Michigan and Minnesota are leading the charge to corral compounds known as PFAS, a group of more than 4,700 chemicals that have been in use since the 1940s. Their chemical structures make PFAS resistant to stains, grease and use in paper and cardboard packaging, food wrappers, personal care products, carpeting and clothing — anything treated with Scotchgard, for example — fire suppression foams, and materials with non-stick properties such as Teflon. Industrial applications include chrome plating, electronics manufacturing and oil recovery. Known as “forever chemicals” because they don’t break down, PFAS can accumulate over time, including in drinking water.

That aspect, combined with related health hazards that have become known in the last 20 to 30 years, has led many states to begin learning just how pervasive PFAS are, the threats they pose, and how best to regulate them.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, “studies indicate that PFOA and PFOS can cause reproductive and developmental, liver and kidney, and immunological effects in laboratory animals. Both chemicals have caused tumors in animals.” (PFOA and PFOS are part of the group of PFAS chemicals.) The federal agency also reports higher cholesterol levels among exposed populations, and more limited findings related to low birthweights, effects on the immune system, cancer (for PFOA) and thyroid hormone disruption (for PFOS).

In 2009, the EPA set initial “health advisory levels” at 400 parts per trillion for PFOA and 200 ppt for PFOS. The agency reset those to a sum of 70 ppt for both chemicals in May 2016, but, as stated on EPA’s website, such advisories “are non-enforceable and non-regulatory” and intended as informational guides for state and local officials on dealing with contamination above the advisory level.

While the EPA is working on setting “maximum contaminant levels” — legally enforceable limits on what is allowed in drinking water — for PFAS, states today are left mostly to their own devices. The best thing states can do to gauge their PFAS situations is to monitor and test water systems and wells for contamination, says Rebecca Klaper, director of the Great Lakes Genomics Center at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee’s School of Freshwater Sciences. “It’s not like, ‘Who hasn’t known these compounds were around?’ but we’re able to detect them at much lower levels, and we now know some of the potential health effects of exposure, even at lower levels,” Klaper says. “We don’t really have great ways to clean up the industrial sources, so a good place to start is drinking water.”

MICHIGAN’S MULTI-FACETED APPROACH TO PFAS

Michigan in 2015 became the first state in the Midwest to set limits on allowable discharges into surface waters, including enforceable limits/standards to protect drinking water.

Source: Safer States

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**Regulations on PFAS to Protect Drinking Water (as of February 2020)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Details on regulations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>Groundwater quality standards in development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>Groundwater cleanup target levels in effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>Health-based guidance levels, groundwater cleanup target levels and surface water discharge limits in effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>Maximum contaminant levels proposed and under development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>Groundwater cleanup target levels in effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>Maximum contaminant levels, groundwater guidance levels and groundwater discharge limits in pre-proposal development phase</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Water Works Association, CSG Midwest research

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**PFAS-Related Legislation in Midwest (as of February 2020)**

- Illinois: House bill 3887 (D Khalil).
- Michigan: Senate bill 1120 (D Sabo).
- Minnesota: Senate bill 459 (D Hortman).
- Nebraska: Senate bill 1314 (D Baumgartner).
- Wisconsin: Assembly bill 784 (D Wichman).

Source: Safer States

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**States Take Lead on PFAS Problem**

‘Forever chemicals’ persist in environment and are linked to health problems; options include drinking water standards, legal remedies to help fund cleanup efforts.

by Jon Davis (jdavis@csg.org)

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**CSG Midwest News**

- **Capitol Insights**
  - Profile: Michigan House Minority Leader Christine Greig
  - FirstPerson article: North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum

- **CSG Midwest Under the Dome Initiative helps bring workshop on civil discourse to Kansas legislators**

- **BILLD Alumni Notes**
  - A look at three alumni now serving in key leadership posts in state government
  - Guest column: Why the ability to project strength and warmth is critical to legislative leadership
Michigan took a hard look at its county jail system and population, and now has several ideas for reform

### Criminal Justice & Public Safety

**By Mitch Arvidson**

*Marvinson@csg.org*

After nine months of extensive, unprecedented analysis of Michigan’s county jail populations, a specially formed task force has delivered 18 recommendations to the Legislature designed to improve state policies and curb rising jail incarceration rates.

The bipartisan task force’s work reflects concerns in Michigan about the impact of a growing population, which has occurred even amid big drops in the state’s total crime rate (see line graph). Who is being sent to these facilities? Why? And for how long?

Getting statewide answers to these questions has been difficult because the data and records on jail incarceration are held individually by Michigan’s 83 counties. Part of the job of the task force (formed by gubernatorial executive order), then, was to collect this information and find statewide patterns. It analyzed arrest information from 600 law enforcement agencies, court data from 200 districts and circuit courts, and admission records from 20 representative county jails.

Among the findings:
- Michigan’s jail growth is equally attributable to pretrial detentions and inmates serving short-term, post-conviction sentences.
- While most people admitted to jail stayed for less than a week, those who stayed for longer than one month made up 82 percent of jail bed-days.
- Driving without a valid license was the third most common reason for jail admission.

The recommendations now under legislative consideration reflect these and other findings. For example, because of the role of traffic violations in the overall jail population, one idea is to “stop suspending and revoking licenses for actions unrelated to safe driving.” And because the majority of the population in jail for less than a week, the task force recommends shortening the time people spend in jail between arrest and arraignment — to 24 hours in most instances, and no more than 48 hours. It also says the state’s bail laws should be reviewed, by strengthening the presumption of release on personal recognizance and setting higher thresholds for judges to impose non-financial and financial conditions for release.

For defendants who cannot afford bail, or who are not eligible for pretrial release and must stay in jail for longer than a week, the task force recommends that they be tried within 18 months of arrest. It also proposes policy changes to decrease the number of people entering the jail system at the front end — for example, expand police officers’ discretion to use appearance tickets as an alternative to arrests; reduce the use of arrest warrants for failure to appear in court or pay fines and fees; and make greater use of behavioral health services to deflect people away from Michigan’s criminal justice system and connect them with treatment options.

In January, Michigan House Speaker Lee Chatfield and Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey stated their intentions to review the recommendations and introduce them to the legislative process. “I really feel strongly that the recommendations are interrelated; they really should be adopted as a package,” says Bridget Mary McCormack, chief justice of the Michigan Supreme Court.

McCormack, who served as co-chair of the task force along with Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist II (other members included legislators, law enforcement and judges), the past nine months of jail-population analysis yielded useful, and sometimes unexpected, results.

“For me personally, I was surprised to learn that the jails in our rural counties were growing far more significantly than the jails in our urban populations,” McCormack notes.

This could be due to rural counties having a lack of alternatives to jail, but also the fact that one in four people in rural jails are held by non-county authorities, such as the federal government or the state Department of Corrections. This is up from one in nine in the 1970s.

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**Economic Development**

**By Laura Tomaka**

*btomaka@csg.org*

As of early March, Wisconsin was set to become one of the first states in the nation to expand incentives for private investments in federally designated Opportunity Zones. Under AB 532, which passed with bipartisan support in the Assembly and Senate, Wisconsin would double the tax credits for investors supporting projects in financially strapped, low-income communities across the state. (The bill had not yet been signed by the governor as of early March.)

Opportunity Zones were established by the U.S. Congress three years ago. Under that 2017 law, governors submit lists of low-income census tracts to be identified as Opportunity Zones. Through federal tax incentives, investors are then encouraged to reinvest unrealized capital gains into development projects in these areas. In particular:
- A deferral of federal taxes on any recent capital gains until 2026.
- A reduction of capital gains tax payment by up to 15 percent (10 percent if the investment is held for five years, and an additional 5 percent if held for at least seven years).
- An elimination of taxes on potential profits from an Opportunity Fund if the investment is kept for 10 years. (An Opportunity Fund is an investment vehicle for business investments in these zones.)
- Up to 25 percent of a state’s census tracts that qualify as low income (along with a limited number of contiguous census tracts) can be submitted for designation. Nationally, there are now more than 8,700 Opportunity Zones.

In Wisconsin, which has 120 designated zones, lawmakers saw an opportunity to build on the federal program. AB 532 doubles the state’s Opportunity Zone tax exclusion for investors who invest in an Opportunity Fund.

Under the legislation, investors receive an additional 10 percent state capital gains tax reduction if they hold an investment in a Wisconsin Qualified Opportunity Fund for at least five years, and an additional 15 percent after seven years.

“We should be doing what we can to incentivize investment in Wisconsin, and this bill does that,” says Rep. Nancy VanderMeer, sponsor of the legislation.

Eligible projects include commercial and residential real estate development, new business ventures, and the expansion of existing operations.

“One of the things that stood out to us here is that we’re incentivizing private capital investment and not spending tax dollars,” VanderMeer adds. Another plus: Opportunity Zones cover a diverse group of communities. For example, nearly 30 percent of them are in Wisconsin’s rural areas. “It is incentivizing private capital to areas of the state that might not otherwise garner investment,” she says, adding “there’s a somewhat rural and urban appeal to the proposal.”

“I’m always thinking about how to drive investment to rural areas, and economic development in general,” VanderMeer says. “This legislation is a unique way to do that, especially utilizing an already existing program and structure set up at the federal level.”

The most typical type of investment that has been and will be utilized in the program is real estate investment, both residential and commercial,” she adds. “That might mean a new apartment complex, a business expansion or investment in a new mixed-use retail-residential building.”

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**In Michigan, Crime Rates Have Fallen, While Jail Incarceration Rates Have Increased**

**By Bridget Mary McCormack**

*Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court*

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**Opportunity Zones**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Crime rate (# of crimes per 100,000 people)</th>
<th>Jail incarceration rate (# of inmates per 100,000 people)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>120.0</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
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<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Crime rates in Michigan vs. the U.S. from 1970 to 2015**

Source: CSG Midwest research.

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**Jail incarceration rates in Michigan vs. the U.S. from 1970 to 2015**

Over past five years, Minnesota has emerged as national leader in efforts to protect pollinators

“Comprehensive policy work and habitat changes take time, something that may be limited for our pollinators,” Minnesota Rep. Rick Hansen

Caucus, other regional organizations outline six priorities for federal action on protecting lakes, shorelines

Earlier this year, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus joined a coalition of regional organizations in laying out a six-point action plan for the U.S. Congress and Trump administration. Along with state legislators and agencies, the coalition includes environmental, business and labor groups and tribal and city leaders. Here is an overview of the six priorities.

#1: MAINTAIN FUNDING FOR GREAT LAKES RESTORATION

In late 2019, key congressional leaders from the region secured the first-ever boost in funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative since its inception a decade ago. As a result, $320 million will go to various GLRI projects this year; that’s up from $300 million.

Maintaining this funding level is a top priority for the Great Lakes coalition and other regional organizations. The GLRI funds projects (by states, local governments and other entities) that remove toxic substances from the Great Lakes basin, prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species, control nonpoint source pollution and restore habitat.

Earlier this year, the U.S. House passed a bill to gradually boost annual GLRI funding until it reaches $475 million by 2026.

#2: INVEST MORE IN WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

With concerns about PFAS contamination (see cover story) and the safety of drinking water on the rise, more federal action and investments are needed, the caucus and other Great Lakes organizations say.

First, they suggest more federal funding for two revolving funds: the Drinking Water Fund, which helps replace or upgrade local drinking water systems; and the Clean Water Fund, which supports improvements to local wastewater treatment systems and other infrastructure projects. Other ideas include improved monitoring and cleanup of PFAS contamination sites and a greater emphasis on “green infrastructure projects.”

#3: STRENGTHEN GREAT LAKES MARITIME TRANSPORTATION

According to the Great Lakes Seaway Partnership, more than 160 million metric tons of commercial cargo are transported on the Great Lakes waterway each year. The Soo Locks in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., has been dubbed the “linchpin of commercial navigation in the Great Lakes” because it allows vessels to pass between Lake Superior and the other Great Lakes. Funding for a new Soo Lock is a priority of the caucus and other regional groups, as is upgrading other locks, commercial ports and navigation infrastructure in the Great Lakes region.

#4: REDUCE NUTRIENT POLLUTION FROM FARMS

By fully funding conservation programs in the U.S. farm bill, the regional coalition says, the federal government can help states and their farmers adopt practices that reduce nutrient runoff from agricultural land — a major cause of harmful algal blooms.

#5: STOP ASIAN CARP WITH FOCUS ON BRANDON ROAD

The installation of a new electric barrier and other control systems at Brandon Road Lock and Dam in Illinois has been identified as a critical next step in state-federal efforts to stop Asian carp from reaching the Great Lakes. One of the coalition’s priorities for 2020: Fund preconstruction engineering and design for the Brandon Road project.

#6: HELP SHORELINE COMMUNITIES

The U.S. Congress has authorized a new study to map out a plan to manage and protect 5,200 miles of Great Lakes coastline. Full funding for the Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study is still needed, and this is a priority of the caucus and other regional organizations. The study, they say, will “identify ways to safeguard coastal communities from erosion, flooding and other impacts from changing lake levels.”
Nine Midwest Governors gave state of the state addresses in January and February; here is one policy idea from each of them

1. **Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker: Ethics Reform Needed to Restore Trust in Government**
   Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker is pressing legislators in 2020 to enact “real, lasting ethics reform.” Along with singling out the need for stronger laws that prevent conflicts of interest, Pritzker said in his State of the State address that Illinois needs a “revolving door” law — a ban on legislators lobbying immediately after leaving office.

2. **Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb: New Adoption Unit Will Help Kids Find Permanent Homes**
   Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb announced plans to create a special unit within state government with a sole mission: find permanent homes for the children of parents whose rights have been terminated. According to Holcomb, 1,400 children in the state are currently available for adoption. The new unit will be part of the Department of Child Services (DCS). Holcomb also told legislators that the state will reduce the time it takes to adopt a child to under one year.

   Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds wants to raise the state’s sales tax rate by 1 cent, a move that she says would meet several objectives: more money for water quality, a dedicated source of state funding for Iowa’s regionally based mental health system, and reductions in income and property taxes. “Any increase in revenue from a sales tax must be more than offset by additional tax cuts,” Reynolds said in her Condition of the State address.

4. **In Kansas, a Push for Medicaid Expansion, Help for Rural Hospitals**
   Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly unveiled a bipartisan help agreement in January to expand Medicaid eligibility to more low-income residents. “We are so close; let’s get this done,” Kelly said in her State of the State address to legislators. The expansion would be funded by a surcharge on hospitals; it includes a work-referral program for beneficiaries and a requirement that the expansion population pay a monthly premium. The agreement also contains other health policies, including additional support for the state’s struggling rural hospitals. As of mid-February, it was unclear whether the plan would pass the Legislature. Eight Midwestern states (all but Kansas, South Dakota and Wisconsin) have adopted Medicaid expansions in recent years.

   Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer is establishing new public-private partnerships to help families navigate a state law that will keep students from advancing to fourth grade if they are reading below grade level. Some flexibility was built into this retention mandate: families and educators can seek exemptions, and Whitmer wants to make sure this option is known among parents whose students are at a higher risk of being retained. Michigan’s new budget, meanwhile, is investing more dollars in literacy coaches to improve reading instruction.

6. **Nebraska Gov. Pete Ricketts Unveils $16 Million Plan for Career-Based Scholarships**
   Gov. Pete Ricketts said his state must do more to “connect the next generation of Nebraskans with great careers.” His policy idea: offer $16 million in scholarships to help Nebraska colleges attract students pursuing careers in math, engineering, health care or computer information systems. Recipients would take part in a Nebraska-based internship or apprenticeship, and the state would track program outcomes — for example, how many scholarship graduates become employed by Nebraska businesses.

7. **North Dakota Council Aims to Improve Collaboration on Education Policy**
   North Dakota legislative sessions are only held in odd-numbered years, but Gov. Doug Burgum still delivered a State of the State address in early 2020. In it, he singled out last year’s passage of SB 2215, which established a K-12 Education Coordinating Council. That 18-member council, Burgum said, is now bringing “everybody together in one room” — teachers, legislators, school administrators, school board members, the state executive branch, etc. — to identify opportunities for greater collaboration, review the delivery of education services and recommend policy changes. “[It] puts us ahead of almost every other state,” he said.

8. **South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem Calls for New Investments in Rural Broadband**
   In her State of the State address, Gov. Kristi Noem said South Dakota needs to make sure that its residents “aren’t forced to choose between the modern economy on the one hand, and life in their hometowns on the other.” With that in mind, she stressed the importance of finding policies that bring high-speed internet to “even the most remote” communities. Last year, the Legislature approved a $5 million plan to launch Connect South Dakota, a grant program that connected 4,800 households to broadband; Noem asked lawmakers to approve another $5 million in 2020.

9. **Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers Proposes Expansion of Farm-to-School Programs**
   Gov. Tony Evers focused much of his State of the State address on ways to help Wisconsin’s agriculture industry, noting that the state had lost one-third of its dairy farms between 2011 and 2018 and leads the nation in farm bankruptcies. His mix of strategies includes helping build direct, local markets for the dairy products and other foods made by Wisconsin farmers. Evers is proposing state grants to expand farm-to-school programs and start a new “farm to fork” initiative. The goal: Get more locally produced food into the cafeterias of schools, hospitals and businesses.
by Tim Anderson (tanderson@csg.org)

In Wisconsin, the path to getting any kind of dyslexia-related bill through the Legislature has never been easy, with bills in various sessions getting caught up in what has been called the state’s “reading wars” over issues such as phonics, whole language and how best to instruct students. But proponents of getting the state, and its school districts, to do more to help young people with dyslexia and related conditions finally found some legislative success in early 2020.

“It’s going to be a very good first step,” Wisconsin Rep. Bob Kalp says of AB 110, which became law in February. “[It] puts dyslexia on the radar screen in our state.”

Prior to the bill’s passage, Wisconsin was one of four Midwestern states (Kansas, Michigan and South Dakota are the others) without laws on dyslexia, according to the National Center for Improving Literacy. Much of that center’s research has focused on provisions that require dyslexia-related screenings and interventions by school districts, as well as training for prospective and current teachers.

Wisconsin’s AB 1110 includes no such mandates.

Instead, the state Department of Public Instruction (DPI) will develop a guidebook on dyslexia and related conditions and then update it every three years. It will include information on how to identify dyslexia and provide students with proven intervention and instructional strategies.

An advisory committee will write the guidebook, and Kalp says it will be made up of equal numbers of members from two groups that traditionally have been on opposing sides in the state’s “reading wars.” The idea is to throw them in a room together and, with help from the DPI, build a guidebook, he adds. Once this

Dyslexia-related requirements in Midwest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Specific Legislation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>The statue specifically allows for dyslexia-related bills, but no requirements are described above. Source: National Center on Improving Literacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the center’s Brian Gearin, Wisconsin and Iowa have dyslexia-related laws, but no requirements are described above.

Michigan and South Dakota are the others.

According to the center’s Brian Gearin, among the 50 states, universal screenings and early interventions are the most common policy trend.

Most states with screening and

INTERVENTION LAWS

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Legislation in nearly every state in the region provides a purchasing preference to products manufactured or produced using recycled content. However, the extent of the preference varies, including whether the state has statutory language that spells out a price preference for bidders who offer recycled products.

Indiana, Kansas, Michigan and Minnesota are examples of states that specify a particular price preference. Indiana offers a price preference of between 10 and 15 percent for products containing recycled content, while Kansas provides a 3 percent price preference. The Kansas preference applies only to paper, including newsprint and high-grade printing and writing paper.

In Michigan, the statute provides for a 10 percent price preference for recycled materials. In addition, the law includes language that a minimum of 20 percent of purchase price is attributable to recycled content. Minnesota also requires the purchase of products with recycled content, when they do not exceed the price of products without recycled content by more than 10 percent.

Other states in the Midwest have statutes that express a general preference for the purchase of products with recycled content, but often without a specific price preference. Instead, many of these statutes call for state agencies to buy recycled products whenever economically feasible.

Paper is a commonly requested recycled product and has been one of the nation’s recycling success stories. Slightly more than 68 million tons of paper and paperboard were recovered in 2018, a new high, according to the American Forest and Paper Association. This has kept increasing amounts of paper out of landfills. In 2017, 22 million tons of paper products went to landfills, compared to 36 million in 2007.

Along with using their purchasing powers to encourage recycling, states have the option of restricting the disposal of certain materials from landfills and/or requiring that certain materials be recycled.

According to a 50-state study from the Northeast Recycling Council, every Midwestern state has a disposal ban on some kind. (Nationwide, the most commonly banned materials are lead-acid batteries, waste oil, tires and liquid wastes.)

In addition, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin were among the 22 states noted in the council’s 2017 study as having some kind of mandatory recycling law in place. The breadth of these laws can vary widely. Illinois’ statute only covers mercury thermostats, for example, while in Wisconsin, local governments are required to have recycling programs that collect aluminum cans, corrugated cardboard, food and beverage containers, and certain types of paper.

Nationwide, the five materials most frequently covered by states’ mandatory recycling laws are lead-acid batteries, corrugated cardboard, high-grade office paper, aluminum and tin cans, and glass containers.

Six states in the Midwest have battery-recycling laws of some kind, notes Call2Recycle®, a consumer-battery recycling and stewardship program.

In Minnesota and Iowa, the producers of certain types of batteries must offer or fund recycling of their products. (Minnesota’s law covers more types of batteries than Iowa’s.) The laws in Indiana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin apply to lead-acid batteries. Indiana and Wisconsin require retailers to post notices to customers about the state’s disposal and recycling laws. North Dakota and South Dakota require retailers to accept lead-acid batteries as part of a customer exchange/trade-in.

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NEW RESTRICTIONS ON VAPING SALES, ADVERTISING TAKE EFFECT IN SASKATCHEWAN

Under a Saskatchewan law that took effect in February, the province is restricting how vaping and e-cigarette devices are sold, displayed and marketed. Sales to people under the age of 18 are banned, and vaping-related products cannot be used in and around public buildings, including schools.

In many ways, The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Act builds on the restrictions already in place in Saskatchewan for tobacco products. Vaping and e-cigarette products cannot be advertised in areas where young people can enter, and they cannot be sold at amusement parks, arcades and theaters. The province is allowing the regulated sale of flavored tobacco and vapor products to adults.

Provincial health officials say many Canadian jurisdictions have similar restrictions in place. In the 11-state Midwest, the minimum legal sales age for e-cigarettes is 21 in Illinois and Ohio; 19 in Nebraska; and 18 in Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, South Dakota and Wisconsin, according to the Public Health Law Center at Mitchell Hamline School of Law.

FLOODING COST MIDWEST $6.2 BILLION IN 2019; THIS YEAR, STATES ARE PLANNING FOR MORE

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration estimates that last year’s flooding along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers from torrential rains that also soaked Indiana and Ohio cost the Midwest $6.2 billion in physical and economic damage. In January, the governors of Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska (joined by Missouri) signed a “memorandum of agreement” to cooperate in ongoing flood recovery projects and prepare for future floods along the Missouri River.

Under the multi-state agreement, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Kansas Water Office and Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (along with Missouri’s Department of Natural Resources) will:

• identify areas for joint study to improve flood recovery and flood control projects;

• advocate on behalf of the states to guide the federal government’s management of the Missouri River; and

• coordinate flood infrastructure projects to mitigate damages in the three states.

Meanwhile, this year’s legislative sessions in the Midwest have included several measures related to flood recovery and mitigation — for example, a $20 million Flood Recovery Plan in Iowa (SF 2144, signed into law in February), a legislative resolution in Nebraska (LR 288, adopted in February) urging the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to prioritize flood control in its management of the Missouri River, and a bipartisan proposal in Minnesota (SF 3564) to transfer $10 million from the state general fund to a special state account that helps communities recover and rebuild after flooding and other natural disasters.

Last year in the Midwest, Illinois’ capital budget allocated $375 million for water management projects, including flood mitigation, and North Dakota legislators passed HB 1014 (signed in May), which created a loan program for home owners affected by river flooding caused by ice jams.

WISCONSIN SUICIDE PREVENTION TASK FORCE RESULTS IN PEER-TO-PEER PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS

Wisconsin will be providing grants for peer-to-peer suicide prevention programs in schools under legislation (AB 528) signed by Gov. Tony Evers in February. Another bill also was expected to become law: AB 531 would require student ID cards issued by public schools and the University of Wisconsin system to include suicide prevention hotline numbers. The Wisconsin Legislature passed this measure in late February. (Similar ID bills have been introduced this year in other states, including Iowa, SF 2081, and Nebraska, LB 1001.)

In September 2019, the Wisconsin Speaker’s Task Force on Suicide Prevention issued eight policy recommendations for legislators, including the peer-to-peer program and student ID requirement. (Wisconsin Rep. Joan Ballweg, current chair of The Council of State Governments, led the task force along with Rep. Steve Doyle.)

Many other states are taking action as well. In the Midwest, two new laws in Illinois require that suicide awareness be a part of police officer training (HB 2767) and that the state’s postsecondary schools provide students with prevention resources (HB 3404).

Late last year, Michigan passed legislation (SB 228) to create a Suicide Prevention Commission, and Minnesota’s FY 2020 budget includes a $265,000 grant program for teachers to get training on suicide prevention. Under a proposal in Saskatchewan (Bill 618), the province’s Health Authority would be required to establish a prevention strategy.

OHIO HAS NEW INCENTIVES FOR EMPLOYERS, COLLEGES TO HELP WORKERS EARN MICRO-CREDENTIALS

With the governor’s signing of HB 2 in early 2020, Ohio deepened its commitment to “upskilling” the state’s workforce, a policy objective that lawmakers say will help employers fill high-demand jobs and prepare individuals for better paying jobs.

In part, the new law codifies TechCred, a state initiative launched in September that reimburses employers ($2,000 per worker) for the costs associated with a worker earning an industry-recognized, technology-focused credential. One unique aspect of this reimbursement program is a requirement that workers be able to earn the credential in less than a year’s time. This is known as “micro-credentialing,” and Gov. Mike DeWine is hoping to have 10,000 Ohio workers complete micro credentials every year.

Under HB 2, too, the state will establish the Individual Microcredential Assistance Program to reimburse postsecondary schools and other training programs. To receive state funding, providers of this training must have a plan for reaching low-income, partially unemployed and unemployed individuals.

According to the Lumina Foundation, 45.5 percent of Ohioans between the ages of 25 and 64 had a postsecondary degree or credential as of 2018. Across the Midwest, the rates of working-age adults with this level of educational attainment have been on the rise, but still fall short of the attainment goals set by policymakers for their state workforces.

FOR STUDENTS WANTING TO VOTE, ILLINOIS ENSURES THEY GET EXCUSED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Illinois schools must now grant a two-hour excused absence for students seeking to cast a ballot. Signed into law in January, SB 1970 is “for any student entitled to vote” in a primary or general election (either on Election Day or during the state’s early-voting period). The school can specify the hours that it will allow a student to be absent.

The new law in Illinois reflects a legislative trend in that state and others in recent years — changing state election laws to reduce barriers for young people and other first-time voters. Other examples include allowing individuals to register on Election Day (Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin have such laws in place) and providing for automatic voter registration when individuals interact with a government agency (Illinois and Michigan). Some states outside the region also have begun to pre-register 16- and 17-year-olds.

North Dakota is the only state in the nation that does not require voter registration. As of February, nine of the Midwest’s 10 other states provided for online voter registration. The lone exception was South Dakota, where lawmakers were considering an online-registration bill this year (as of February, HB 1050 had passed the House).

35.6% +15.7% 18 to 29
30 to 44 48.8% +13.2% 45 to 64
65 and up 66.1% +6.7%

U.S. VOTER TURNOUT RATE IN 2018

Source: U.S. Census Bureau
The team was created by executive order in November 2017 by then-Gov. Rick Snyder. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer used an executive order in February 2019 to make it a permanent body within the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy. (Two pending bills, HB 4746 and SB 402, would codify the action team in state law.)

Among this team’s tasks:
- Identify impacted locations and implement a plan to assist and local authorities to ensure the safety of Michigan’s land, air, and water.
- Assess the status of PFAS contaminated sites and develop individualized site-response strategies.
- Develop environmental response and health protocols. In 2019, Michigan officials announced they would begin the rule-making process to formalize new maximum contaminant levels for seven specific PFAS compounds based on recommendations from the action team’s Science Advisory Workgroup.

The state has spent about $25 million annually on PFAS cleanup since creation of the Action Response Team, says department spokesman Scott Dean. Legislators appropriated $30.6 million for PFAS activities in fiscal year 2019.

Michigan is also suing PFAS manufacturers as part of what Dean says is a “multi-faceted” approach to the cleanup problem. In February, the state settled a two-year-old lawsuit against 3M, alleging they “deliberately concealed the dangers of PFAS and withheld scientific evidence” about them while selling and distributing them in Michigan “in a way that they knew would contaminate natural resources and expose Michigan residents to harms.”

Michigan Sen. Winnie Brinks, whose constituents were among those affected by the Wolverine situation, says that led her to introduce legislation (SB 14) in January 2019 to set state maximum contamination limits of 5 ppt on PFAS and PFOS.

“I knew it wouldn’t move, but it started a good conversation,” Brinks says, adding she is glad the state is moving to regulate the seven compounds. “These seven are simply the ones we know the most about, so that’s where we’re starting.”

Michigan and Ohio, too, have turned to the courts. Ohio sued DuPont in 2018, in that case it is winding its way through a state court. Michigan’s 2020 lawsuit against 3M alleged the company’s production of PFAS had damaged drinking water and natural resources in the southeast Twin Cities metro area.

3M settled in February 2018 for $850 million; as a result, the state has $720 million to use for drinking water and natural resources enhancement projects.

Michigan Sen. Winnie Brinks
Six-year legislator is leading one of the Midwest’s most diverse caucuses, working to build bipartisan relationships during period of divided government

by Laura Tomaka (l.tomaka@csg.org)

PROFILE: MICHIGAN HOUSE MINORITY LEADER CHRISTINE GREIG

As minority leader in the Michigan House, Christine Greig leads a team of 52 Democrats. As a child growing up in neighboring Indiana, she was part of another large team — a close-knit family of 12 children. “I’m number six, right in the middle,” she says. “My whole family and childhood upbringing were always very team-centered. Everyone shared in success, and everyone had a part in success.” Greig carries that same philosophy to her role as a legislative leader.

“My number one goal is to define the passions in each of my caucus’s members, and then help them get to a success point,” she says. “When they are successful as individuals, legislators, then we will be successful as a caucus.” And they’ve enjoyed some additional political leverage since 2019, when a Democrat was elected governor (Gretchen Whitmer) to create divided government in a state where Republicans have long held majorities in both legislative chambers.

Greig ascended to her caucus’s top leadership position that same year, her fifth year in the House. Her path to the Legislature was not a direct one. Though she had been involved in student government since high school, Greig had a long and successful career in the private sector as an expert in computer applications and information technology — working for Andersen Consulting, for example, and owning a consulting business with her husband, Bob. “When my boys started getting into school, I started cutting back on work,” Greig says. “When my boys started getting into school, I started cutting back on work.”

She instead was spending more and more time as a leader in education, creating a foundation for her local schools and traveling to Washington, D.C., and Lansing to meet with policymakers. “That’s what got that fire going that I had when I was in high school,” she says. “I thought I should run for office and be that voice for parents who are worried about their kids and be a voice for teachers — to champion public education investment.”

Once elected, she began working on a range of K-12 education issues: improving policies on school safety and student discipline, addressing teacher shortages, and strengthening charter-school accountability. Early on, Greig’s colleagues took notice of her legislative work. She has held a leadership title of some kind in each of her three terms in the House. During a recent CSG Midwest interview, Rep. Greig reflected on her views on lawmaking and legislative leadership, and discussed policy priorities for her final year in the term-limited Michigan House.

Q: What do you view as some of the biggest challenges leading your 52-member, minority-party caucus?

A: The diversity of our caucus is breathtaking. Our members come here from all walks of life and bring different perspectives — with half being women and 23 first-timers to the Legislature or first-time officeholders. And our members range in age, from their 20s through their 70s, and represent the Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Hindu faiths, to name just a few, and a diversity of professionals including scientists, firefighters and teachers.

Unifying the caucus can be challenging on any issue, but our diversity enriches the conversation. At the end of the day, we are usually able to find common ground on the most important issues. I strive to be a resource and help new members navigate being a first-time legislator, as well as to help them find their passion in terms of policy development.

Q: How would you describe your leadership style?

A: I follow the servant leadership model, as it is more of a collaborative approach that focuses on helping members of your team optimize their accomplishments to achieve greater organizational success. I firmly believe it is my responsibility to bring our 52 members along that journey with me.

My goal is not convincing every single member to agree with my opinion, but to encourage each member to strategically evaluate the issues based on their unique district dynamics and conscience. And, at end of the day, everyone needs to live up to their values. I’m committed to always respecting that.

Q: You’ve also talked about the value of building personal relationships across the aisle. Why is this important to you?

A: It would be really easy for us to just completely go to partisan ends and have a bloody battle about everything. But our responsibility is to govern.

Q: What would you point to as the most important policy areas for the Michigan Legislature to address in 2020 and beyond?

A: It’s infrastructure. The state that put the country on wheels is having a lot of challenges with our roads and our bridges. We have not invested at the appropriate level to maintain and modernize our infrastructure. And every year that we’re not catching up on that investment, our roads and bridges are getting worse. We must address the critical infrastructure needs of our state with a practical long-term funding solution.

Another key priority is the protection of the residents of Michigan. It takes all of us talking and working together.

We don’t always agree, but you must be civil, and you can be respectful and still hold on to your values. In this legislative session, we’ve seen a lot more dialogue. We really must make the effort to talk and find some common ground by becoming better acquainted with each other as people. With our Democratic governor, Gretchen Whitmer, and a Republican-controlled Legislature — even when we reach an impasse — we still have a responsibility to continue discussions and deliver solutions for Michiganders. There are going to be times when we can’t figure out tough issues together, but there are also issues that we can work on very well together. We don’t want anyone walking away from the table.

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FIRST PERSON: NORTH DAKOTA IS TRANSFORMING LIVES BY RESHAPING ITS POLICIES ON ADDICTION

Statewide initiatives improve behavioral health outcomes, promote recovery

by North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum

More than 22 million people in the United States struggle with the disease of addiction. It destroys lives, families and futures across every social and economic group. Stakeholders in North Dakota have increasingly called for improvements in the state’s behavioral health system, citing unmet treatment needs and insufficient investments in prevention and recovery supports. These challenges are not unique to North Dakota. As substance abuse takes its toll on families in our state and across the nation, we must explore new approaches to addiction.

Addiction is a treatable disease, and there is hope for recovery. Recovery happens at home, in communities and in the workplace (nearly 70 percent of individuals struggling with addiction are employed full time). For too long, people with the disease of addiction have been deprived of medical treatment, empathy and compassion because of shame, stigma and discrimination.

In recent years, North Dakota has made progress in reducing the rates of substance abuse and related consequences. Today, behavioral health and addiction remain a priority as part of our administration’s Five Strategic Initiatives. We approach each initiative with a shared purpose: to Empower People, Improve Lives and Inspire Success.

OUR APPROACH

North Dakota is focused on improving access to behavioral health services and reinventing recovery.

Inspired by First Lady Kathryn Burgum’s courageous decision to share her own recovery story, we created the Office of Recovery Reinvented through executive order in 2018 to promote efforts to eliminate the shame and stigma surrounding addiction. The office has a seven-member advisory committee, chaired by the first lady, that is making a difference in the lives of many.

Recovery Reinvented, as it is known throughout our state, is the sum of all the impassioned parts working together — an ongoing series of innovative practices and initiatives to eliminate the shame and stigma of addiction.

Through public-private partnerships, we are uniting to find solutions to help people with proven prevention, treatment and recovery approaches. At the third annual Recovery Reinvented event last November, we were joined by national and state addiction recovery experts and more than 1,200 people, including individuals in recovery and their families, behavioral health and health care providers and administrators, business and community leaders, faith-based organizations, Native American leaders and educators.

In addition, we’ve launched several efforts aimed at promoting recovery and eliminating stigma:

• The Youth Ending Stigma (YES) Challenge, launched in partnership with the first lady, fosters student-led initiatives and projects focused on eliminating social stigma surrounding behavioral health issues, including addiction and mental health conditions.

• The first-ever Peer Support Day at the Capitol brought together behavioral health advocates and care providers, peer-support specialists and recipients, state and local decision-makers, and others to discuss the benefits of peer support and its role in recovery. The state has doubled down on peer support by expanding reimbursement for these services and recognizing the importance of peer-support specialists within the behavioral health workforce.

• The Families Strong program is available for free to our citizens. Developed by the Addiction Policy Forum and Mosaic Group, Families Strong uses a support-group-based model to help families impacted by substance use disorders.

• We launched a workplace recovery initiative that empowers employers and human resource officers to create recovery-friendly workplaces. We provide resources such as the Workplace Cost Calculator, the Shatterproof Addiction Education Program, and the SAMHSA Workplace Toolkit. Believing in the value of Shatterproof’s ‘Just Five’ program, the North Dakota Department of Human Services is bringing this program to our state team members and private businesses.

• We’ve developed the Behavioral Health Strategy, which aims to invest in prevention and early intervention, increase access to community-based treatment and recovery services and supports, and reduce criminal justice involvement for individuals with behavioral health needs. This strategy continues to guide statewide programs and investments, ensuring efforts are effective.

IMPROVING OUTCOMES

North Dakota spent more than $260 million over the past decade on new jails at the city, county and state levels. Many individuals in our correctional systems are there because of crimes rooted in addiction. Half of all arrests in our state are alcohol- or drug-related, and 75 percent of those in our prisons have an addiction. Incarceration without rehabilitation is not a cure for addiction.

In 2016, our judicial, legislative and executive branches joined forces to request intensive technical assistance from The Council of State Governments Justice Center, with support from The Pew Charitable Trusts and the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance. The goal: use a data-driven justice reinvestment approach to help the state reduce the corrections population, contain corrections spending, and reinvest a portion of the savings into strategies that can reduce recidivism and increase public safety.

As a result, we implemented Free Through Recovery, a community-based behavioral health program designed to increase access to recovery support services for individuals engaged with the criminal justice system who have a serious behavioral health concern. As a partnership between our department of Human Services and Corrections and Rehabilitation, Free Through Recovery aims to improve health care outcomes and reduce recidivism by delivering high-quality community services linked with effective community supervision.

Since the program’s launch in 2018, more than 2,500 individuals have been referred to participate in this program and receive services provided by more than 50 agencies offering care coordination and peer support. Providers are reimbursed monthly based on participant outcomes of recovery, housing, employment and criminal justice involvement.

In the first 18 months of the program, more than 60 percent of participants met three of four outcomes every month.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Today, we continue to build on the foundation we’ve set over the past two years — addressing head-on the challenge of building supportive and strong recovery communities at home, at school or in the workplace. We all play a role in creating a culture that enables recovery in North Dakota and our nation.

North Dakota is taking a comprehensive approach to addressing the behavioral health needs in our state by investing in community-based services and supports. By focusing on housing, employment, education and peer support, we will improve outcomes and reduce costs by avoiding expensive emergency and psychiatric inpatient care. These investments will also help to develop the state’s workforce and expand access to behavioral health supports in rural areas. North Dakota is a special place, a place where everyone can come together to find solutions. When we can empower people by giving them effective tools and resources, we can improve their lives and inspire success for others. Together, we can reinvent recovery.

Doug Burgum has been the governor of North Dakota since December 2016.

*Figures based on surveys from 2017 and 2018. The U.S. estimated rate is 7.22 percent.

Source: U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

STATELINE MIDWEST | MARCH 2020

SUBMISSIONS WELCOME

This page is designed to be a forum for legislators and constitutional officers. The opinions expressed on this page do not reflect those of The Council of State Governments or the Midwestern Legislative Conference. Responses to any article are welcome, as are pieces written on other topics. For more information, contact Tim Anderson at 630.925.1922 or tandereson@csg.org

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CSG MIDWEST NEWS & EVENTS

REGISTRATION OPEN FOR 75TH ANNUAL MIDWESTERN LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE ANNUAL MEETING IN DETROIT

This summer, the Midwest’s state and provincial legislators will celebrate their 75th Annual Meeting in one of the region’s most historic cities. Led by Sen. Ken Horn, chair of the Midwestern Legislative Conference, the Michigan Legislature will welcome legislative colleagues to Detroit on July 19-22. Online registration for the family-friendly MLC Annual Meeting is available at csgmidwest.org. A registration discount is available through May 11.

The MLC Annual Meeting is the premier event for the region’s state and provincial legislators. It features expert-led policy sessions, renowned speakers, professional development workshops, and social events for attendees and their youth and adult guests. Sen. Horn’s 2020 MLC Chairmen Initiative.

• Evening events at top Detroit venues, along with daytime programming for the adult and youth guests of meeting attendees.

CSG ISSUES REPORT ON OVERSEAS VOTING

A recent report from The Council of State Governments’ Overseas Voting Initiative details barriers to the delivery of ballots to, and from their return, from military and overseas voters, while also offering ideas for how states can help remove these barriers.

“Examining the Sustainability of Balloting Solutions for Military & Overseas Voting” is available at ov.csg.org. The report suggests a need for “legislation that reflects evolving technology and jurisdictional needs,” says Taylor Loundsdale, CSG’s program manager for the Overseas Voting Initiative — a collaboration between CSG and the U.S. Department of Defense to improve the voting process for uniformed personnel and other U.S. citizens overseas.

CSG SETS POLICY ACADEMIES FOR 2020

The 2020 CSG policy academy and forum schedule covers topics such as Medicaid and health care, privacy and cybersecurity, sustainability and the future of work. Many of the academies will be held at CSG's National Conference, which will take place Dec. 2-5 in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Here is this year’s list of policy academies:

• Medicaid Leadership, Sept. 23-25 in Washington, D.C.
• Healthy States, Dec. 2-3 in Santa Fe
• Future of Work, Dec. 2-3 in Santa Fe
• Privacy and Cybersecurity, Dec. 4 in Santa Fe
• The Turn Toward Sustainability, Dec. 4 in Santa Fe

For information about attending a policy academy, contact CSG’s Jessica Clay at jclay@csg.org.

KANSAS LEGISLATORS TAKE PART IN WORKSHOP ON ‘BUILDING TRUST THROUGH CIVIL DISCOURSE’

Despite an ice storm that forced the closure of state government in Kansas, 40 legislators attended a Jan. 17 workshop in Topeka on civil discourse.

The half-day event was presented by the National Institute for Civil Discourse’s Next Generation program, which provides legislators with an opportunity to build relationships and discuss how to change the current trend toward political division.

Next Generation workshops are co-facilitated by Republican and Democratic legislators. The “Building Trust Through Civil Discourse” workshop was developed by former Ohio Rep. Ted Celeste, who has been a frequent speaker at CSG Midwest events and programs. This Kansas workshop was co-sponsored by the Midwestern Office of The Council of State Governments, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Sunflower Foundation and Washburn University.

UNDER THE DOME PROGRAMMING

This workshop was also part of CSG Midwest’s “Under the Dome” initiative, which offers customized policy seminars and professional development workshops in state capitols across the Midwest. Topics of past Under the Dome programs have included legislative ethics (Indiana), policy strategies to promote entrepreneurship (Nebraska), state budget policy and Great Lakes protection (Illinois), Medicaid expansion (South Dakota), legislative civility (Minnesota, Nebraska and Ohio), Great Lakes policy (Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin), health policy and public opinion (Wisconsin), and strengthening legislative institutions (South Dakota). Legislators are encouraged to reach out to CSG Midwest staff about customizing an Under the Dome event in their state capitol.

For information, please contact CSG Midwest director Mike McCabe (630.925.1922 or mmccabe@csa.org) or visit csgmidwest.org.

CSG TOLL FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION PERIOD OPEN TO MAY 8

Legislators and other state government officials now can apply for The Council of State Governments’ 2020 Henry Toll Fellowship program, which will be held Aug. 21-25, in Lexington, Ky. The program brings together 48 officials from all three branches of state government for “an intense leadership boot camp.” The program’s sessions are designed to stimulate personal assessment and growth, while providing priceless networking and relationship-building opportunities. Applications are available at csg.org. They are due by May 8. (Please note that Toll Fellows are required to attend a graduation ceremony during CSG’s National Conference in December.)

This program targets outstanding, rising state government officials from all three branches of government. Toll Fellows graduates have achieved great success, including serving as governors, secretaries of state, chief justices, top legislative leaders and members of U.S. Congress.

WISCONSIN LEGISLATORS LEADING CSG AND NCSL IN 2020

Wisconsin scored a rare double in 2020 — two of its legislators are heading The Council of State Governments and the National Conference of State Legislatures. Assembly Speaker Robin Vos is serving as NCSL president in 2019-2020, while Rep. Jon Ballweg is current national chair of CSG. Ballweg also was 2016 chair of CSG’s Midwestern Legislative Conference. Earlier this year, CSG and NCSL co-hosted a reception for Ballweg and Vos in Madison, Wis. The event drew close to 100 legislators and others. Pictured at that event, from left to right, are Tom Steyer, NCSL executive director; Speaker Vos, NCSL president; Rep. Ballweg, CSG national chair; and David Atkins, CSG executive director/CEO. (Photo: Joel Kanosh/Wisconsin Legislature)

The Council of State Governments was founded in 1933 as a national, nonpartisan organization to assist and advance state government. The headquarters office, in Lexington, Ky., is responsible for a variety of national programs and services, including research, reference publications, innovations transfer, suggested state legislation and interstate consulting services. The Midwestern Office supports several groups of state officials, including the Midwestern Legislative Conference, an association of all legislators representing 11 states (Wisconsin, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin) and the Canadian province of Saskatchewan. The provinces of Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario are MLC affiliate members.  

STATETLINE MIDWEST | MARCH 2020
When people size you up, what are they looking for? The short answer is they want to understand your character. We humans have evolved a whole lot of neural circuitry for making split-second character judgments about each other. These judgments are a big deal, shaping every aspect of our lives.

And when we decide how to feel about someone, we’re not just making one judgment—we’re making two. The criteria that count are strength and warmth. Both of these traits are especially important for legislators as they seek to lead others in their communities and inside capitals.

STRENGTH GETS THINGS DONE

As a personal quality, strength is a measure of how much a person can impose their will on our world. Strength consists of two basic elements: the ability to affect the world and the gumption to take action.

In short, it is a combination of skill plus will. Grudgingly or gladly, we respect people who project strength. We look to strong people as leaders because they can protect us from threats to our group. Strength is essential to effective leadership in any group setting.

BUT STRENGTH ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH

To move beyond respect to admiration, you also need to be liked. And to do that, you need to project warmth. For our purposes, warmth is what people feel when they recognize that they share interests and concerns. It is the sense of being on the same team.

If strength is about whether someone can carry out their intentions, warmth is about whether you will be happy with the result. When people project warmth, we like them. Warmth encompasses several related concepts, including empathy, familiarity, and love.

YOU DON’T HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN STRENGTH AND WARMTH

Once you grasp these insights about strength and warmth—and how they impact our character judgments—it opens up a whole new window on the human experience. You can understand why certain people are appealing by looking closely at how they project strength and warmth. Or you can see what makes others seem cold or weak.

Knowing that strength and warmth matter is one thing, but acting on that insight turns out to be tricky, because it’s very hard to project both at once. Strength and warmth are in direct tension with each other. Most of the things we do to project strength of character—wearing a serious facial expression, flexing our biceps or our vocabulary—tend to make us seem less warm. Likewise, most signals of warmth—smiling often, speaking softly, doing people favors—can leave us seeming more submissive than strong.

This presents each of us with a dilemma. Do we choose to project warmth, so people like us? Do we instead show strength, so we command respect? Or do we try our best to project strength and warmth, knowing that one undermines the other and we might end up failing at both?

It turns out to be a false choice. Strength and warmth are complements, not mutually exclusive opposites. Someone who lacks strength comes across as weak, not warm, and an absence of warmth reads as cold rather than strong. A balance of strength and warmth signals capability in service of others—an aspiration any legislator can understand.

THE CHOICE IS YOURS

Character is a matter of what you choose to be. People judge your character by the way you act, and especially by the way you interact with them. Even if a lot of behavior is unconscious, nearly all of it can be subject to conscious choice. You can choose to learn how to behave differently: You can take steps that change your unconscious reactions in the future.

Once you discover the lens of strength and warmth, it changes the way you see others…and yourself.

APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR 2020 BILLD PROGRAM: APRIL 8

Lawmakers in their first four years of service are encouraged to seek a 2020 fellowship to the BILLD program—the premier legislative leadership program in the Midwest.

Thirty-nine fellowships will be awarded this year through a competitive application process run by the BILLD Steering Committee, a bipartisan group of state and provincial legislators. The application deadline is April 8.

The BILLD program will be held Aug. 7-11 in Minneapolis and include a mix of sessions on leadership training, professional development and public policy. Close to 900 legislators have participated in BILLD since it began in 1995.

Guest Author: Matthew Kohut

Matthew Kohut is the co-author of Compelling People: The Hidden Qualities That Make Us Influential and is managing partner of KNP Communications, which specializes in helping clients become better communicators. He also leads KNP’s development of customized training and coaching programs.

You can understand why certain people are appealing by looking closely at how they project strength and warmth.
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 | Santa Fe, New Mexico
Contact: Kelley Arnold ~ kamold@csg.org
800.800.1910 | csg.org

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

Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus

March 2020

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Email: csgm@csg.org | www.csgmidwest.org

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED