CSG Hosts First National Task Force Meetings in Kentucky

By Shawntaye Hopkins

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The Council of State Governments hosted policymakers from across the country in June for the first meetings of its two national task forces: Healthy States and The Future of Work.

“Thank you for being willing to take on what I believe is a really important task but a heavy lift nonetheless,” said Tennessee state Sen. Bo Watson, during the opening session of the Healthy States meeting. “You are here, and were selected to be here, for a reason, and it is because of the skill set that you have around this subject.”


“The topic is as complicated and fraught with uncertainties and policy complexities and political pitfalls as it is critical from a fiscal, economic, business and moral perspective,” Townsend said.

The Healthy States Task Force, which is divided into four subcommittees, met June 17-19 in Lexington, Kentucky, the home of CSG Headquarters. The Future of Work Task Force, also divided into four subcommittees, met in Lexington June 19-21.

Over the next two years, policymakers in both groups will survey best practices and innovative state initiatives during planned task force meetings, some of which will be held at annual CSG National Conferences. The task forces will produce reports detailing best practices and state successes in the policy areas at the end of the two years.

“The topic that we are looking at today with workforce, I can’t help but go back and say, ‘Where does it all begin?’,” said Colorado state Sen. Nancy Todd, during the opening session of The Future of Work Task Force meeting. “And it all begins in the classroom. It all begins with what we are doing in preparing our children for the future.”


McGinn described the past, present and future of the workforce —from the various trades of immigrants to the impact of generations entering the workforce now.

She recalled being a kid watching the Jetsons and not believing the show would ever become a reality.

“Now, when we think about autonomous cars, we’re getting pretty close to that,” she said. “So, we’ve gone a long way in technology.”
Over the three-day task force meetings, policymakers set goals for the next two years within their subcommittees and listened to public and private-sector speakers with expertise in the policy area. In addition to overall co-chairs, each subcommittee of the Healthy States and The Future of Work task forces has two co-chairs and 10 members.

“Two years is the least it’s going to take to tackle all of this, but we think it can be done,” Townsend said, referring to the work of the four Healthy States subcommittees: What’s Next? Leveraging Innovation; State Health Systems and Return on Investment; Capacity, Preparedness and Resiliency; and Interventions to Save Lives.

Townsend said that even though federal developments could dramatically change some of the topics discussed by the Healthy States Task Force members, CSG has created an opportunity for policymakers to come together, learn from each other, and carry useful information back to their states.

The Future of Work subcommittees are The Workforce of Tomorrow; Smart Government; What’s Next? Embracing the Future; and Equity and Inclusion.

Todd offered this advice to members of The Future of Work Task Force as she prepared to move through each group during the event: “Listen to each other. Think about different perspectives. ‘My way is the highway’ will never work in a good, collaborative setting.”

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