



For state officials, knowing what lies around the corner is half the challenge, and the CSG Policy & Research team is committed to providing key insights and analysis on emerging issues the policy spectrum to state officials. Each year, CSG policy experts take a look at the top issues facing states in education, energy and environment, fiscal and economic development, federal affairs, health, international affairs, interstate compacts, transportation and infrastructure, and workforce development.

Here's a look at the most important topics on states' federal affairs agendas in 2017.

» Presidential Transition

The president's transition team must fill 4,000 political appointments to lay the groundwork for implementing the new administration's policy agenda and provide for the effective management of our civil service and military. This is a daunting task, and the administration's future success will be a function of the people he selects. Ensuring that each incoming presidential administration is ready to lead is both a national security imperative and an obligation owed to the American people.

State officials must engage early with the new administration if they are to form constructive relationships and positively influence the adoption of policies affecting the states. CSG is committed to supporting these efforts. At the 2016 CSG National Conference in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, CSG outlined its vision for fostering effective cooperation with the federal government through a resolution titled, "**Supporting a Successful Transition Process**."

» Strengthening States' Role in Federalism

The diversity of policy experimentation and accountable governance made possible by the 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution has enabled our nation to thrive despite the changing needs of society and an increasingly global economy, and it is essential that the role of the states as the "laboratories of democracy" is preserved. The states should work with the federal government to adopt policies of constructive engagement to gather relevant information about existing issues, build on innovative programs already in place at the state level, and ensure national policies are implemented in the most effective and efficient manner possible. To that end, CSG, building on its **Statement of Principles on Federalism**, is engaging the new administration early to cultivate an atmosphere that will advance the notions of federalism.

» Fiscal Uncertainty

Inaction and delays associated with the appropriations process in Congress continue to cause uncertainty and make it more difficult for state and local governments to manage fiscal resources and strategically plan. Congress has not approved all 12 appropriations bills on time since 1996, and it has relied on the use of stopgap continuing resolutions and omnibus bills to provide federal appropriations. This pattern of patchwork funding and the recurring threat of government shutdowns have made it difficult to predict the flow of funds to state and local governments, and likely will continue to pose challenges to the states in 2017.

» Civic Education

Civic education is fundamental to effective government and citizen engagement. It equips citizens with the knowledge and capabilities to become community, state, national and international leaders. It is also essential for building trust between citizens and elected officials—more important than ever in today's highly polarized society. States are taking important steps to improve civic education and, in particular, to highlight the important role of the states in our republican form of government, and many of these efforts are explored in detail in the recent CSG report, "**Civic Education: A Key to Trust in Government**."

» Intergovernmental Relations

Absent the federal Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, which was closed in 1996 and was the framework for the state and federal relationship in the rulemaking process, both federal and state leaders must identify opportunities to increase their coordination and improve the intergovernmental relationship. CSG has been working with the other **national organizations of state and local officials** to identify recommendations on how to improve the state-federal regulatory process, including: **updating the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act**, establishing consistent state-federal advisory committees within federal agencies and ensuring state legislators simply know who to contact in each federal agency. These efforts will remain a priority for the states and for CSG in 2017.



Andy Karellas leads The Council of State Governments' efforts in monitoring federal and international activity and advocating the interests of states to members of Congress, federal agencies, nongovernmental agencies and other stakeholders. He directs the CSG Intergovernmental Affairs Committee, the International Committee and the CSG Legal Task Force, which monitors the activities of the U.S. Supreme Court. Prior to joining CSG, Karellas served as a senior staffer with the House Small Business Committee, focusing on international trade and technology issues. He has also worked as deputy director of government affairs for Aon Corporation in Chicago and as the special assistant to U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez.

Jeff Stockdale is a CSG senior policy adviser who advocates for the interests of the states to federal leaders and agencies, nongovernmental organizations, associations and other relevant stakeholders. He also assists in the monitoring of federal legislative, regulatory and political affairs as related to and impacting the states and assists in the development and execution of public policy programming and products. Prior to joining The Council of State Governments in 2015, Stockdale served as federal relations manager at the Civil War Trust.

Get Involved

CSG provides state leaders a variety of regional and national opportunities to actively engage on issues of importance to their jurisdictions and constituents. CSG regional and national committees and task forces are designed to encourage multi-state problem solving, the sharing of best practices, and networking among state officials and between public and private sectors.

The CSG Intergovernmental Affairs Committee is co-chaired this year by Connecticut Deputy Speaker Bob Godfrey and Tennessee state Sen. Douglas Overbey. The committee reviews and recommends policy resolutions and statements to the CSG Executive Committee that reflect the overall mission and objectives of state leaders. The adopted policy positions are active for three years and must be reviewed periodically by the committee.

The committees will hold its next meeting at the CSG 2017 National Conference, Dec. 14-16 in Las Vegas.

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