Lawmakers participate in annual leadership institute

On Aug. 9-13, 36 legislators from the 11 member states and three of the Canadian affiliate provinces of the Midwestern Legislative Conference gathered in Minneapolis to take part in the 25th annual Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development (BILLD). The BILLD program is produced by the MLC — with staff support provided by The Council of State Governments Midwestern Office — in partnership with the Center for the Study of Politics and Governance at the University of Minnesota’s Humphrey School of Public Affairs. The five-day program consists of seminars on leadership training, professional development and policy analysis taught by Humphrey faculty, professional development experts and legislative leaders from across the region. The Bowhay Institute is named in honor of the first director of CSG’s Midwestern Office, the late James Bowhay. Each of the participants earned a fellowship through a nonpartisan, competitive application process that is overseen by a steering committee of Midwestern legislators. The 2019 class, highlighted in this publication, joins 840 Midwestern lawmakers who have completed the BILLD program since 1995.

**REP. TORY MARIE ARNBERGER**

Tory Marie Armburger decided to run for legislative office during the final semester of college while interning for a sitting Kansas House member, who was also one of her college professors. On the campaign trail, Armburger became more acutely aware of the urban-rural difference in the state. A rural Kansan, she brings to the Legislature a determination to bridge that gap. She also is interested in working for job creation and being a voice for the state’s oil and agriculture communities. Armburger has a bachelor’s degree in business education from Fort Hays University and is a business education teacher.

**REP. ANN M. BOLLIN**

Prior to her election to the Michigan House, Ann Bollin served as a township clerk between 2003 and 2018. She also has extensive experience as a marketing manager and consultant, and has served on the board of directors of her local Chamber of Commerce and the Michigan Townships Association. In 2018, she was enrolled in the Brightford Women’s History Roll of Honor. Bollin studied recreation therapy at Central Michigan University and was a Taubman Fellow at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government Senior Executives in State and Local Government Program.

**MPP RIMA BERNS-MCGOWN**

Born in South Africa, Rima Berns-McGown has been an advocate for policies that promote inclusion, accountable institutions and the elimination of oppression. Prior to her election, she was a lecturer at the University of Toronto at Mississauga. She also served as the research director of the Mosaic Institute. In the Legislative Assembly, she is working on issues related to access to public transportation, affordable child care and universal pharmacare. Berns-McGown has a doctorate in international studies from the University of Wales, a master’s degree from Johns Hopkins University and a bachelor’s degree from Carleton University.

**REP. WESLEY C. BRECKENRIDGE**

Wes Breckenridge was elected to the Iowa House following a career in law enforcement. A police lieutenant, he spent time supervising the investigations division in Newton. His career led him to legislative policy interests in public safety and judicial policy. Breckenridge helped to work out a key provision on emergency commitment that was part of a mental health measure passed during last year’s session. He has a bachelor’s degree in public administration from Upper Iowa University, a master’s degree in management from American Military University and a master’s certificate in criminal justice from the FBI Academy.

**MLA KELLY BINDLE**

Kelly Bindle represents the north Manitoba community in which his family has had a long history. A civil engineer and small-business owner, he has an engineering consulting firm and owns and operates the Ripple Rock Meat Shop. Bindle has been active with the Royal Canadian Legion and his local humane society, and is a citizen representative on his town’s public works and infrastructure committee. As a lawyer, he is working to improve the province’s economy through regulatory reform, fiscal accountability and transparency. He also is committed to working with First Nations, Metis and Inuit community leaders to create education opportunities for young Manitobans.

**REP. RICK CARFAGNA**

Prior to his legislative service, Rick Carfagna spent 15 years in government relations in the telecommunications field, overseeing legislative and regulatory issues at the local, state and federal levels. He now is using that expertise to promote legislation that expands broadband access to underserved areas. He has also worked to add computer science to the K-12 curriculum and to facilitate government use of blockchain technology. He is active with the Chamber of Commerce and the United Way, and as a literacy volunteer. A former legislative fellow and aide, Carfagna was a township trustee. He has a bachelor’s degree in political science from John Carroll University.

**THE BOWHAY INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (BILLD) is the only leadership training program designed exclusively for Midwestern legislators. The purpose of BILLD is to help newer legislators develop the skills necessary to become effective leaders, informed decision-makers and astute policy analysts. The program offers a unique opportunity for lawmakers to improve their leadership skills and explore the issues of the day with nationally renowned scholars, professional development experts, and legislative leaders and colleagues from across the region. The Council of State Governments is a nonpartisan, nonprofit association charged with promoting excellence in state government. As the only association representing all three branches of government, CSG has been committed to putting the best ideas and solutions into practice since 1933. CSG’s Midwestern Office serves 11 states — Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin — and the Canadian provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Saskatchewan.**
Cristina Castro became the first person in her family to graduate college, earning a bachelor's and master's degree in business administration from Northern Illinois University. Castro has worked in marketing and communications management in both the public and private sectors. Her first elected office was as a county board member. In 2018, she was appointed as director of the Illinois Housing Development Authority, Black History Family Festival and Centro de Información. In the Senate, Castro has focused on issues such as maternal health, internet sales taxes and economic development.

In the legislature, Hamilton has continued her work directed an effort within the Indiana Department of Revenue to fund environmental projects. She has served as a board member of the Indiana Institute for Recycling Equipment and Technologies and served on various industry boards, including the American Rental Association. Hamilton has a bachelor's degree in psychology from Oral Roberts University and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Kansas.

The legislature, Haywood is focused on economic development issues such as housing, transportation and employment. Prior to his election, Haywood was president of the City of Milwaukee Youth Council, and he currently is chair of the Milwaukee Restorative Justice Commission. Haywood is a member of the city's Violence Prevention Steering Committee. An analyst with the Haywood Group — a real estate development, investment and consulting firm — Haywood is studying business administration at Cardinal Stritch University.

Myron Dorn has long been a leader in his community, with more than 20 years of service on local co-op boards and more than three decades as a volunteer emergency medical technician. Growing up she became a community leader in helping bereaved siblings deal with childhood grief. As a legislator, her priorities include addressing prison overcrowding in Nebraska as well as reforming Nebraska churches. Growing up she became a community leader in helping bereaved siblings deal with childhood grief. As a legislator, her priorities include addressing prison overcrowding in Nebraska as well as reforming welfare issues, including early learning and child abuse.

Erica Crawley is a first-generation college graduate, with a law degree from Capital University, a master's degree in public administration from Walden University and a bachelor's degree in criminology from Cleveland State University. A U.S. Navy veteran, Crawley worked on legislation to exempt veterans' disability severance pay from the state's income tax. Prior to her legislative service, Crawley advocated on behalf of children and families with the Cuyahoga County Job and Family Services, YMCA Head Start/Early Start Program, Court Appointed Special Advocate for Children and the Black Child Development Institute.

Before his election, Lee worked for the secretary of state and was a volunteer emergency medical technician. Lee also has been active in elections and local government affairs. In the legislature, he is focused on a number of issues, including education, health care, jobs and economic development.

Padma Kuppa came to the United States from India as a young child. She grew up in America before moving as a teenager to India, where she earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. Kuppa moved back to the United States for graduate school. She has since worked as an engineer and project manager in the automotive, financial and technology industries. In her Michigan community, Kuppa founded an interfaith group whose mission is to provide education and support to help families and individuals, and she currently serves in leadership roles for the Troy Historic Society and the Michigan Roundtable for Diversity & Inclusion.
Shane Lindauer's four years of service on a county council helped lead his selection to fill a House seat that was vacated mid-term. A small business owner, Lindauer is a chiropractor and has been an adjunct instructor at the community college and university levels. He has a strong interest in public health issues and successfully sponsored legislation that allows ambulance-service membership agreements from out of state for up to five years, thus lowering the cost for those requiring medical transport. Lindauer served six years in the Army National Guard. He has a bachelor's degree from Iowa State University and degrees from Logan College of Chiropractic.

Donald Longmuir has a wealth of experience in business, economic development and education. For 40 years, he owned and ran a real estate title company. He also spent 25 years as a local economic developer and as his county's planning and zoning administrator. He served on his local school board for more than two decades, including nine years as chair. In the legislature, Longmuir is interested in policies that will help develop the state's workforce. He also has worked to address the state's increased demand for legal services by low-income residents and seniors. Longmuir has a bachelor's degree in business education from North Dakota State University.

Ethan Manning grew up in a rural area, living and working on his family's beef cattle farm. Many of his policy concerns are focused on rural areas — such as improving job opportunities, providing access to health care, addressing drug problems, and making broadband more accessible. In addition to sponsoring several successful bills this year, Manning guided a Senate on school safety that helped the House. A former county council member, Manning is a real estate broker and auctioneer. He has a bachelor's degree in business management from Western Governors University.

Riordan McClain grew up in a small, rural town in the same county that is home to his legislative district. The director of finance and customer service for a start-up investment firm, McClain is using this experience to work on economic policy in the Ohio House. He is focused on workforce training issues and the state's commercial activity tax, as well as addressing the opiate epidemic. A former Lake County, Ohio, community service includes coaching youth sports, working as a youth mentor, and volunteering with his church. McClain has a bachelor's degree from Bluffton University and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Findlay.

Ann Meyer has worked in the health care field for a number of years, both as a registered nurse and, more recently, as a teacher. She has been an adjunct nursing instructor at her local community college for the past eight years. She has a strong policy interest in health care and access to services, including mental health. As a first-term legislator, Meyer is vice chair of the House Health Care Committee, which has floor-managed several committee bills. She also helped build consensus in the Education Committee on legislation regarding school radon testing and mitigation. Meyer has her nursing degree from the University of Detroit Mercy.

At 22 years old, Joe Mitchell is the youngest member of the Iowa Legislature. He comes to his position with experience, however, having worked as a session clerk to an Iowa state senator from 2013 to 2014. At age 15, Senator from Iowa and to Gov. Kim Reynolds. Mitchell's policy interests focus on criminal justice reform, and he has worked on several issues of legislation to improve the state's criminal justice system. Mitchell is also a co-founder of the Iowa Future Caucus, a bipartisan group addressing issues facing millennials in Iowa. He has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Drake University.

Laura Murphy has served as a precinct committeewoman since 2002 and was an alderwoman from 2000 to 2009. Her service to others includes membership on the boards of the Maine Center Mental Health Association and WINGS (a domestic violence recovery organization), as well as 'adopting' a homeless and indigent senior citizen. Murphy has passed legislation protecting members from unscrupulous members of the state's court system. She is also committed to helping the state's resurgence through higher education and job growth. Murphy has a bachelor's degree in political science from Illinois State University.

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Hugh Nerlien grew up on his family's farm in rural Saskatchewan. After 30 years working in northern Manitoba and Alberta, he returned to rural Saskatchewan, where he owned and operated a Dragonfly Holdings prior to his election. In the Legislative Assembly, he serves as legislative secretary to the Minister Responsible for SaskTel. Nerlien's volunteer experience includes serving as a former president of the Canadian Crime Stoppers Association and Porcupine Plain Economic Development Committee and as a board member for Porcupine Credit Union. Nerlien is a graduate of Saskatchewan Polytechnic, where he earned a diploma in business administration.

Rebecca Reimer brings a background in business and education to the Legislature, where she is focusing on education and judicial issues. A former farmer and rancher, Reimer has been an advocate with The Heartland Financial for more than 20 years. She served on the Chamberlain School Board from 2002 to 2015, including two terms as board president. In the Kansas City area, she is a volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, the Consumer Council and local church. Reimer has a bachelor's degree from South Dakota State University and a master's degree in political science from the University of South Dakota.

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Each year, the Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development is supported by organizations, foundations and corporations that believe in the importance of leadership training and the need to provide legislators with the opportunity to develop their leadership and policymaking skills.

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