A look at state mask mandates, other policies as schools in the Midwest reopened for new year

• Criminal Justice: Bill in Ohio would change many drug possession offenses from felonies to misdemeanors
• Education: Legislators hear strategies to close “homework gap” as K-12 schools rely more on remote learning
• Health & Human Services: Minnesota launches first-in-the-nation Medicaid plan that includes housing services
• Agriculture & Natural Resources: In Iowa, new law focuses on planning for animal diseases, preventing trespassing

Capitol Insights

• Profile: Wisconsin Assembly-Majority Leader Jim Steineke
• FirstPerson article: Michigan Sen. Stephanie Chang

MLC Chairman’s Initiative: Literacy

• Changing media landscape has some state lawmakers pushing for greater emphasis on media literacy

Question of the Month

• Which states certify police officers and how can certifications be removed?

Around the Region

• Public health experts share thoughts, policy ideas on how states can better prepare for future pandemics and other emergencies

For States, New Lessons on How to Work Through Crises Together

COVID-19 pandemic strained usual interstate sharing of resources during times of disaster or emergency, but also underscored value of cross-border cooperation

by Ilene Grossman (igrossman@csg.org)

S
States are accustomed to working together and helping one another through times of crisis or natural disasters. Between 2016 and 2019 alone, via the congressionally authorized Emergency Management Assistance Compact, more than half of the U.S. states requested assistance from others. Every state but one provided help to another state during this time. In all, more than 29,000 personnel were deployed to states in need of help. Still, states have come up with ways to work together during the COVID-19 pandemic, and as each jurisdiction realized they had to keep their medical resources and personnel close — for example a health care worker who traveled to a different state would have to be quarantined for 14 days upon his or her return home. One alternative became increasing interstate cooperation in the area of telehealth.

In early April of this year, EMAC was invoked to share medical resources in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and California provided lifesaving ventilators to Illinois and a handful of other states hard hit early on. The ventilators are owned by California, and loaned through EMAC. During that same period of time, two additional states shared personal protective equipment and a public health incident management team.

Telehealth Support

EMAC is a mutual-aid agreement between the 50 states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories. It covers all governor-declared disasters. Once a declaration is issued, other states can come to a state’s aid with personnel, equipment and supplies. State emergency management agencies are responsible for implementing the compact on behalf of their respective governors. The compact was ratified by the U.S. Congress in 1996 and was used extensively following the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

That goes, too, for scarce resources such as ventilators, personal protective equipment and other medical supplies.

Take, for instance, the deployment of health workers and others through EMAC, which offers license reciprocity and legal protections to personnel assisting from other states.

“You learned very quickly that during a national and global pandemic, and when the president for the first time ever declared a 50-state emergency, [a state’s] medical resources needed to be kept close to home,” says Trena Sheets, executive director of the National Emergency Management Association, which administers the disaster-relief compact and is an affiliate of The Council of State Governments.

That goes, too, for scarce resources such as ventilators, personal protective equipment and other medical supplies.

Still, states have come up with ways to work together during the COVID-19 pandemic, and as each jurisdiction looks to recover and be better prepared for the next public health crisis, one option is to pursue greater interstate, regional cooperation.

Cover Story Continued on Page 7

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

CSG Midwest Issue Briefs 2-3

• Criminal Justice: Bill in Ohio would change many drug possession offenses from felonies to misdemeanors
• Education: Legislators hear strategies to close “homework gap” as K-12 schools rely more on remote learning
• Health & Human Services: Minnesota launches first-in-the-nation Medicaid plan that includes housing services
• Agriculture & Natural Resources: In Iowa, new law focuses on planning for animal diseases, preventing trespassing

Capitol Clips 4

• A look at state mask mandates, other policies as schools in the Midwest reopened for new year
• New CSG report examines “resiliency” of states as they enter a historically challenging fiscal period

MLC Chairman’s Initiative: Literacy 5

• Changing media landscape has some state lawmakers pushing for greater emphasis on media literacy

Question of the Month 5

• Which states certify police officers and how can certifications be removed?

Around the Region 6

• Public health experts share thoughts, policy ideas on how states can better prepare for future pandemics and other emergencies

Capitol Insights 8-9

• Profile: Wisconsin Assembly-Majority Leader Jim Steineke
• FirstPerson article: Michigan Sen. Stephanie Chang

CSG Midwest News 10

• Midwestern Legislative Conference forming nonpartisan group to advance discussions on social justice

BILLD Alumni Notes 11

• Q & A with BILLD alums: How has the pandemic changed campaigning in your state?
• Several graduates of Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development now leading their states on elections
T he statistics about drug addiction and its consequences — the number of overdose deaths, and the rates of people arrested and imprisoned — are everywhere for policymakers to see. But Ohio Sen. John Eklund says those numbers can’t tell the full story, and often fall short of motivating legislators to reexamine the consequences of drug crimes and punishment.

“It’s really about learning the stories of those who are addicted, their family and their friends, and about the personal consequences,” he says, “and why the system is not working the way it is now.”

Those stories have helped fuel Eklund’s push for passage of SB 3, a bill that the Ohio Senate overwhelmingly approved in late June (by a vote of 25-4) — more than 16 months after he introduced the bill. If signed into law, SB 3 would reclassify Level 4 and Level 5 felony drug possession charges as misdemeanors. These charges typically apply to individuals arrested for having low amounts of controlled substances, with the possession assumed to be for personal use.

The bill’s origins, and Eklund’s work on recodiﬁying drug laws, date back to the work of a multibranch committee that included legislators, judges, prosecutors, public defenders, police and criminal justice experts. During his time on that committee, Eklund was struck by “how felonies for drug possession charges have much broader consequences than just simply a criminal conviction.”

He points, for example, to the “scarlet Letter” that follows people who are criminally prosecuted for drug crimes in which there was effectively no malicious intent. The lasting effects include statutory collateral sanctions and societal effects such as having trouble ﬁnding housing and jobs.

The result, he says: Outzised consequences that do not match a drug possessor’s or user’s actions. “We could be incarcerating the people we are afraid of, not the people we are mad at,” he adds.

Outside the Midwest, a handful of states already have changed their statutes in recent years to reclassify drug possession as a misdemeanor.

An attempt to change Ohio’s law via the ballot failed two years ago when voters rejected Issue 1, which would have amended the state’s Constitution to reclassify the possession and use of drugs and drug paraphernalia as misdemeanors. Issue 1’s failure was partly attributed to the permanent nature of a constitutional amendment and the difﬁculty in adjusting the law if needed. Those who backed Issue 1 regrouped, however, and decided to pursue legislation.

According to the nonpartisan Ohio Legislative Service Commission, SB 3 could result in a reduction of annual prison admissions by 2,700 and save the state Department of Rehabilitation and Correction up to $75 million annually. Some additional cost burdens, though, may be borne by localities that handle lower-level offenses such as marijuana use. While SB 3 reduces penalties for many lower-level possession charges, it also creates a new felony charge for possession with intent to distribute or sell relatively low amounts. “Intent” in these cases would be determined by common-law processes on a case-by-case basis.

This clause was included in anticipation that legislators would otherwise object to the bill on the grounds that drug dealers would not be held accountable. “Why was there such a long time between introduction of SB 3 and Senate passage? For one, Eklund says, there was a year-long process of negotiations. Then, after other legislative matters sucked up a lot of time and energy at the end of 2019, Eklund was hopeful that SB 3 could be addressed in early 2020.

“Before you know it, we are in the middle of the coronavirus crisis,” he says. “Because of the inability of the legislature to meet and the orders from the state to stay home … we basically lost eight weeks of our legislative lives.” The House will have until the end of this year to act on SB 3.


**CRIMINAL JUSTICE & PUBLIC SAFETY**

**Under Senate-passed bill in Ohio, many more drug possession offenses would no longer be felonies**

by Mitch Avildson (mavildson@csg.org)

**DRUG OFFENSES IN OHIO, THE NUMBER OF OFFENDERS IN PRISON, AND THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF SB 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong># OF PEOPLE SERVING TIME IN PRISON FOR A DRUG OFFENSE IN 2016</strong></th>
<th><strong>AVERAGE AMOUNT OF TIME (IN YEARS) SPENT IN PRISON FOR A DRUG CRIME</strong></th>
<th><strong>POTENTIAL # OF FEWER OFFENDERS EVERY YEAR UNDER SB 3</strong></th>
<th><strong>POTENTIAL YEARLY SAVINGS FOR PRISON SYSTEM UNDER SB 3</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5,070</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td>$75 MILLION</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Ohio Legislative Service Commission

**Game changer**: By working directly with broadband providers, states can help close ‘homework gap’

by Tim Anderson (tanderson@csg.org)

This spring, as schools across the nation shut down in-person instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic, North Dakota and broadband service providers in the state stepped up.

The result was a quick reduction in the gap in which has been dubbed the “homework gap.” “What’s really impressive is that in a matter of weeks, North Dakota was able to get 90 percent of unconnected student homes linked to broadband,” Jack Lynch, state engagement director for the nonprofit group EducationSuperHighway, said during a July 30 webinar held by three committees of the Council of State Governments’ Midwestern Legislative Conference.

The gap in student access to internet connectivity is acute.

“Solving the gap is urgent, even though, is the urgency among state policymakers to address the problem, as schools rely more on remote learning to replace some or all in-person instruction and to ensure the continuity of learning if buildings have to be closed due to health- or weather-related events. According to Lynch, close to 10 million lower-income U.S. households with school-age children do not have a high-speed internet connection.

Every state has its unique set of challenges on broadband expansion, but Lynch singled out North Dakota because of its rapid response incorporated strategies that can be replicated across the country. First, identify students lacking home access. Next, team up with providers to ensure affordability and adoption.

In North Dakota, a list of 2,000 unconnected students was generated and then shared with broadband providers, who found that a vast majority of households (1,865 of the 2,000) could not receive services almost immediately. At least initially, these providers launched the service at no cost, as part of a “keep Americas connected” pledge.

Fast forward a few months, and North Dakota is “continuing conversations with these service providers about how to use [federal] CARES money and some other funding sources to keep all of these households online,” Lynch said.

He told a similar promising story about access among students in Chicago Public Schools.

There, the district partnered with local service providers to identify students who lacked home access. Then, it issued a request for proposals from these providers, used a mix of funding sources (federal, local and philanthropic) to cover the costs, and reached out to families in need of service.

“The key is the school districts, as opposed to the individual providers, are starting to take responsibility for getting the solution deployed,” Lynch said.

Like school districts, states can take on that greater responsibility as well.

“They also have the chance to close the homework gap” by using a portion of the billions of federal dollars earmarked for education in this year’s CARES Act.

According to Lynch, Indiana was one of the first U.S. states to seize this opportunity, developing a $62 million program that supports initiatives to expand connectivity and students’ access to devices.

In Ohio, as part of a new $50 million grant program, the state will help schools establish internet “hotspots” for unconnected students. That state also is helping school districts work with providers. It recently issued a “request for information” from various entities seeking their lowest-cost options for providing students with device and broadband service. Ohio is using that information to create a pricing sheet for school districts.

Outside the Midwest, Lynch told legislators, states such as Virginia have begun to require school districts to collect information on which of their students lack home access to high-speed internet.

South Dakota Sen. Jim Bolin and Minnesota Rep. Mary Kunesh-Podein serve as co-chairs of the Midwestern Legislative Conference Education Committee. The vice chair is Ohio Sen. Hearcel Craig. Tim Anderson serves as CSG Midwest staff liaison to the committee.
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Minnesota launches new housing assistance program as a regular part of its Medicaid plan

by Jon Davis (jdavis@csg.org)

Three years ago, the Legislature directed the Department of Human Services to make housing services a part of the state’s Medicaid plan. Federal approval came in 2019. The benefit began being offered in July.

“It’s going to give some flexibility in attempting to take a holistic approach to someone’s needs,” says Deputy Senate Majority Leader Michelle Benson, who serves as chair of her chamber’s Health & Human Services Finance and Policy Committee. “We have housing and mental health. If we can break down barriers and have those be coordinated, hopefully we’ll have better outcomes for everyone.”

The new benefit will be used to help seniors and/or people with disabilities — including those with mental health and substance abuse disorders — who are either in need of housing or at risk of losing it.

“Transition services” will help people plan for, find and move into housing. That includes helping Medicaid enrollees develop a housing plan, contact prospective landlords and negotiate leases, and find resources to cover moving expenses.

“Sustaining services” include training on being a good tenant, and the early identification and prevention of behaviors that could lead to eviction. The new benefit does not cover room-and-board expenses.

By placing these services in its Medicaid plan, Minnesota can assist more people found to be eligible under a federal requirement that demonstration (or pilot) programs be revenue neutral, says Erin Sullivan Sutton, director of the department’s Housing and Support Services division. She says the new service originated with a June 2015 memorandum from the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services advising states on allowable coverage of housing-related services for people with disabilities.

The department then recommended it to the Legislature, which subsequently included language on housing services in an omnibus budget bill (SF 2) passed in 2017.

When the program is fully implemented, an estimated 7,600 Minnesota residents will receive these housing services, at an estimated annual cost of $2.6 million, according to the Minneapolis Star Tribune.

Minnesota’s goals include reducing homelessness and building a stronger link between where people want to live and the services they need in order to have stability in their lives.

Illinois is about halfway through a six-year demonstration project of how similar housing support services can help people experiencing homelessness and/or who are recovering from substance use disorders and are at risk of homelessness.

“By coupling stable housing and pre-teneancy and tenancy supports and services with behavioral and physical health services, the chances of mental health recovery and reduced alcohol and drug use among persons with mental illness and/or substance use disorder experiencing homelessness or housing instability greatly improve,” state officials said in their application for a Medicaid waiver allowing the project to proceed.


AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

With new law, Iowa hopes to be prepared to respond to animal diseases, stop ‘infiltration’ of farm operations

by Carolyn Orr (coryorr@startribune.com)

In a session year shortened due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Iowa Legislature still managed to pass significant bipartisan legislation impacting livestock and food production.

Most notably, SF 2413 (signed by Gov. Kim Reynolds June) addresses what Sen. Ken Rozenboom says are “the most critical issues facing the livestock industry in Iowa today: foreign animal diseases and protection of food production facilities.”

Under this measure, he says, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship now has a more clearly defined process for how to respond to a foreign animal disease. The state agency had participated in a U.S. Department of Agriculture mock drill earlier and found some weaknesses in its ability to respond to outbreaks of such diseases as African swine fever or avian influenza.

Iowa’s statutory language has now been broadened by replacing the word “livestock” with the word “animals,” thus allowing the department to segregate, treat or dispose of diseased animals, including those that may be abandoned by their owners.

According to Rozenboom, SF 2413 also allows the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship to destroy feral swine found on both public and private property, but only after ownership cannot be determined.

Landowners will be permitted to destroy feral swine found to be damaging their personal property, without a requirement that they first identify ownership. (Iowa also prohibits anyone from releasing swine to become feral swine.)

The most controversial part of SF 2413 involved a section that increased criminal penalties for trespassing on property related to food production — defined as “entering or remaining on the property of a food operation” without the owner’s consent. Those operations include not just food processors and livestock operations, but bee apiaries, fish hatcheries and farmer’s markets as well.

A first trespassing offense is an aggravated misdemeanor; subsequent offenses are a class D felony.

“I [am not only necessary, but] urgent due to repeated and brazen violations of private property rights in our state,” Rozenboom says.

“Attempts to inhibit food and agriculture operations endanger the livelihoods of Iowa farmers, the agriculture economy and the world’s food supply,” he adds.

Opponents have derisively called SF 2413 the state’s third round of an “ag gag” law, meaning it is an attempt to stop whistleblowers from documenting conditions at agricultural production facilities.

Iowa has been involved in a legal battle over this issue for several years.

A U.S. District Court previously struck down a 2012 Iowa law as a violation of the First Amendment because of statutory language that criminalized the use of false statements or misrepresentations to access an agricultural operation.

The Legislature passed a second law in 2019 making it illegal for a person to gain access to an agriculture facility through deception if the intent is to cause an “injury” to the “business interest” of the facility.

The same U.S. District Court judge granted a preliminary injunction against the 2019 law in December.

IOWA REFORMS ADOPTED SOON

SF 2413 was one of three prominent agriculture-related bills passed by the Iowa Legislature in 2020. The others were HF 2477 and HF 2310.

Under HF 2477, counties can no longer require conditional-use or special-use permits for any agricultural experience on farmland. And HF 2310 removed a requirement that farmers have a separate “oversize” permit for vehicles used to haul items such as hay, stover and straw.

“We will reduce regulations on livestock producers hauling feedstock,” Sen. Tom Shipley says, “and make Iowa’s regulations better match surrounding states.”

Most States in Midwest require masks in schools for start of year

At least for the start of the 2020-21 year, K-12 school teachers, other staff and students were being required in a majority of the Midwest's states to wear masks or other face coverings for in-person instruction held during the school day.

Mask mandates of some kind are in place in Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin, as the result of either gubernatorial orders or plans developed by state departments of education and/or health. The region’s four other states — Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota — have left mask policies to the discretion of local school officials. The province of Saskatchewan also does not have a mask mandate for schools.

CSG Midwest's review of state policies on school reopenings for the fall found only one state in the region where schools are required to offer in-person instruction: Iowa. Earlier this year, the state Legislature passed SF 2310, which included this language: “Unless explicitly authorized by the governor, a school shall not reopen absent the declaration of a public health disaster emergency issued by the governor . . . a brick-and-mortar school district or accredited nonprofit school shall not take action to provide instruction primarily through remote-learning opportunities.”

Based on that law, Gov. Kim Reynolds announced in July that schools must offer at least 50 percent of their instruction in person. According to The Des Moines Register, a school district can seek a waiver from this requirement if it is located in a county where the COVID-19 positivity rate among tested individuals is 15 percent or more and if its schools have absenteeism rates above 10 percent.

Midwestern states have left most decisions on the reopening of schools to local education leaders. The mask mandates and Iowa’s requirement for in-person instruction are two exceptions.

Details on the mask mandates, other safety requirements

As part of these mask mandates, states typically provide exceptions for specific groups of students and/or staff. Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly, for example, waives the mask rule for individuals with medical or mental health conditions and for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Michigan does not require face coverings for individuals who cannot “medically tolerate” it.

Michigan’s rules also may vary depending on a school district's geographic location and COVID-19-related health risks for that area. For school districts located in a Phase 4 region (as determined by the state’s Safe Start plan), face coverings must be worn by all staff and all ages of students when they are in indoor hallways and common areas. Students in grades six and up also must wear masks while in their classroom. There is an exception for lower-grade students if they remain with their classes throughout the school day and do not come into close contact with students in another class.

In Indiana, under an executive order of Gov. Eric Holcomb, the state’s youngest K-12 students — kindergarten through second grade — are exempt from the face-covering mandate.

In some states, a mask mandate is among several COVID-19 related safety measures required of school districts as they welcome students and staff back to in-class instruction. For example:

- Illinois schools must either conduct symptom screenings and temperature checks or require that individuals self-certify that they are free of symptoms before entering school buildings. Illinois also prohibits more than 50 individuals from gathering in one space in a school building. Other requirements: more frequent school-wide cleanings and disinfections, and enforcement of social distancing whenever possible. (These required safety measures are for schools in a Phase 4 region of the state under the Restore Illinois plan for reopening the state and protecting public health.)

- Under Gov. Kelly's executive order in Kansas, hand sanitizer must be made available in every classroom, and temperature checks must be conducted of people before they enter a school building.

New laws on remote learning requiring more of school districts that use it

As recently as earlier this year, “remote” or “distance” learning was a K-12 topic receiving scant attention in most state capitols. If included at all in education laws, remote learning was viewed as an occasional alternative to in-person instruction in public school systems — for example, allowing schools to provide a day of online instruction here or there, in lieu of taking a snow day or having students and staff travel in inclement weather.

The COVID-19 pandemic made this kind of learning an everyday necessity, and more and more Midwestern state legislatures are responding with new statutory requirements for their schools and teachers.

In June, with the passage of HB 164, Ohio lawmakers set six parameters for remote learning in K-12 schools: 1) describe how instruction will be met; 2) establish a method for determining competency, grading students and promoting students; 3) document attendance of students; 4) monitor student progress; 5) ensure equity; and 6) provide professional development to teachers.

That same month, the Illinois General Assembly passed SB 1659, which requires districts to provide remote instruction that is accessible to all students, reflects state learning standards, allows students to confer with teachers, addresses the unique needs of special populations, and monitors attendance and participation.

Minnesota and North Dakota are among the states requiring school districts to offer remote/distance learning as an option to families who prefer it to in-person instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

New CSG report on COVID-19’s impact on states’ fiscal health, resilience rings alarm bells

States face a combined estimated revenue shortfall of between $169 billion and $253 billion in general fund receipts in fiscal years 2020 and 2021 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impact, according to a recent study released by The Council of State Governments. And that loss of revenue is only part of the “fiscal shock” that awaits legislators in the months and year ahead: In FY 2021, Medicaid spending will increase by an estimated $29 billion.

Regionally, the West is projected to incur the worst shock, -15.2 percent, followed by the Midwest, -10.9 percent; East, -10.2 percent; and South, -8.6 percent. (See map for state-by-state figures for the Midwest.)

“COVID-19: Fiscal Impact to States and Strategies for Recovery” also analyzes and scores states on their relative fiscal risks and resiliency. For risks, researchers used measures such as near-term general fund revenue declines, increased Medicaid expenditures, remaining unemployment benefits, economic and personal fiscal performance. Based on those metrics, Michigan, Ohio and Indiana were listed as among the U.S. states at the highest fiscal risk. In contrast, Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska were among the lower-risk states. A state’s fiscal resiliency was based on budget reserves and rainy day funds, the ability to fund debt, Medicaid costs per enrollee and K-12 school spending. South Dakota had one of the nation’s highest resiliency scores; Illinois the lowest.

The report suggests steps that states could take to aid in an economic recovery and make it through this tough fiscal period:

- Establish multistate, regional collaborations and coalitions to improve economic reopening strategies.
- Enable customized, local planning for industries most affected by the pandemic and in need of an economic boost (ideas include help with workforce training, tax incentives, regulatory adjustments and industry diversification).
- Implement “new, comprehensive revenue strategies” to balance taxes, debt, federal funding and other revenue sources in anticipation of a “multi-year recession economy.”
- Update laws and regulations to “minimize reliance on in-person activities” — for example, telehealth and remote work capabilities.
E n an age when the definition of “media” has expanded by orders of magnitude and the very definition of “truth” seems up for grabs, how are elementary and high school students to make sense of the myriad images and messages — overt and subliminal — bombarding their neurons?

The answer is comprehensive media-literacy education for K-12 students, says Erin McNell, founder and president of Media Literacy Now, a Massachusetts-based nonprofit advocacy group.

People are aware of how the nuts and bolts of media systems work, but not as aware of how the messages work their way into their thinking, McNell says. “It’s literacy for the 21st century,” McNell says. “I think a good analogy is smoking and vaping. Showing teens how they were manipulated by tobacco companies is effective, but that wasn’t helpful when vaping companies used the same playbook.

“If we had educated young people, we wouldn’t have lost 50 years of public health [progress].”

**Legislating for Literacy**

The idea has caught on since Media Literacy Now was formed between 2011-13. While Ohio and Florida are the only states with statutory requirements to include media literacy in their curricula for K-12 students, Minnesota’s administrative rules include media literacy standards, specifically that students “will critically analyze information found in electronic, print and mass media and use a variety of these sources” and “will communicate using traditional or digital multimedia formats and digital writing and publishing for a specific purpose.”

A Minnesota law requires the state’s education commissioner to “revise and appropriately embed technology and information literacy standards” based on recommendations from school media specialists into the state’s academic standards and graduation requirements (and to review them every 10 years).

**Question of the Month**

Do states certify police officers, and can certifications be removed for misconduct?

While not technically an occupational license, the certification of police officers is required in most states. The International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training defines certification as “the process by which law enforcement officers are licensed in their respective jurisdictions, establishing the satisfaction of selection, training and continuing performance standards.”

In most states, police officer standards and training (POST) commissions establish these standards and carry out certification. They also are responsible for decertification.

Nearly all U.S. states, including all 11 in the Midwest, have existing statutory authority to certify or decertify, according to Roger Goldman, a law professor at St. Louis University and leading researcher on this issue. (The states without such authority are California, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Rhode Island.)

However, some states (including Indiana, Michigan, Nebraska, Ohio and Wisconsin in the Midwest) do not provide their POST commissions with the authority to administratively revoke the certifications of police officers for non-criminal misconduct. In addition, the use of decertification varies greatly by state. For example, in a 2016 study, University of Seattle criminal justice professor Matthew Hickman found that Florida and Georgia alone accounted for well over half of the country’s total revocations during the previous year. The 11 Midwestern states accounted for 8.6 percent of the country’s revocations.

Furthermore, there is sometimes no guarantee that law enforcement agencies will report officer arrests, non-criminal misconduct or firings to the state POST commission.

A 2017 Michigan law requires law enforcement agencies to create a separation of service record when an officer resigns, and for agencies to obtain individual service records prior to hiring. However, this does not necessarily mean that hiring agencies cannot, or will not, hire officers who resigned because of past misconduct in another jurisdiction.

“There are many cases around the country where officers leave their departments because of misconduct and then they are rehired — sometimes knowingly, sometimes not — by other departments… That’s why you absolutely need to have the states come in and prevent this sort of thing from happening,” Goldman said in a 2017 interview with The Atlantic.

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker, and Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel have all recently called for legislative fees to a system that allows for officers fired in one jurisdiction to be hired in another. In Illinois, Attorney General Kwame Raoul is calling for a new police-licensing system, similar to the way the state licenses doctors, lawyers, hairdressers, etc.

Meanwhile, one state that currently cannot decertify police officers is poised to enact one of the most far-reaching laws in the country. Massachusetts’ HB 4794 and SB 2880 would establish certification committees made up of half, if not all, community members.

Question of the Month response by Mitch Avisdon (marvisdon@csg.org), policy analyst for CSG Midwest, which provides individualized research assistance to legislators, legislative staff and other government officials. This section highlights a research question received by CSG Midwest. Inquiries can be sent to csgm@csg.org.
Lessons From COVID-19 Pandemic Include Investing More in Public Health, Addressing Prevalence of Chronic, Preventable Conditions

Reduced federal and state investments in public health over the past decade.

Growing numbers of people with diabetes, obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure and other underlying conditions.

Inequities in the types of services and health infrastructure needed to keep individuals and whole communities well.

They all added up to a country vulnerable to being hit hard by a transmissible disease such as COVID-19, two public health experts said to legislators during a July webinar of The Council of State Governments’ Midwestern Legislative Conference.

Their message: Learn the hard lessons taught by the COVID-19 pandemic, and embed them in future policy decisions about public health.

“We’re willing to spend a lot of money without question when people get sick, but we don’t spend very much money to stop people from becoming sick,” John Auerbach, president and CEO of the Trust for America’s Health, said to legislators participating in the webinar.

In the United States, for every $1 spent on medical care, 55 cents is spent on public health and social services. Compare that to Europe, where countries there spend $2 on public health and social services for every $1 on health care.

Dr. Safdar, medical director of infection control for the University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics, noted that the risk of dying or becoming gravely ill from COVID-19 is amplified by conditions such as heart disease and diabetes.

“A lot of these conditions are amenable to prevention,” she said. “It’s the absence of prevention that makes people not only vulnerable to getting COVID-19, but (not) recovering from it.”

‘Shore Up’ Public Health

Though states and communities have been at the front lines of dealing with COVID-19, Auerbach’s presentation also highlighted just how reliant they are on federal funds. Nearly half (48 percent) of the revenue for state health agencies comes from federal funds.

And at both the state and federal levels, Auerbach said, public investments in public health took a hit during the Great Recession and never really recovered.

For example, in fiscal year 2006, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention granted $766 million for public health emergency preparedness; by FY 2019, the amount had dropped to $617 million.

During that same period, grant funding for the nationwide Hospital Preparedness Program (which aims to improve patient outcomes during emergencies and disasters) was cut in half.

States make different levels of investment in public health on a per capita basis, but overall, it is lower now than before the 2008 recession. One result is 10,000 fewer workers in state public health systems and an even greater reduction of this workforce at the local level (a decline of 33,000 full-time-equivalent employees over the past 12 years).

“That has made it more difficult to respond, and to respond quickly, when a major emergency like the pandemic occurs,” Auerbach said, citing limited capacity for testing and contact tracing, outdated data systems, and ineffective communication systems among the consequences.

“The lesson is that we need to make sure we shore up our public health departments and our funding, and not just after an emergency happens.”

Dr. Safdar told lawmakers that there inevitably will be another public health emergency or disaster that will confront states. The question is how prepared they will be to deal with it.

One part of preparedness is trying to address the prevalence of underlying, chronic conditions in individuals.

A second component is strengthening the internal capacity of public health systems and improving the preparedness of those systems.

For example, the first two stages of a pandemic are “investigation” and “recognition.” What states, and the country, need during these phases is a sophisticated data system that provides access to information on what is happening in the epicenter of the pandemic.

“This was a gap in our preparedness early on,” she said, “because it wasn’t always clear what the state of the pandemic was.”

According to Safdar, fixing this problem should be part of a four-pronged approach to improving public health preparedness, a “4 S Framework” developed by Harvard University professor Paul Taylor:

• Upgrading data and communication systems to foster coordination and the sharing of resources and information.
• Having enough staff (diagnostic tests, medical supplies and personal protective equipment).
• Ensuring enough staff (doctors, nurses and community health workers) is available and has the proper training.
• Building enough space in the public health system so that patients can be cared for in a safe manner, whether that is in a hospital, a nursing home or an alternative care setting.

Some of her specific recommendations include building a reserve of public health workers and outlining in advance how treatments and vaccines will be distributed to the public.

“Pandemic preparedness doesn’t exist in a vacuum,” Safdar added. “The systems that are being put in place now and that must continue in the future are not just good for pandemic preparedness. They’re good for public health for all kinds of things.”

“We’re willing to spend a lot of money without question when people get sick, but we don’t spend very much money to stop people from becoming sick.”

John Auerbach, president and CEO, Trust for America’s Health

Article written by Tim Anderson, CSG Midwest publications manager, and Ilene Grossman, CSG Midwest assistant director. They can be reached at tanderson@csig.org and igrossman@csig.org.
While EMAC always covered reciprocity for professional licensing, telehealth services had never before been a consideration. True to the nature of EMAC, however, it is possible to deploy these services through the compact. And during the pandemic, a draft executive order was shared with governors to allow medical professionals in good standing in another state to provide telehealth services using remote technologies within their scope of practice. Several governors subsequently issued these executive orders. The result: Even if doctors, nurses or other health workers couldn’t travel, they could provide some assistance remotely for areas hit hard by the pandemic.

‘BEYOND TUNNEL VISION’

Some states also made moves to work together on the problem of securing personal protective equipment, medical supplies and testing equipment. Michigan and Ohio are part of a new six-state compact to ease shortages and delays for COVID-19 testing. The states immediately began working together to negotiate with manufacturers and to make bulk, joint purchases of point-of-care antigen tests.

In early May, the governors of seven Northeastern states (Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island) signed an agreement to address these shortages and collaborate more broadly on their COVID-19 response.

They originally planned to focus on finding suppliers who could meet the demands of the time and combining orders to reduce costs. The governors hoped this would stabilize the supply chain by making demand more predictable. But as shortages for equipment and supplies began to ease in May, the focus of the regional agreement shifted — away from joint purchasing and toward addressing emergency management and procurement.

These groups meet weekly and allow states to share reopening efforts, discuss supply-chain problems, and plan for a likely uptick in COVID-19 cases in the fall. “Our calls allow us to get together with peers and make sure we move beyond tunnel vision and think through problems together,” Schall says. While the creation of a joint-purchasing program will be discussed in more detail, the Northeastern states decided that it was more important to first share information on state contracts with suppliers and on trusted vendors. In the event of another public health emergency, these states can then shorten their vetting process for vendors and move forward more quickly on purchasing.

According to Sheets, one lasting lesson of the COVID-19 pandemic is the need for states themselves to ensure they have an adequate stockpile of medical equipment, supplies and other items. That will take additional funding, she says, but states cannot rely on the Strategic National Stockpile to meet all of their needs. Sheets suggests three other ways for states to strengthen their responses to future disasters and emergencies.

• Review the requirements, limitations and procedures for the waiver or suspension of laws and regulations during public health emergencies.

• Consider a statutory requirement that state governments and individual agencies have plans for continuity of government and continuity of operations. Along with this law, she recommends that states conduct annual training and exercises on these plans.

• Determine whether legislation is needed to address liability issues associated with having the private sector, nonprofit organizations and volunteers become mutual-aid resources. This kind of law would help facilitate the state and recovery responses within a state, as well as in other states through EMAC. States may need enabling legislation or a memorandum of understanding in place to make individuals in the private sector or in a nonprofit “agents of the state.” Such a designation would allow states to assume liability for these individuals, who then can be deployed through the disaster-relief compact.

BINATIONAL REBOUND

In times of emergency or disaster, states and provinces also work together through agreements such as the Northern Emergency Assistance Compact. NEMAC currently has nine members: the states of Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin, and the provinces of Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan.

“Through NEMAC, we are able to work with Canadian provinces and support requests that don’t get to the level of a declaration of emergency or disaster from the governor,” explains Jake Ganieany of the governor’s office. “Through NEMAC, we are able to work with Canadian provinces and support requests that don’t get to the level of a declaration of emergency or disaster from the governor.”

Responding states are reimbursed for the operation of equipment or the provision of services. Cost-sharing arrangements between states and provinces exist in the agreement to help guide post-pandemic recovery plans. How the emergency management assistance compact allows states to assist one another

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PROFILE: WISCONSIN ASSEMBLY MAJORITY LEADER JIM STEINEKE

After a journey from town supervisor to Assembly majority leader, Steineke discusses leadership, legislating and what comes next in the time of COVID-19

by Jon Davis (jdavis@csg.org)

“...it’s incredible difficult to try to forecast what the issues are going to be. But I’m assuming, based on economic conditions, that our biggest challenge is going to be the state budget next year and trying to figure out how to navigate that, given the fact that we’re assuming that we’re going to have to deal with some revenue shortfalls that are going to present some challenges as far as where to allocate the dollars and what, if any, cuts are going to have to be made."

“I think that in times of crisis like this, it may be harder to lead people. But it’s easier to keep people together because I think people typically want to stand together when you’re facing greater challenges.”

BIO-SKETCH: REPRESENTATIVE JIM STEINEKE

- has served as majority leader in the Wisconsin Assembly since 2015
- previously served as assistant majority leader in 2013; first elected to Assembly in 2010
- born in Milwaukee and grew up in Wisconsin town of Wauwatosa
- worked as a real estate agent and salesman
- he and his wife, Heather, have three children and live in Kaukauna, Wis.

J im Steineke’s path to legislative leadership began with a favor for a friend. “In the town I lived in, there was an issue between the volunteer fire department and the town board; he recalls. “One of my neighbors was a volunteer fireman, and we would talk regularly about how the town board was treating the volunteers, and I was squarely on his side.”

“He said at the time, ‘Well, we could really use the help. if you’d run for town board, that would be great.’”

Though new to the small Wisconsin town of Vandenbroek, Steineke ran and won. He served as a town supervisor from 2005 to 2011, including a stint as town chairman from 2007-2011, and as an Outagamie County supervisor for six years.

“When I got to the county level, I realized that most of the problems were at the state level, so it was just a matter of trying to find the spot where I felt like I could do the most good,” he says. “That same idea — finding a spot to ‘do the most good’ — soon led him to seek positions of leadership.

Steineke has served as majority leader since being elected to the position in 2014, and in a recent interview with CSG Midwest, he discussed topics such as his leadership style and challenges that lie ahead for Wisconsin and its elected leaders.

Here are excerpts from that conversation.

Q What have you learned from leading the Assembly and your Republican caucus during the COVID-19 pandemic?

A I think that in times of crisis like this, it may be harder to lead people. But it’s easier to keep people together because I think people typically want to stand together when you’re facing greater challenges.

It’s harder to identify in a pandemic that we haven’t really dealt with before what direction is the right direction to go. Even the science is muddy on this, so the answers are even more complicated and knowing for certain which is the right direction to take is much more difficult.

Q How did you come to be in leadership?

A My personality is such that I like to be involved in decision-making processes. I think that’s pretty natural when it comes to people who run for office. So when I saw an opportunity to get involved in leadership, it was just kind of a natural spot for me.

I first ran for assistant majority leader as a sophomore, in my sophomore term, just to give our group of legislators who came in at the same time a voice at the table when it came to some of the decision-making that leadership was contemplating. It was really about giving our group of legislators a voice at that time.

Q How would you describe your leadership style at this point? How has it evolved?

A I don’t know that it’s changed a whole lot. I’ve always been the one that always wants to do my best to bring people together to gain consensus surrounding issues … to move the group forward. I don’t think that has changed a whole lot; maybe stylistically I do things a little bit different, but my main goal is still to try to get all 63 of our members on the Republican side moving in the same direction with a unified voice.

Q Has that become more difficult over the years?

A Any time you’re dealing with 63 people that are typically Type A personalities, you get back to the whole “herding cats” analogy. It is difficult, and it’s probably gotten a little more challenging over the years.

Q Do you anticipate any further pandemic-related action in the current session? What do you anticipate for the new session in January?

A As far as coming back into session [in 2020], I think a lot of that is going to be determined by whether or not the U.S. Congress passes something that we have to then come in and pass enabling language to help facilitate. If Congress does, we’ll likely have to come in before the election; if not, I’m not certain that we will because the governor, through the [federal] CARES Act, has all the resources he needs to help fight the pandemic. We have no control over where those dollars go anyway, so I’m not certain that there’s a dire need for any new legislation at this point.

But we always stand ready and willing to come in if something comes up that we need to address. We can certainly do that.

Q If you have to reconvene the Assembly, are you considering holding a virtual session? (The Wisconsin Senate did so earlier this year, and the Assembly held a “partial” virtual session.)

A Anything is possible. It’s hard to predict what next week is going to look like, let alone five or six months from now, but a virtual session is something we would only utilize if we absolutely had to. It’s a clumsy way of doing business. It’s very difficult to have good debates on the issues because everyone is participating remotely. It’s not something we would prefer to do unless we absolutely had to.

We’re fortunate that we have that experience behind us now so if we need to utilize it, we can. We’ve been able to learn some things from what could have been done better. I also think we’re hoping we don’t have to go down that road again.
FIRST PERSON: MORE TRANSPARENCY WILL HELP RESTORE PUBLIC’S TRUST IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

Michigan launches new initiative to collect, report on use-of-force incidents

“The goal of our Law Enforcement Transparency Collaborative is to push our agencies in Michigan toward 100 percent participation.”

by Michigan Sen. Stephanie Chang

I represent much of Detroit — a city full of people who hustle hard and whose incredible resilience was built up through enormous challenges. Detroit put the world on wheels, is the home of Motown and, to this day, remains at the epicenter of national movements.

In fact, two months before the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous “I Have a Dream” speech in Washington, D.C., he led a “Detroit Walk to Freedom” in which more than 125,000 people marched — 20 years to the day after the 1943 Detroit uprising — that concluded with an earlier version of his now-famous speech.

Since June 23, 1963, some things have changed, but some major issues are the same — including the continuation of police brutality. In 2015, the only database related to any kind of use of force by police was created by The Washington Post, but it only showed fatal police shootings.

According to the Post’s data, there have been 78 police shootings in Michigan since 2015. Of course, that doesn’t let us see the whole picture, and this is where my story of working for more than five years (so far) on increasing transparency begins.

MICHIGAN COLLABORATIVE BUILDS ON NEW FBI DATABASE

From “The Talk” that Black parents must give to their children at a young age, to the trauma of watching George Floyd’s murder on video — knowing it could have been one’s own brother, father or uncle — Black Americans and other people of color know far too well the issues of excessive use of force by police officers.

Knowing this, when I took office in 2015, I began to look for a way to require law enforcement agencies in Michigan to report data to the state on use-of-force and officer-involved shootings — broken down by racial, gender and ethnic demographics. I had productive conversations with law enforcement and social justice stakeholders on my legislation, but never got a committee hearing.

This term, however, we had a new opportunity. In conversations with Bob Stevenson, the executive director of the Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police, we decided to pursue a collaborative approach that builds on the use of new data collection efforts being made nationally.

That national effort is being led by the FBI, and is known as the National Use of Force Data Collection. Its goal is to offer a comprehensive view of the circumstances, subjects and officers involved in use-of-force incidents nationwide.

The new initiative in our state, the result of months of dialogue and work, is the Law Enforcement Transparency Collaborative (LET-C). It focuses on transparency and the use of centralized statewide data regarding use-of-force incidents from our law enforcement agencies. Under this new collaborative, our Michigan State Police will pull down data from the FBI’s federal database in order to create annual, Michigan-specific public reports.

In June, Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist II (the first African American to serve in that role in Michigan), Rep. Jason Wentworth (a member of the opposite party who represents communities vastly different from mine), the Michigan State Police, Advocates and Leaders for Police and Community Trust, Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police, Michigan Sheriffs Association, and I announced the formation of LET-C.

For law enforcement agencies around the country, submitting information to the federal database is voluntary. But the goal of LET-C is to push our agencies in Michigan toward 100 percent participation, with the aggregation and publication of data led by the Michigan State Police. So far in Michigan, county sheriffs’ offices have 100 percent participation and police agencies are around 90 percent.

DATA ON USE-OF-FORCE INCIDENTS WILL INFORM POLICY

Currently, three types of use-of-force events are captured by the FBI and its National Use of Force Data Collection:

- when a fatality to a person occurs connected to use of force by a law enforcement officer;
- when there is serious bodily injury to a person connected to use of force by a law enforcement officer; and
- in the absence of either death or serious bodily injury, when a firearm is discharged by law enforcement at, or in the direction of, a person.

The LET-C data collection also includes the incident date, the number and demographics of the officers involved, demographics of the subjects involved, and the type of force used in the incident. With this information, we hope to provide a thorough dataset that would increase transparency — which is key to rebuilding trust between police officers and community members. In addition, this effort can generate conversations among lawmakers, law enforcement personnel and members of community organizations about how we can improve a police force that serves and protects everyone.

People in our communities are looking to us for change, and this collaboration is an important step forward for restoring transparency, accountability and trust in our law enforcement officers.

I am honored to have helped make this happen, and excited to continue the push for 100 percent participation in Michigan.

I encourage lawmakers in other states to consider building similar partnerships because every community can benefit from more transparency.

Michigan Sen. Stephanie Chang serves as Democratic floor leader in the state Senate. She was first elected to the Senate in 2018 and previously served in the Michigan House.

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 FirstPerson article are welcome, as are pieces written on other topics. For more information, contact Tim Anderson at 630.925.1922 or tanderson@csg.org

# OF PEOPLE SHOT AND KILLED BY POLICE: JAN. 1, 2015, TO JULY 22, 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of people shot and killed by police who were Black or Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>68.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>50</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Washington Post

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STATELINE MIDWEST | AUGUST 2020

9
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CSG MIDWEST NEWS & EVENTS

Great Lakes St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus

State and provincial legislators from across the Midwest took part in a two-day virtual meeting in July that focused on how to better involve the agricultural sector and rural communities in the production of clean energy.

The Midwest-Canada Relations Energy Subcommittee — a binational group of The Council of State Governments’ Midwestern Legislative Conference — sponsored the event. Work was led by three legislators:

- Saskatchewan MLA Dan D’Autremont, chair of the MLC Energy Subcommittee;
- Minnesota Sen. David Senjem, vice chair of the MLC Energy Subcommittee;

As part of this meeting, titled “The New Energy Economy: Extending the Benefits to American and Canadian Farmers and Rural Communities,” lawmakers learned lessons from Germany, where the agriculture sector has profited from that country’s energy transition. Farmers own 11 percent of Germany’s renewable electricity generation facilities, and rural cooperatives play a leading role in energy development.

Attendees heard from several speakers, including a German farmer who spoke of local initiatives that are driving energy independence and allowing residents to own energy generation. During plenary and breakout sessions, legislators shared details about how their states and provinces were working with farmers and rural communities to develop local energy sources.

Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe discussed some new efforts in his province, and a senior executive at Siemens talked about the potential for green hydrogen (hydrogen made from renewable energy sources) in rural communities. Gerard Reid, one of the leading global experts in energy, discussed longer-term projections for the energy sector and provided information about how states and provinces can be leaders in the changing energy world.

A follow-up meeting will likely be held in late September; please contact CSG Midwest assistant director Ilene Grossman for more information: igrossman@cs.org.

CSG Midwest provides staff support to six standing MLC policy committees: Agriculture & Natural Resources, Criminal Justice & Public Safety, Economic Development, Education, Health & Human Services, and Midwest-Canada Relations.

Midwestern Legislative Conference’s four officers are seen here as a photo taken at The Council of State Governments’ 2019 National Conference (from left to right): Kansas Sen. Caryn Tyson, MLC second vice chair; South Dakota Sen. Gary Cammack, MLC first vice chair; Michigan Sen. Ken Horn, MLC chair; and Illinois Sen. Elgie Sims, MLC immediate past chair.

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The Council of State Governments was founded in 1933 as a nonpartisan, nonprofit 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, sponsored 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 (Illinois, 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.

MLC expands reach to foster interstate work on fiscal affairs, social justice and legislative continuity

The council of State Governments’ Midwestern Legislative Conference will soon begin exploring the reach of its services to the region’s legislators with the formation of three new interstate, binational working groups.

During a virtual meeting of the MLC Executive Committee, members agreed to:

- establish a new MLC committee on fiscal affairs;
- create an MLC Forum on Social Justice that allows Midwestern legislators to discuss and address a wide range of racial and social justice issues; and
- form a Task Force on Continuity of Government and Legislative Oversight in Times of Emergency.

The MLC is an association of all legislators representing 11 states (Illinois, 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. This group is governed by a bipartisan, binational Executive Committee and four officers (pictured to the right).

CSG Midwest provides staff support to the MLC.

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Q & A WITH BILLD ALUMS: HOW HAS CAMPAIGNING, AND RUNNING A CAMPAIGN, CHANGED IN LIGHT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND CONCERNS ABOUT HEALTH?

“Campaigning is entirely different this year. Normally I would be starting to knock on doors to engage with my constituents, but during this unusual time, I think that many people would be uncomfortable with a stranger showing up at their door, especially knowing [you] had been in contact with multiple people throughout the neighborhood.”

“Door-to-door contacts, which are very necessary and popular in South Dakota, are just not taking place. Therefore, mailings, social media and other more expensive forms of campaigning are now necessary. That means raising more money for campaigns is now vital. I believe that challengers are handicapped in this environment.”

“This is the first year I’ve been in public office that I won’t have a parade. I’m spending most of my campaign time on the phone and doing outreach with voters by Zoom and social media.”

“We are going to be doing a lot more of our campaigning virtually this year. Lots of us are experimenting with Zoom meetings and town halls, and I think we’re all trying new strategies to reach people. It remains to be seen how comfortable people are going to be with your typical door knocking and in-person events, but our campaigns will adapt and we’re confident in our ability to run strong campaigns even with the limitations we may have this year.”

The secretary of state serves as the chief election official in a number of states, including all but Illinois and Wisconsin in the Midwest. Currently, two of the region’s secretaries of state completed the BILLD program when they were members of their state’s legislature.

Former Indiana Sen. Connie Lawson (BILLD class of 1999) has served as secretary of state since 2012; during her time in office, she has worked to improve election security and integrity. While serving as a state senator, Lawson sponsored legislation to allow counties to move to a vote-center model and no-excuse early voting. As secretary of state, she has continued to promote the benefits of the vote center model, which allows individuals to cast ballots anywhere in their home county. At least 35 counties across Indiana use vote centers.

Former Ohio Sen. Frank LaRose (BILLD class of 2013) was elected secretary of state in 2018, after having served eight years in the Senate. As a legislator, much of his work focused on election security, integrity and modernization. For example, he sponsored legislation that created Ohio’s first online voter registration system. LaRose’s policy priorities as secretary of state include election integrity and increased civic participation.

In the region’s legislatures, a number of BILLD graduates have leadership roles on the committees that oversee legislation related to election policy in their states.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS
- Illinois Sen. Laura Murphy, class of 2019
- Kansas Sen. Elaine Bowers, class of 2010
- Minnesota Rep. Raymond Dehn, class of 2013
- Wisconsin Rep. Ron Tuder, class of 2018

COMMITTEE VICE CHAIRS
- Kansas Sen. Randall Hardy, class of 2019

RANKING MINORITY MEMBERS
- Ohio Sen. Hearcel Craig, class of 2015

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

CSG Midwestern Legislative Conference
Webinars for Region’s Legislators
Visit csgmidwest.org to find dates of upcoming webinars and view recordings of past webinars on public policy, professional development and leadership training.

MIPRC Annual Meeting (Virtual Meeting)
November 10-11, 2020
Contact: Laura Kliewer – lkliewer@miprc.org
630.925.1922 | miprc.org

Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus
Annual Meeting (Virtual Sessions)
September 11 and 21, 2020, and October 2 and 9, 2020
Contact: Lisa Janairo – ljanairo@csg.org
630.925.1922 | greatlakeslegislators.org

Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting
July 11-14, 2021 | Rapid City, South Dakota
Contact: Cindy Andrews – candrews@csg.org
630.925.1922 | csgmidwest.org

Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development
July 30-August 3, 2021 | Minneapolis, Minnesota
Contact: Laura Tomaka – ltomaka@csg.org
630.925.1922 | csgmidwest.org

CSG Henry Toll Fellowship Program
August 20-24, 2021 | Lexington, KY
Contact: Kelley Arnold – karnold@csg.org
800.800.1910 | csg.org

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