HELP FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

This school population is at much greater risk of falling behind and not graduating; advocates say states can help with a mix of prevention and intervention strategies.

by Tim Anderson (tanderson@csg.org)

Six years ago, with a $2 million legislative appropriation, Minnesota launched a pilot program to help some of that state’s most at-risk students — young learners who lack stable or adequate housing. The state began partnering with schools and local organizations to provide vulnerable families with subsidies that helped pay their rent over two school years. The goals: Stabilize housing and prevent homelessness, thus improving school attendance and, over the long term, academic performance among these students.

The early results, says Eric Grumdahl, were a “powerful signal” that this kind of intervention worked.

Ninety percent of the pilot program’s students with a known housing status were stably housed. (All of them had entered the program experiencing housing instability or school changes.) Further, these young people were more likely to be attending school on a regular basis than their homeless peers.

“That encouraged us to take this to a larger scale,” adds Grumdahl, who works for Minnesota’s Interagency Council on Homelessness and the Department of Education.

That “larger-scale,” permanent program is now called Homework Starts with Home, and the Legislature appropriated $3.5 million for it this biennium as part of Minnesota Housing’s base budget.

The hope among legislators is to reach more young people, and to stop what can be a destructive cycle — homeless students are much more likely to fall behind and drop out of school; individuals who don’t complete high school are at a much higher risk of homelessness as young adults.

“They’re losing time and they’re losing coursework. At the same time, they’re also losing attachments to friends and teachers, and all of those emotional pieces of stability.”

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

Not surprisingly, then, the achievement gaps between homeless students and their peers are wide. Nationwide, for example, less than two-thirds of homeless children/youths enrolled in public school.

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**State laws treat mother's substance use during child abuse, but should they?**

by Jon Davis (jdavis@csg.org)

Twenty-two years after South Carolina became the first state to criminally convict a woman for child abuse for using crack cocaine during her pregnancy, only Alabama and Tennessee have joined it in criminalizing that behavior. But almost half of all states — including every Midwestern state except Kansas, Michigan and Nebraska — consider a mother’s drug use during pregnancy to be child abuse under civil child-welfare law, according to a December 2019 survey by the Guttmacher Institute, a New York City-based organization researching sexual and reproductive health policies worldwide.

This type of statutory language, Guttmacher notes, provides grounds for the termination of parental rights. Minnesota, South Dakota and Wisconsin also consider a mother’s prenatal drug use to be grounds for civil commitment (for example, required enrollment in inpatient drug treatment programs), according to the survey.

The survey also notes that if prenatal drug use is suspected, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin require health professionals to report it while Indiana requires pregnant women to be tested; Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota require both. Kansas and Nebraska have no reporting or testing requirements, the survey says.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates 15 percent of infants nationwide are affected by prenatal alcohol or illicit drug exposure, which can cause a wide range of physical and developmental challenges.

The Guttmacher survey details the mix of state strategies to address this public health problem — some include punitive measures such as forced admission to an inpatient treatment program, others fund programs that target help for pregnant women to overcome their addictions.

“Sometimes the effects of these bills are much more punitive than the intent,” notes Elizabeth Nash, senior state issues manager for Guttmacher.

For example, short of criminalizing prenatal drug use, she says, Wisconsin “has one of the most punitive laws in the country.”

That law, which dates from 1997, allows pregnant women to be subjected to forced treatment and detention if local government employees feel she “habitually lacks self-control in the use of alcoholic beverages, controlled substances or controlled substance analogs ... to the extent that there is a substantial risk” to the physical health of her child.

This law was declared unconstitutionally vague in 2017 by a federal district court, but that decision was then vacated by a federal appellate court which ruled that the case became moot when the plaintiff moved out of the state.

Crucially, the appellate court did not rule on the merits of the district court’s finding, says Lynn Paltrow, founder and executive director of National Advocates for Pregnant Women.

This kind of legislation seems to address a serious problem, but the effect of it can be to discourage women from seeking help and treatment on their own, Paltrow says.

“What we need are health care systems that guarantee people confidentiality and security whenever they seek care,” she says.

According to the Guttmacher survey, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin have either created or funded drug treatment programs specifically targeted to pregnant women.

In addition, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin provide pregnant women with priority access to state-funded drug treatment programs.

In Illinois, for example, treatment services are available at no cost for individuals not eligible for Medicaid through the federal Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant which targets pregnant women and women with dependent children, among others — and pregnant women seeking substance use disorder treatment are given priority admission status, according to the state’s Department of Human Services.

If treatment capacity is unavailable for a pregnant woman seeking services, interim services will be made available no later than 48 hours after she has sought treatment, according to the department.


### Iowa legislation aims to boost rural development for entire state's economic benefit

by Laura Tomaka (ltomaka@csg.org)

In Iowa, Gov. Kim Reynolds has made improving economic opportunities to all areas of the state a top priority. To do this, she has placed a particular focus on rural Iowa and the challenges faced by those communities.

Since 2018, state and community leaders have taken part in the governor’s Empower Rural Iowa Initiative in order to address the challenges facing the state’s rural communities. The initiatives’ work resulted in legislation and a set of recommendations for continued action.

Sixty percent of Iowans live in counties with populations less than 100,000 and 30 percent live in counties with less than 25,000, making rural Iowa critical to the entire state, says Iowa Sen. Mark Lofgren.

“It is rural Iowa that has made us what we are today,” says Lofgren, who is a member of the initiative’s task force and chair of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Economic Development.

“Much of the industry in the larger counties depends on connections with rural counties,” he says. “Rural counties offer a low-cost of living and many economic opportunities that are not available in large cities.”

Like many rural areas across the region, rural Iowa is challenged with slow economic growth, job loss and declining populations. Last session, legislators approved, and Gov. Kim Reynolds signed, the Empower Rural Iowa Act (HF 772) as an initial step to address these issues.

The act focuses on improving workforce housing, broadband connectivity and local leadership in rural communities. It provides $25 million to fund workforce housing credits and $5 million in grants to increase broadband access.

In addition, it creates the Center for Rural Revitalization, which will help communities create a vision and roadmap for Main Street economic improvements.

These areas need the state’s attention to help attract and keep businesses in smaller towns across the state, Lofgren says.

“Much of the housing stock in rural counties is older and not as updated as potential new residents would like,” he adds. “Internet connectivity in many rural areas is not sufficient for the needs of residents and businesses.”

The Empower Rural Iowa Initiative will also address a community leadership void that has arisen as businesses have left small towns by providing a pathway for local engagement and strategic planning. Lofgren says. Late last year, the Empower Rural Iowa Task Force adopted a set of final legislative recommendations for the 2020 session. Among them:

- **Provide additional funding and a higher state match for existing broadband grants to improve internet speed in rural areas**
- **Increase the cap for Main Street Challenge grants, which assist communities in making economic and physical improvements to Main Street districts.**
- **Increase funding for the state’s derelict-buildings grant program.**
- **Provide more rural set-aside money for the state’s building remediation program.**
- **Continue set-aside for small cities in the state workforce housing tax credit.**
- **Create a matching grant program focused on developing rural leaders.**
- **Continue support for Rural Innovation Grants and Rural Housing Assessments created in 2019.**


**Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome Rates for 1,000 Newborn Hospitalizations in Midwest States (2016)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Rate per 1,000 Newborns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Above U.S. national rate of 7.0
Below U.S. national rate of 7.0

Source: Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project; Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**
Growing pains likely as hemp production, and regulation of it, comes to states across the Midwest

by Carolyn Orr (carolyn@strawridgefarm.us)

Hemp production in Midwest, 2019*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Planned or actual plantings</th>
<th># of licenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>19,300 acres</td>
<td>733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>5,300 acres</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>5,700 acres</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>32,000 acres</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>8,000 acres</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>3,900 acres</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>1,251 acres</td>
<td>1,247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In 2016, the USDA rule required testing every field within 15 days of harvest. This is difficult to achieve for farmers and regulators alike. Minnesotas law has an additional penalty for farmers who have a hard time getting their entire crop harvested within that 15-day window. For state regulators, the challenge is collecting samples from the hundreds of fields all trying to harvest at the same time. Farmers may have a hard time getting their entire crop harvested within that 15-day window. For state regulators, the challenge is collecting samples from the hundreds of fields all trying to harvest at the same time.

Midwest states in middle of national debate over laws on ‘riot boosting,’ protecting energy infrastructure

by Mitch Arvidson (marvidson@csg.org)

Six months after passage of an “anti-riot boosting” bill in South Dakota, national attention, South Dakota’s governor and attorney general agreed to a settlement that effectively nullifies certain provisions of this 2019 legislation (SB 189), along with two other existing laws.

The settlement was announced in October, one month after state’s SB 189 were ruled unconstitutional in U.S. District Court. Under the agreement, the state will no longer enforce laws that make it a felony for an individual to encourage or solicit violence in a riot, whether or not participating directly. The agreement also strikes down most provisions in SB 189, except a section that allows the state to collect compensation from individuals who cause damage during protests.

South Dakota’s Riot Boosting Act aimed to create ways for the state to pursue legal action against out-of-state actors who assist, financially or otherwise, with violent protests and rioting.

Over the past five years, 17 states have passed laws related to riots or protests, often with a particular emphasis on protecting pipelines or other critical energy infrastructure, according to the International Center for Not-For-Profit Law. Much of this legislative activity has been a reaction to protests in 2016 in North Dakota over the Dakota Access Pipeline. According to Gov. Kristi Noem, SB 189 was introduced to “ensure the Keystone XL pipeline and other future pipeline projects are built in a safe and efficient manner while protecting our state and counties from extraordinary law enforcement costs.” With that goal in mind, and in an attempt to strike a balance between free speech, Noem was planning in late 2019 to introduce new legislation. Her idea, the Minneapolis Star Tribune noted in December, is to change the law so that oral and written advocacy is not considered urging or inciting a riot.

New laws in 3 other states

The ACLU of South Dakota argued that the 2019 law’s “broad language invites arbitrary enforcement” and was too vague to understand what behaviors and actions were and were not allowable. In the Midwest, three other states have new laws that increase potential penalties for protests near pipelines or other “critical infrastructure.” These laws don’t have the same “riot boosting” language as South Dakota’s, though Indiana and North Dakota legislators did include language allowing for fines of up to $100,000 for any individual and/or organization that conspires with individuals who commit offenses outlined in the new statutes. South Dakota’s SB 471 creates the offenses of “criminal infrastructure facility trespass” and “criminal infrastructure facility mischief,” carrying penalties of up to 30 months and six years in prison, respectively. North Dakota’s SB 244 criminalizes “interfering, inhibiting, impeding or preventing the construction or repair of a critical infrastructure facility.” Violators face a $10,000 fine and/or up to five years in prison.

In November, Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers signed AB 426. Individuals who trespass or intentionally cause damage to the property of an energy provider now face felony charges punishable by up to six years in prison and a $10,000 fine.

This year, for the 24th time in the nation’s history, the federal government will count the nation’s population. For states, their communities and residents, much is at stake in the results of this decennial census. Close to $700 billion in federal dollars is distributed every year based on results of the census, which also determines the size of a state’s congressional delegation and number of votes in the U.S. Electoral College. Here are some population trends in the Midwest ahead of “Census Day” on April 1.

**1 MINNESOTA, NORTH DAKOTA AND SOUTH DAKOTA LEAD MIDWEST IN POPULATION GROWTH**

In December, the U.S. Census Bureau released its last set of state estimates in advance of the official population count. Nationwide, between 2010 and 2019, the U.S. population has grown an estimated 6.3 percent — from 308.8 million to 328.2 million. Only three states in the Midwest have met or exceeded this rate of growth: Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota (see map). In contrast, Illinois is one of four U.S. states that lost population (Connecticut, Vermont and West Virginia are the others).

**2 OVER THE PAST DECADE, THE MIDWEST HAS LOST 1.6 MILLION PEOPLE TO OTHER REGIONS**

Four factors contribute to changes in a state’s population: the number of births and deaths, domestic migration and international migration. That third factor, the movement of people from one area of the United States to another, is a particular concern for many states and communities in the Midwest. Between 2010 and 2019, this region lost a net total of 1.6 million people as the result of domestic migration (see map). The biggest losses occurred in Illinois (third most in the country), Michigan (fifth most) and Ohio (seventh most). In this region, only North Dakota and South Dakota have experienced net gains in population due to decade-long trends in domestic migration.

**3 MIDWEST STATES EXPECTED TO LOSE CONGRESSIONAL SEATS, VOTES IN ELECTORAL COLLEGE**

As the Midwest and East have lost population, due to domestic migration and other trends, the West and South have gained. That will mean greater political clout for the latter two regions following completion of the 2020 census and reapportionment. Using the latest population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, the political consulting firm Election Data Services Inc. predicts that the following states will gain U.S. House seats: Arizona (one), Colorado (one), Florida (one), Ohio (one), North Carolina (one), Oregon (one) and Texas (two). The 11-state Midwest, on the other hand, is likely to lose three congressional seats — one each in Illinois, Michigan and Minnesota. (Ohio also is at risk of losing a seat, and Minnesota is close to hanging on to all eight of its current seats, depending on the results of the official census count.) For decades, the Midwest and Northeast have been losing congressional seats and, as a result, votes in the U.S. Electoral College. In 1972, for example, the 11-state Midwest held 133 Electoral College votes — 49.2 percent of the 270 votes needed to win the presidency. If the current predictions for reapportionment hold, this region will have 105 Electoral Midland votes in the 2024 presidential election.

**4 MIDWEST’S RURAL COUNTIES ARE LOSING POPULATION; SUBURBS ARE GAINING**

Across the Midwest, rural counties are losing people. In Illinois, for example, populations dropped in each of the state’s 62 rural counties between 2010 and 2018, according to estimates released in April 2019 by the U.S. Census Bureau. In four other Midwestern states — Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska and Ohio — population declines occurred in at least three-quarters of nonmetropolitan counties (see table). In some cases, too, these declines have been dramatic, with double-digit losses in 12 of the region’s rural counties, including five in Kansas alone.

Where is population growing? The largest increases tend to be in the suburbs. In seven Midwestern states, the state’s fastest-growing county is in a metropolitan area, adjacent to or near a county containing a large city:
- Kendall County in Illinois (west of Chicago)
- Hamilton County in Indiana (north of Indianapolis)
- Dallas County in Iowa (west of Des Moines)
- Ottawa County in Michigan (west of Grand Rapids)
- Carver County in Minnesota (southwest of the Twin Cities)
- Sarpy County in Nebraska (south of Omaha)
- Delaware County in Ohio (north of Columbus)

These population shifts will impact how congressional and state legislative districts are drawn. Once state redistricting is complete, in time for the 2022 elections, the result will be larger (or lost) districts in rural areas, and more political clout for metropolitan regions, particularly the suburbs.

**5 POPULATION HAS SLOWED DUE TO DECLINE IN BIRTHS, INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

When the U.S. Census Bureau released the new population estimates in December, it made particular note of two nationwide trends.

- One is the decline in population increases from net international immigration (based on the movement of people into and out of the country) — from a decade high of 1,046,709 in 2016 down to 595,348 by 2019. That is a 43.1 percent drop for the nation as a whole. This trend was even steeper in Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin. One state in the Midwest, however, bucked this national trend: Net international immigration in Indiana rose from 13,298 in 2016 to 57,046 in 2019, an increase of 264.3 percent. That was the result of increased net international immigration (based on the movement of people into and out of the country) — from a decade high of 1,046,709 in 2016 down to 595,348 by 2019. That is a 43.1 percent drop for the nation as a whole. The trend was even steeper in Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin. One state in the Midwest, however, bucked this national trend: Net international immigration in Indiana rose from 13,298 in 2016 to 57,046 in 2019, an increase of 264.3 percent. That was the result of increased net international immigration in Indiana.

- The single largest contributor to U.S. population growth is the “natural increase”: more births than deaths. But this birth-to-death gap is narrowing, thus leading to slower population growth. Compared to the start of the decade, population gains from “natural increases” are down (often sharply) in every Midwestern state except North Dakota and South Dakota. And between 2018 and 2019, the number of births fell in each of the Midwest’s 11 states. In four states outside this region (West Virginia, Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont), there were actually more deaths than births in 2019.

Article written by Tim Anderson, CSG Midwest publications manager. He can be reached at tanderson@csgrp.org.
CAPITAL CLOSEUP: ALL GOVERNORS HAVE CLEMENCY POWERS, BUT PROCESS VARIES IN MIDWEST BECAUSE OF DISTINCT RULES, CONSTITUTIONAL LANGUAGE

by Jon Davis (jwdavis@csg.org)

Though it is not uncommon for governors to have broad clemency powers, Kentucky ex-Gov. Matt Bevin ignited a firestorm and put a spotlight on this long-held tool of the executive branch late last year when he granted pardons or commuted the sentences of hundreds of people — all after he narrowly lost re-election.

It wasn’t the number that generated national controversy, but rather some of the specific cases involved — for example, a murderer whose family had raised campaign funds for Bevin, a teacher who had pleaded guilty to possession of child pornography and witness tampering, and a child rapist.

The Kentucky Constitution gives the governor the authority to “commute sentences” and “grant reprieves and pardons.” He or she may consult with the state parole board on pardon petitions, but doesn’t have to do so, and must tell the Legislature who was pardoned and why.

Across the 11-state Midwest, governors have sole or shared powers of clemency. This authority most often comes from state constitutions, with additional statutory language sometimes providing rules and procedures for the governors to follow.

Minnesota and Nebraska stand out among states in this region because the power is formally shared by three-member boards made up of the governor and two other state officials: the attorney general and chief justice of the Supreme Court in Minnesota, and the attorney general and secretary of state in Nebraska.

And even in states where the governor has sole authority, the process can vary. In Illinois, South Dakota grants more pardons than Minnesota because its Board of Pardons and Paroles considers applications, investigations, and makes recommendations to the governor, while Minnesota requires the governor, attorney general and chief justice to do all that work.

Governors in Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin must report their pardon decisions to the legislature.

RECENT ACTIVITY IN MIDWEST

There are different types of gubernatorial clemency. In Kentucky, for example, Bevin’s decision to pardon or to commute (lesen) certain sentences drew the ire of prosecutors and the families of crime victims.

But recent developments in two Midwestern states have been much less controversial.

In Illinois, when lawmakers legalized the use of recreational marijuana in 2019, they required the automatic expungement of arrest records for marijuana possession under 30 grams. According to the Chicago Tribune, state police are also sending marijuana conviction records to the Prisoner Review Board to determine which ones should be pardoned.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker said he will pardon in all cases recommended for dismissal; late last year, he granted 11,817 pardons.

Meanwhile, Gov. Mike DeWine has launched the “Ohio Governor’s Expedited Pardon Project” to speed up the pardon process for qualified ex-offenders. His goal is to process and consider petitions within six months. “There are decent people all over the state who are living in the shadow of a long-past and regretted mistake,” DeWine said. Acrong the requirements for applicants seeking an expedited pardon: conviction-free for the past 10 years, a post-offense employment history (or a compelling reason for not having one), and a history of community service.

Capital Closeup is an ongoing series of articles focusing on institutional issues in state governments and legislatures. Previous articles are available at csgmidwest.org.

QUESTION | What types of financial assistance do states in the Midwest offer military veterans?

From targeted tax relief and monetary compensation to help finding a job or pursuing a postsecondary degree, Midwestern states have a number of laws and programs in place to assist military veterans.

Almost every state in the region, for example, doesn’t tax retired military pay. The lone exceptions are Nebraska, which offers a partial income-tax exemption, and Indiana, which currently is phasing in a full exemption between now and 2023 (the result of last year’s HB 1010).

In April 2019, North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum signed legislation (HB 1053) fully exempting military retirement benefits from state income-tax, and

seven Midwestern states (Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio and Wisconsin) have temporary emergency-aid funds to assist veterans (and often their spouses and dependents) who experience unforeseen financial emergencies.

In North Dakota, veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder also can secure a grant to help purchase a service dog.

Another policy option is to offer veterans some kind of preference in the state hiring process — for example, adding points to the grade on a civil service test or guaranteeing an initial interview and/or consideration. Every state in the region offers some type of employment preference.

In Indiana, a program known as Next Level Veterans helps service men and women apply for jobs in the public and private sectors; it also provides $5,000 per household for veterans who relocate from another state to accept permanent employment in Indiana. Unemployed or under-employed veterans in Wisconsin may receive a grant of up to $3,000 per year if they have a financial need while going through job training.

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QUESTION OF THE MONTH

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At least half of the Midwestern states provide some type of higher-education financial assistance to veterans. Illinois, South Dakota and Wisconsin pay full tuition and certain fees for resident veterans at any state-supported postsecondary institution. Minnesota provides a per-semester stipend for veterans, and North Dakota’s Veterans Education Training program offers a free program of study to prepare individuals for a certification program or for a two- or four-year college degree. In Kansas, any veteran is eligible to pay the in-state tuition rate at public colleges and universities.

Question of the Month response by Laura Kliewer, CSG Midwest senior policy analyst. She can be reached at kliewer@csg.org. CSG Midwest provides individualized research assistance to legislators, legislative staff and other state government officials. This section highlights a research question received and answered by CSG Midwest. Research inquiries can be sent to csigm@csg.org.
Legalized sports betting has come to a fourth state in the Midwest, thanks to bipartisan bills signed by Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in December. The package of legislation marks the culmination of years of work by lawmakers to change state policy on sports betting and internet gaming. The end result: Michigan residents will be able to wager on sports events (amateur and professional) and participate in online, casino-style gaming such as poker through the state's commercial and tribal casinos.

According to Whitmer’s office, the Michigan Department of Treasury is estimating a gain in state revenues of $19 million — close to half of which will go to the School Aid Fund ($4.8 million) and a fund ($5.4 million) that provides financial assistance to firefighters who have developed certain cancers as the result of smoke inhalation and exposure to chemicals. Casino will pay a state tax rate of 8.4 percent on their adjusted gross receipts from sports betting. Detroit casinos also will pay a city tax of 1.25 percent. Mobile sports wagering will be allowed through the state’s licensed casinos.

Michigan is the 20th U.S. state to legalize sports betting; Illinois, Indiana and Iowa passed laws in the early part of 2019. In Iowa, through the first five months of fiscal year 2020, 18 licensed casinos had handled a total of $212 million in sports wagering, yielding $1.3 million in tax revenue (based on a state tax rate of 6.75 percent), according to the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission. A little more than half of this activity in Iowa occurred via the internet (mobile phones or other devices). Indiana had collected $3.9 million in taxes from sports betting as of the end of 2019 (the tax rate is 9.5 percent), with close to 70 percent of the $162 million in total wagers being made through internet sportsbooks that have partnered with casinos, according to the Indiana Gaming Commission.

Michigan is the first state in the Midwest, and fifth in the United States, to authorize its casinos to offer online poker and other games.

### New Wisconsin Law Ensures Kids’ Lemonade Stands Won’t Be Squeezed Out of Business

When Wisconsin children try to stir up customers this summer for their neighborhood lemonade stands, a new state law will be in order. A bill signed by Gov. Tony Evers in late November, a minor does not need to get either a food processing permit or a retail food establishment license from the state’s Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection. In addition, municipalities cannot ban “a stand operated by a minor.”

The new law applies to stands that occasionally sell lemonade, other drinks or food that do not require temperature control and that are sold directly to consumers. These stands must be operated by someone under age 18 on private property (with the owner’s permission).

These types of state laws have become more common in response to media reports of children’s lemonade stands being shut down by local law enforcement. The company Country Time Lemonade held a promotion in 2019 (dubbed “Legal Ade”) that paid the permit fees for children’s lemonade stands; it also has an ongoing “legalize lemonade” campaign that tracks legislative activity. As of May 2019, Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska and North Dakota were among the 16 U.S. states with laws allowing children’s lemonade stands to operate without licenses. Outside the Midwest, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott signed a similar lemonade legalization bill into law in June 2019; that measure also bans homeowner or neighborhood associations from banning children’s lemonade stands.

### With Their Economies and Revenues Growing, States Are Building Up Reserve Funds

Three recent national studies underscore the strength of state economies, fiscal conditions and revenue collections entering the new legislative year in the Midwest. The latest data from the Urban Institute, for example, compares state tax collections between the third quarters of 2019 and 2018 (July to October) — for every state in the region, revenue was up, and North Dakota was one of eight U.S. states with year-over-year increases of 7.5 percent or more. Nebraska and Wisconsin also experienced significant revenue gains.

According to “The Fiscal Survey of the States,” released late last year by the National Association of State Budget Officers, actual collections in general funds for fiscal year 2019 exceeded original budget projections in every Midwestern state except South Dakota, where collections were “on target.” For the start of FY 2020, collections were either on target or higher than original projections across the region. In FY 2019, NASBO notes, no U.S. state made mid-year budget cuts due to revenue shortfalls, and U.S. state rainy day funds reached an all-time high. The median balance of these funds as a share of general-fund spending was 7.6 percent; it was even higher in Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota.

Between the second and third quarters of 2019 (the latest data available from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis), state GDP grew in every Midwestern state, led by increases of 2.3 percent in Indiana and Nebraska. In both of these states, agriculture was the leading contributor to this growth. No other states in the region outpaced the nation’s GDP increase of 2.1 percent.

### Saskatchewan Sets Goals for Decade Ahead — “Big Boost in Exports, Rise in Population”

The province of Saskatchewan rang in the new decade with a plan that lays out a 10-year vision for growth, along with a set of policies to meet its ambitious goals. Those objectives include having a population of 1.4 million people by 2030 (a nearly 20 percent increase over current numbers), as well as increasing the value of exports by 50 percent and boosting by 100,000 the number of people in Saskatchewan’s workforce.

Growing the state’s agriculture industry is central to Saskatchewan’s plan, and Premier Scott Moe introduced two new provincial tax incentives for this sector: one to support the application of emerging digital technologies and to attract agricultural technology companies, and a second to encourage investments in the chemical fertilizer industry. The province also is opening new trade and investment offices in Japan, India and Singapore.

The province already has experienced historic population growth over the last decade, and it has been making a concerted effort to keep and attract young people. For example, individuals who graduate from a postsecondary institution are eligible for up to $26,000 in tax credits if they live in or move to Saskatchewan. To date, nearly 71,000 people have claimed this tax credit.

### Maricopa Legalization Will Be on Ballot in South Dakota; Sales Begin in Michigan and Illinois

The future of South Dakota’s marijuana laws is in the hands of the state’s voters. In late 2019 and early 2020, Secretary of State Steve Barnett validated the signatures of petitions for two different ballot proposals — one is an initiative measure to legalize marijuana for medical purposes, the second is a proposed constitutional amendment to legalize recreational and medical marijuana. Both of these questions will appear on the November ballot.

Voters in three other Midwestern states have been asked to legalize recreational marijuana in recent years. Results have been mixed: Proposals failed in North Dakota and Ohio, but passed in Michigan. According to Mlive.com, Michigan’s recreational sales began in December and totaled close to $6.5 million; those numbers are expected to rise as more retailers get licensed. Illinois is the other Midwestern state where recreational marijuana is now legal, the result of legislative action last year (HB 1438).

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In every state, the homeless-student population includes young people who live in shelters, hotels or on the street, but a vast majority of this student population is in “doubled-up housing” — often temporary, and the result of economic hardships or circumstances such as domestic violence. “It’s not just staying temporarily with a family; a lot of times it’s anybody who will take them in,” Duffield says. “They are extremely vulnerable, and at risk of abuse or neglect.”

“These are children who generally have been invisible in their schools and communities,” she adds. Some recent changes in federal education policy, though, are raising the visibility of this student population, while also requiring more of states.

IDENTIFICATION, PREVENTION

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), states for the first time must track and report on the academic progress and graduation rates of students identified as homeless. Previously, the focus of federal policy has been to make sure these students have school access and stability,” Duffield says. “The big change with ESSA is we’re going to track how well they’re doing.”

The federal law also requires school districts to reserve some of their Title I funds to support children and youths experiencing homelessness. This can include investing in school-based liaisons (who help identify students) or in transportation services that keep students at their school of origin. “It’s a strong federal blueprint, but much of the action, where the rubber has to meet the road, is at the state level,” Duffield says.

Examples of recent state actions include:

• a 2019 law in Indiana (SB 464) that helps unaccompanied youths take a high school equivalency exam and access identification documents that they need to secure stable housing; and
• new pathways for homeless students in Kentucky and Texas to complete coursework, earn partial credits and secure a diploma.

According to Duffield, Washington stands out among states for having the most comprehensive policy framework in place to help its population of homeless students.

Every school in that state is required to have a liaison that helps identify these students, and then connect them and/or their families to services that can stabilize their living situations. (Under federal law, every school district must have a liaison.)

“Liaisons are lifelines for these children and families,” Duffield says. “They have a singular focus on this population. They train the school community that these children exist, what their needs are, what their rights are.”

Early identification can result in homeless prevention, and that is the goal of a new project being implemented by The University of Chicago’s Chapin Hall in a handful of school districts.

This “Upstream” model relies on a mix of schoolwide surveys and early warning indicators (such as chronic absenteeism) to identify at-risk students. These young people and their families are then connected to appropriate community services that address “underlying risk factors before they escalate to crisis.”

The Chapin Hall project is based on a program from Australia that reduced the number of young people becoming homeless and dropping out of school. In Minnesota, meanwhile, university researchers will be tracking the impact of Homework Starts With Home. Will it stabilize students’ housing situations? Will it improve school attendance and longer-term educational outcomes?

More and more states are likely to be asking questions like these in a new era of education policy under the Every Student Succeeds Act.

“It’s shining a light on how homelessness affects educational achievement, above and beyond poverty,” Duffield says.

STATE STRATEGIES TO HELP HOMELESS STUDENTS: THREE EXAMPLES OF NEW LAWS AND PROGRAMS FROM THE MIDWEST

ILLINOIS SCHOOLS GET FUNDING OPTION TO PROVIDE HOUSING HELP

In 2017, Illinois legislators passed HB 2061 to help school districts provide housing assistance to a child who is “homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.” This aid can go toward families’ rent, mortgage, or other unpaid bills and financial debts. Under the three-year-old law, a school district is able to use transportation funds for housing assistance if this is the most cost-effective option. (Under federal law, homeless students have the right to remain in their school of origin if it is in their best interest; transportation must be provided to and from the school.)

INDIANA ENABLES YOUTHS TO ACCESS DOCUMENTS, EXAMS THEY NEED

For every state in the Midwest, a portion of the homeless-student population is “unaccompanied” — young people living on their own or with a caregiver who is not their legal guardian (see map). Helping this group was one of the goals of Indiana’s SB 461, which was signed into law in 2019. It helps unaccompanied youths gain access to critical documents (such as birth certificates and photo identification) that they may need to secure housing or enter the workforce or higher education. Under the law, certain representatives of these youths (for example, from a school district, a nonprofit group or government entity) is authorized to get these documents. They also can register a young person to take school tests.

MINNESOTA PROVIDES HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

According to the national nonprofit organization SchoolHouse Connection, Minnesota is one of a handful of states where legislation was passed in 2019 to help college students experiencing homelessness. In June, Senate File 2415, the Legislature appropriated more than $550,000 to launch a grant program between the state and postsecondary schools. That money will be used to “meet immediate student needs that could result in a student not completing the term of [his or her] program.” Legislators also allocated $3.3 million over the next two years for Homework Starts at Home, which provides housing assistance to students experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, homelessness (see main article for details).

% of Students Graduating from High School on-Time (2026-‘17)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>% Graduating</th>
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<td>84.5%</td>
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<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>84.0%</td>
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* Unaccompanied refers to a young person not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This includes youths living on their own and youths living with a caregiver who is not their legal guardian.

Stabilize students’ housing situations? Will it improve school attendance and longer-term educational outcomes? More and more states are likely to be asking questions like these in a new era of education policy under the Every Student Succeeds Act.

“It’s shining a light on how homelessness affects educational achievement, above and beyond poverty,” Duffield says.
Through 10 years and two seismic statehouse power shifts, the Wisconsin Senate's assistant minority leader pursues bipartisan problem solving

by Jon Davis (jdavis@csg.org)

When Janet Bewley first ran for a Wisconsin Assembly seat in 2010, her party controlled the governor's office and both legislative chambers. “Then, almost in one fell swoop, from the moment that I ran until the next day when I found the election results, it had completely, completely shifted,” Bewley says of the election which gave Republicans that same triple-lock on state government. “Everything was upside down. It was a very interesting place to be.” And volatile as well.

Her first few days and months in office were marked by the historic legislative fight over Act 10, the measure that changed collective bargaining rules for most public sector employees, ignited massive protests, and even caused 14 Senate Democrats to decamp to Illinois to delay a vote. (The bill ultimately passed.)

“I had nothing to compare it to because I had not been in state government before that,” Bewley recalls. “I was on the floor for three days in that, and it was all brand new and rather bizarre. “But I loved it.”

Ten years later, she still does, and Bewley is now a legislative leader adjusting to another power shift in Wisconsin state government: With the election of a Democratic governor, Tony Evers, power is now shared among the political parties. “Suddenly, she says, “there’s a reason for conversation.”

In a recent interview with CSG Midwest, Bewley talked about her hope for bipartisanship, her role as assistant minority leader, and some of her legislative accomplishments to date. Here are excerpts.

Q How much did you have to change your outlook that first year in the Legislature, after finding yourself in the minority party?
A It was made known to me by a colleague who asked me, “How does it feel to be irrelevant?” Having someone frame my circumstances that way made me completely do a 180-degree turn. I said, “I have never been more relevant in my life. I now have the duty to represent my district and serve as a minority representative.” And I found that to be such a challenge, and again, I was relevant. I had the same number of constituents as any other representative in the building, we had just as many needs, just as many challenges and issues. So my role was no different in terms of my significance to my constituents than any other representative.

Q You’re now entering a second year of divided government in Wisconsin. What’s your outlook for the year ahead?
A We’re not really dancing very smoothly yet, but we’re looking to dance with each other. A lot of people want to view this as if it’s a fight — someone’s going to win and someone’s going to lose. I prefer to think of it as a dance. You’ve got to understand your partner and be willing to have your toes stepped on once in a while. But if we just keep working at it, I have a lot of hope, I really do.

Q How do you apply that approach to your role as assistant minority leader in the Senate?
A I think that first of all, people have to be aware of what they say, what words they use, and what kind of willingness they put forth to both their own party members and to those across the aisle. If you have disdain for the other side, for whatever reason, and you show it, well, you’re not going to get anywhere. It helps if we can find a way to say, “OK, we both have those values, we both know that we need to do something. You may have a value that is going to be higher on your list of priorities than mine, but I think you value them. We all care about business, we all care about healthcare. We just have different ways of how that should be handled by the government or the role government should play. We need to take as much emotion out of this as we can and put the emotion into how we express our values rather than just saying, “My solution is better than your solution.”

Q What is the balance you try to strike between working across the aisle and remaining true to the goals of the caucus and your own values?
A One of the things that I am most proud of is the fact that I am willing to work with Republicans, and being known as someone you can go to if you think you want a Democrat to be with you (on a bill). Because I’ll listen. I won’t automatically say “never.” I’ll go with, “That’s a decent bill; yeah, come on, talk to me about it.” If it’s good for the people in my district, and if it’s not completely contrary to how the caucus feels, I’ll go along. I’ll do it. I’ve been on many bipartisan bills that have passed.

They have never been anything that has taken my caucus by surprise because I’m always very straightforward. It takes a lot of work in communicating and letting people know that, “Hey, stay with me, I’m not going to betray anything.”

And I do say no. I think there are many times where I will go along and, at some point, it’ll just get to be more than I can really agree to. So I’ll say, “All right, here’s my limit. If you don’t make this change or I can’t get what I need, I’m not going to be a co-sponsor or a co-author.”

Q Your involvement in public service predates your time in the Legislature. What has drawn you to this work?
A It came out of the satisfaction I got when I was working with communities and with nonprofits, and realizing how, when people come together and work on things as a group — be it a nonprofit or school or a church or a unit of government — you really, really can get things done.

I love to pull problems apart and to try to figure out solutions that are hidden in the mix. I solve problems that way, by literally pulling them apart as I’m talking to my colleagues.

And when you realize that by doing that with others, that you can really do something good for your community? Ah, that’s the best.

For me, that is the most satisfying role that I can play.

“...I prefer to think of it as a dance. You’ve got to be willing to understand your partner and have your toes stepped on once in a while.”

Profile: Wisconsin Senate Assistant Minority Leader Janet Bewley

Bio-Sketch: Wisconsin Sen. Bewley

✓ selected Senate assistant minority leader in 2017
✓ elected to the Senate in 2014, previously served in the Assembly (2010-2014)
✓ was a community relations officer for the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority
✓ served on the Ashland City Council in Wisconsin
✓ lives in Mason, Wis., with her husband, Dave; they have five children and five grandchildren
FIRST PERSON: IN MICHIGAN, IT’S TIME TO OPEN UP NEW OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

Proposal would give schools more autonomy over graduation requirements

by Michigan Sen. Jon Bumstead
(SenBumstead@senate.michigan.gov)

When I was in high school, I faced the same decision many teens face as they grow older: What do I want to do with my life? I did not follow what many would consider to be a traditional career path. During high school, I enrolled in Newaygo County’s Career Tech Center to learn real-world skills that can’t be taught by a textbook. I decided to learn skills for the construction industry and pursue a career as a home builder. That opportunity helped me launch my own successful construction firm (Bumstead Construction) 40 years ago. I think all students in my home state of Michigan should have the ability to make similar decisions regarding their futures — though sometimes our current system doesn’t provide a good process for making those decisions.

I recently introduced legislation to give more flexibility to local school districts when choosing graduation requirements. I believe our current requirements don’t always allow students to explore possibilities that better suit their interests or needs. These requirements sometimes limit student creativity and exploration. My goal is to better help students be prepared for life after school, even if those plans do not include a traditional four-year college.

END ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL POLICY

In 2006, the Michigan Merit Curriculum went into effect and created statewide requirements for high school students in our state. Prior to 2006, graduation requirements were left up to the local school districts. Currently, students who follow the traditional route in Michigan must complete the following courses and credits to receive a high school diploma:

• four credits in English;
• four credits in mathematics, including requirements that students complete yearlong courses in Algebra I, geometry and Algebra II;
• one credit making up both physical education and health;
• three credits in science;
• three credits in social studies, including yearlong courses in U.S.

history and geography, world history and geography, as well as one-half credit in economics and civics; one credit in visual, performing and applied arts; and two credits in world language.

I have introduced two bills, SB 600 and 601, that would allow students more opportunities to enroll in courses or programs they find interesting or wish to pursue as a career. For example, the bills would eliminate the state’s Algebra II requirement for graduation. Students could instead complete a state-approved career and technology education program — in areas such as electronics, machining, construction, welding, engineering, computer science or renewable energy.

Michigan currently is one of only a handful of states that require Algebra II for graduation, and eliminating this mandate would open up opportunities for students to enroll in courses that would better prepare them to meet their goals for the future. These changes will make sure students are ready for the next step after high school, whether that’s entering the workforce or attending a trade school or college. School districts should have the ability to make choices that are best for them and their students, rather than being forced to follow a state-mandated, one-size-fits-all policy.

EMPOWER PARENTS, SCHOOLS

I’ve always believed that local schools have a better understanding than the state of what their students need to be successful. Parents, teachers and administrators who know and work with these students every day are more than capable of making these decisions, and my legislation will take steps to give schools the ability to do so once again.

Late in 2019, SBs 600 and 601 passed through the Michigan Senate’s Committee on Education and Career Readiness.

Michigan Sen. Jon Bumstead was first elected to the state Senate in 2018. He previously served three terms in the Michigan House.

Our current graduation requirements don’t always allow students to explore possibilities that better suit their interests or needs.
FOUR-LEGISLATOR TEAM IN PLACE TO LEAD MIDWESTERN LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

Four highly respected, veteran state lawmakers will lead the Midwestern Legislative Conference in 2020. The MLC’s team of officers assumed their leadership positions in December, after being elected by fellow state and provincial lawmakers earlier in 2019.

- Michigan Sen. Ken Horn is the new MLC chair. A member of the state legislature since 2007, Horn serves as chair of the state Senate’s Economic and Small Business Development Committee. He is a longtime member of the MLC Executive Committee, a former co-chair of the MLC’s Economic Development Committee, and a graduate of two leadership programs of The Council of State Governments: the Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development (BILD) and the Henry Toll Fellowship Program. Among Horn’s responsibilities in the year ahead: oversee planning for the MLC Annual Meeting (July 19-22 in Detroit) and the 2020 MLC Chair’s Initiative on Literacy.

- Illinois Sen. Elgie Sims recently completed a successful term as MLC chair. He now holds the position of immediate past chair. He is a graduate of the BILD and Henry Toll leadership programs, as well as a former co-chair of the MLC Economic Development Committee. In the Illinois Senate, Sims serves as chair of the Criminal Law Committee.

- South Dakota Sen. Gary Cammack will serve as the MLC’s first vice chair in 2020 and is in line to be the group’s chair next year. A member of the South Dakota Legislature since 2013, Sen. Cammack, a rancher and businessman, is chair of the state Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee.

- Kansas Sen. Carolyn McGinn is the newest member of the MLC officer team; she is the group’s second vice chair for 2020. A 15-year member of the Kansas Legislature, McGinn serves as chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee. Her involvement with CSG has included serving as financial officer for the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission. A graduate of CSG’s Toll Fellowship Program, Sen. McGinn also is second vice president of State Ag and Rural Leaders — a national group of state and provincial legislators working to address key issues in agriculture.

OVERVIEW OF THE MLC

The MLC is a nonprofit, binational association of all state and provincial legislators from the Midwest. The MLC has six interstate policy committees, holds an Annual Meeting, provides leadership training to members, and offers many other networking and learning opportunities.

TWO LAWMAKERS FROM MIDWEST LEADING CSG IN 2020

Over the next year, Wisconsin Rep. Joan Ballweg and Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly will serve in the two top leadership posts of The Council of State Governments. Ballweg’s ascension to national chair comes after many years of involvement in CSG, the nation’s only nonprofit association serving all three branches of state government. A 2007 graduate of the Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development, Ballweg was 2016 chair of the MLC. CSG Midwest provides staff support to the MLC in the Wisconsin Legislature. Ballweg has led work on issues such as suicide prevention and evidence-based investments in children and families.

Kelly, a former state senator, was elected governor of Kansas in 2018. She is a 2010 graduate of CSG’s Toll Fellowship Program. Her policy priorities as governor include improving efficiencies in state government and expanding access to early childhood education and health care.

BILLD ALUMNI NOTES: GRADUATES ASSUME NEW LEADERSHIP POSTS

ILLINOIS SEN. DON HARMON
BILLD CLASS OF 2005

Sen. Harmon was chosen Senate president by his caucus earlier this year. First elected in 2002, he has served in several leadership positions during his tenure, including as an assistant majority leader and president pro tempore. In 2019, he also was chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee and a member of the Revenue Committee.

INDIANA REP. TODD HUSTON
BILLD CLASS OF 2016

First elected to the Indiana House in 2012, Rep. Huston is serving as speaker-elect for the 2020 legislative session. Later this year, he will take over as speaker of the House. Last year, Huston was co-chair of the Ways & Means Committee; he continues to serve as a member of that committee. He also previously served as speaker pro tempore.

INDIANA SEN. LIZ BROWN
BILLD CLASS OF 2017

In November, Sen. Brown was selected to serve as assistant majority floor leader for communications for her caucus. She previously served as an assistant majority floor leader for parliamentary affairs. This session, she also is chair of the Senate Ethics Committee and a member of the Appropriations and the Health & Provider Services committees, as well as the School Funding Subcommittee.

IOWA REP. JOHN WILLS
BILLD CLASS OF 2016

At the beginning of this legislative session, Rep. Wills was elected speaker pro tempore for the Iowa House. The second-term legislator previously served as an assistant majority leader and majority whip. He currently is a member of the Agriculture, Appropriations, Commerce, and Veterans Affairs committees in the Iowa House.

WHY TO APPLY: ALUMNI EXPLAIN HOW BILLD PAVES WAY TO SUCCESS FOR NEWER LEGISLATORS

The Council of State Governments’ Midwestern Legislative Conference is seeking applicants for the 26th annual Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development. Thirty-nine fellowships will be awarded to state and provincial lawmakers for the 2020 BILLD program. These fellowships are awarded on a competitive basis by the MLCS BILLD Steering Committee — a bipartisan group of legislators from each of the MLC member jurisdictions. Nebraska Sen. Sara Howard and Minnesota Rep. Laurie Halverson are the committee co-chairs. The co-vice chairs are Iowa Sen. Amy Sinclair and Indiana Rep. Holli Sullivan.

Applications are due by April 8; they are available at csgmidwest.org.

The intensive five-day program is conducted by the MLC in partnership with the Center for the Study of Politics and Governance at the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey School of Public Affairs. Since inception of the training program in 1995, more than 875 Midwest legislators have taken part in the annual program. Here are four reasons to apply this year, through the words of some of those BILLD graduates:

1 | DEVELOP AND HONE CRITICAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICYMAKING SKILLS
Throughout the five-day program, BILLD Fellows participate in a series of interactive workshops with professional development experts, scholars and legislative leaders that fine-tune the skills they need to be effective legislators and leaders. Nebraska Sen. Suzanne Geist, who attended BILLD in 2018 as a second-year legislator, says she gained confidence as a result of taking part in the leadership institute: “I have additional training behind me. I have unique solutions to offer other legislators because of the experience I have had.” According to Iowa Rep. John Wills, a 2016 graduate of the BILLD program, the training helped advance his legislative career: “The aspect that has helped me most is the ability to form coalitions and to listen. This ability, I believe, has helped me become the speaker pro tempore.”

2 | MASTER KEY POLICIES AND POLICYMAKING STRATEGIES
BILLD focuses on important issues facing state policymakers, along with strategies to address them. Scholars from the University of Minnesota, as well as outside experts, provide a context for effectively analyzing state policies and programs, evaluating information, and communicating with constituents and colleagues. The goal: Help legislators craft effective state policy.

“In my first year or two of being a legislator, I thought I had the answer to everything,” Wills says. “That is until I attended BILLD. I learned that everyone has great ideas and thoughts… and working together, [we] could make a good bill or idea even better.” “I have been more attentive and thoughtful in my approach after BILLD,” adds Wills. Geist also says she benefitted from the broad view of policies covered: “I learned that many states face the same issues my state faces. It provided me with a great opportunity to hear proposals and solutions in other states.”

3 | UNDERSTAND AND STRENGTHEN STATE LEGISLATIVE INSTITUTIONS
BILLD allows participants to explore the historical context of the role of state legislatures in the nation’s larger governance system. This deeper understanding of the institution in which they serve helps BILLD graduates become better advocates and guardians of the legislative branch.

“BILLD reaffirmed that my role as a member [of the legislative institution] is to work with everyone, regardless of political party, to effect change,” says Minnesota Rep. Fue Lee, who attended BILLD in 2019 as a freshman legislator.

4 | NETWORK WITH THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST EMERGING LEADERS IN THE MIDWEST
Each BILLD class is comprised of some of the most promising new legislators from across the region. While in Minneapolis for the training program, fellows have the chance to share their knowledge, learn from one another’s experiences, and forge long-lasting relationships.

“I highly recommend BILLD because of the relationships you build with your colleagues that transcend parties and politics,” Lee says. Geist agrees: “I felt like we spent intentional time together, so I came away from the week feeling more connected with [other] legislators than I have in other gatherings that I’ve attended.” Having a network of colleagues across the region has helped Wills as well: “I have friends that I made at BILLD where we bounce ideas, thoughts and challenges off one another to this day.” According to Geist, BILLD was “the best use of time of any legislative conference I’ve attended.” In offering advice to colleagues considering applying for a BILLD fellowship, Wills acknowledges that there are many events and programs that compete for legislators’ time.

“However, BILLD is an educational and networking formula for success that will set your career on a positive trajectory,” he says. “[It] gives you the tools and ability to be a better legislator.”

26th Annual BILLD Program

• August 7-11, 2020
• Minneapolis, Minnesota
• BILLD Fellowships cover the cost of tuition, meals and lodging
• Each Fellow is eligible for a partial travel stipend to help offset the cost of transportation to and from Minneapolis
• Deadline to apply: April 8, 2020

Please submit Alumni News to Laura Tomaka, CSG Midwest program manager for BILLD. She can be reached at ltomaka@csg.org.
Upcoming CSG Events

75th Annual Meeting of the Midwestern Legislative Conference
July 19-22, 2020 | Detroit, Michigan
Contact: Cindy Andrews – candrews@csg.org
630.925.1922 | csgmidwest.org

Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus Annual Meeting
September 18-19, 2020 | Detroit, Michigan
Contact: Lisa Janairo – ljanairo@csg.org
630.925.1922 | greatlakeslegislators.org

26th Annual Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development
August 7-11, 2020 | Minneapolis, Minnesota
Application deadline: April 8
Contact: Laura Tomaka – ltomaka@csg.org
630.925.1922 | csgmidwest.org

CSG National Conference
December 2-5, 2020 | Minneapolis, Minnesota
Application deadline: April 8
Contact: Kelley Arnold – karnold@csg.org
800.800.1910 | csg.org

CSG Midwest Henry Toll Fellowship Program
August 21-25, 2020 | Lexington, KY
Application deadline: May 8
Contact: Kelley Arnold – karnold@csg.org
800.800.1910 | csg.org

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Phone: 630.925.1922 | Fax: 630.925.1930
Email: csgm@csg.org | www.csgmidwest.org
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