSG president, it will be my goal to enhance collaboration between the three branches of each state’s government by continuing to facilitate conversations about intergovernmental efficiency and communication best practices," Herbert said. "I want to continue to provide innovative formats for states to share best practices on all subjects, and between all levels of government."

Stivers has served in the Kentucky General Assembly since 1997. He was elected to serve as Senate majority floor leader in 2009, a position he served in until being elected Senate president in 2012, 2014 and 2016. His term runs through the 2018 session. Among other issues, Stivers focused on career readiness and economic development during his time in the Kentucky Legislature.

"CSG provides an excellent platform that brings people together on a broad spectrum from all over the country," Stivers said. "It allows us to hear from legislators or business leaders who have been on the front end of an issue or idea that is starting to spread into every other region of the U.S. It promotes great discussions on these issues and provides a number of diverse perspectives."

Delaware state Rep. Helene Keeley is the longest-serving member of the Delaware House of Representatives. In 2015, she served as co-chair of the CSG Eastern Regional Conference. She also served as co-chair of the CSG Fiscal & Economic Development Public Policy Committee in 2015 after being a member of the National Working Group on Economic Development that was the impetus for establishing the committee.

"As incoming chair-elect, I would like to see CSG continue their policy academies, which are so very useful to legislators," Keeley said. "I would like to have a focus group on younger legislators to understand better how they would like to have information delivered to them. I believe we still want
that family atmosphere at our regional and annual meetings; and we should find out if there is a way to use technology to advance the sessions."

Wisconsin state Rep. Joan Ballweg was first elected to her position in 2004. For Ballweg, public service began when she served on the Markesan City Council and then went on to serve as mayor of the city for six years.

"I am grateful for the opportunities CSG has given me, and I encourage legislators in my caucus, state and across the nation to participate," Ballweg said.

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