S T A T E L I N E  M I D W E S T

ON THE FRONTELINE OF VACCINATION

From public awareness campaigns, to storage and distribution, to funding, states will play a leading role in efforts to control COVID-19 in 2021

by Jon Davis (jdavis@csg.org)

S tates have at least two critical jobs in the months ahead regarding the COVID-19 vaccines. First, execute their role on the frontlines of distribution. Second, convince leery citizens to get vaccinated.

“That is, at this point, the most critical [element],” Michael Osterholm, a leading national voice on COVID-19 policy, says of public education and persuasion.

“It’s going to take a coordinated and comprehensive federal, state and local program that will, by necessity, involve the private sector.”

For much of 2020, states were preparing their vaccination distribution plans (they are available on The Council of State Governments’ COVID-19 resource page), based on plans from a decade ago for the H1N1 virus, as well as federal guidance.

IMPLEMENTING, PAYING FOR VACCINATION PLANS

What should a state vaccine distribution plan include? Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research at the University of Minnesota and a member of President-elect Joe Biden’s COVID-19 Advisory Board, points to three key components:

- tracking doses from federal sources via state distribution systems into patients’ arms;
- a system to store, distribute and administer the vaccine; and
- a program to educate and convince people to get the vaccine.

Late in 2020, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended a phased distribution of initial shipments of vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna, starting with frontline health care workers and the residents of long-term-care facilities.

All Midwestern states’ vaccination plans assume that starting point, and these priority populations make up a significant percentage of the region’s total adult population — as high as 10 percent in North Dakota (see table).

States then generally lead from those groups to higher-risk populations (for example, seniors age 65 and older), and, as doses become more widely available, to the general populace.

The federal government paid for vaccines via “Operation Warp Speed,” and the CDC released $200 million to states for planning purposes, but hasn’t yet helped pay for storage, distribution, training and public education.

Iowa Rep. Shannon Lundgren, co-chair of The Council of State Governments’ Midwestern Legislative Conference Health & Human Services Committee, says legislators hold weekly calls with state health officials, but it’s not yet known if they’ll need to approve funding during the 2021 session for Iowa’s COVID-19 vaccination program.

“All of those things are just starting to come out now,” she said in December. “We have not yet talked about money. It may

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ESTIMATED # OF STATE’S NURSING FACILITY RESIDENTS AND HEALTH CARE WORKERS WITH DIRECT PATIENT CONTACT (2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Nursing facility residents</th>
<th>Health care workers with direct patient contact</th>
<th>% of adult population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>65,600</td>
<td>626,500</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>37,600</td>
<td>324,800</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>22,300</td>
<td>148,900</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>16,800</td>
<td>147,400</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>37,500</td>
<td>516,800</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>23,400</td>
<td>319,400</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nebraska</td>
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<td>100,000</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Dakota</td>
<td>5,100</td>
<td>50,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>71,900</td>
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<td>8.0%</td>
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<td>South Dakota</td>
<td>5,600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>21,200</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>7,246,100</td>
<td>75,525,100</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation

COVID-19 DEATH RATES IN MIDWEST: DEATHS PER 100,000 RESIDENTS (AS OF DEC. 9)

The U.S. death rate was 87 deaths per 100,000 people as of Dec. 9.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

* The U.S. death rate was 87 deaths per 100,000 people as of Dec. 9.
by Carolyn Orr (carolyn@stawidgiefarm.us)

Two years ago, in a resolution passed at the Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting, the region’s state legislators urged their federal counterparts to support an initiative that connects farmers and ranchers to mental health services.

That policy wish was granted in the 2018 farm bill, which included funding for the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network.

Now the Midwest is poised to work together on delivering these services through a new 12-state initiative devoted to the mental wellness of agricultural producers in the region.

“It’s beyond time we turn our attention back to those working on our state’s farms,” says Wisconsin Sen. Joan Ballweg, who sponsored that MLC resolution in 2018.

Stress in agriculture has been particularly high in recent years, the result of low commodity prices, other market uncertainties and a pandemic.

Suicide rates among farmers and ranchers are more than three times higher than those in the general population. Drug overdose was the leading cause of death.

Farmers killed themselves between 2014 and 2018, according to University of Iowa researchers, and federal prisoners are at greater risks of suicide than those in the general population. Drug overdose was the leading cause of death.

In the Midwest, most states have increased their investment in mental health services for agricultural professionals. While urban counties average 10 psychiatrists per 100,000 people, rural counties have three, a 2018 University of Michigan study found.

The use of telephone hot lines, telehealth services and state crisis centers has helped connect rural residents to mental health supports, but federal legislation supporting these efforts had been left unfunded — until the most recent farm bill.

The regionwide network in the Midwest is receiving $7.2 million in federal support and being led by the University of Illinois Extension.

“Farmers and ranchers are more than three times higher than those in the general population — they have higher rates of health problems than the general population — they have higher rates of health problems than the general population,” said Sen. Ballweg, national chair of The Council of State Governments. “My hope is that we will learn from that mistake and build in sustainable access points to care that will become part of everyday life on the farm.”

Every state in the region will be collaborating on farmers’ mental well-being through the new network, and

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Wisconsin alters Medicaid rules to improve services for individuals released from prison and jail

by Jon Davis (jdavis@csg.org)

In late October, Wisconsin became the latest Midwestern state to suspend, rather than terminate, Medicaid coverage for people who are incarcerated, a policy step designed to ease a released person’s re-entry into society and reduce recidivism.

The move means Medicaid enrollees who are incarcerated will have their health care benefits re-evaluated before they are released from jail or prison, according to the state’s Department of Health Services. The prior policy of termination often delayed access to medical and behavioral health care, as well as medications, following an individual’s release.

“Connecting incarcerated individuals to health services upon their release is critical to breaking the cycles of chronic homelessness, reliance on emergency care and re-arrest,” Department of Health Services Secretary-designee Andrea Palm says. Jack Rollins, director of federal policy for the National Association of Medicaid Directors, says suspension of Medicaid coverage allows states to more easily re-enroll an individual upon re-entry into the community, which is usually part of a strategy to get that person immediately plugged into care management options and any treatment necessary to manage that person’s health needs.

The first days of community re-entry are critical for linking individuals to supportive services that can prevent recidivism, improve individual health outcomes, and reduce costs to the state, he adds.

One study of state of Washington inmates found that the first two weeks of release were especially risky: these individuals (released between 1999 and 2003) were 12.7 times more likely to die during this period than the general population. Drug overdose was the leading cause of death.

On a range of issues, state and federal prisoners are at greater risks of health problems than the general population — they have higher rates of high blood pressure, asthma and blood pressure, for example, and two-thirds of inmates have a substance abuse disorder of some kind, the Commonwealth Fund noted in a 2019 issue brief.

In Wisconsin, 9,585 people were released from jail or prison in federal fiscal year 2019; nearly 70 percent of them were Medicaid eligible. Currently, more than 20,000 incarcerated individuals are supervised by the Wisconsin Department of Corrections’ Division of Adult Institutions.

Wisconsin health officials say the policy switch will reduce costs for community organizations and free or low-cost clinics, the entities that often care for individuals upon their release from prison.

They note, too, that Medicaid will pay the inpatient hospital expenses for inmates with suspended benefits. This policy will result in cost savings for the state Department of Corrections and county jails.

In the Midwest, most states already have policies to suspend, not terminate, Medicaid eligibility for incarcerated individuals (see map).

Late in 2020, two states deliver very different messages about future of two binational energy pipelines by Iren Grossman (igrossman@csg.org)

In a given year, about $585 billion worth of energy products gets shipped to the United States from Canada, the largest source of U.S. energy imports. Much of this trade occurs underground, via multiple pipelines that travel through every state in the Midwest. In two of these states, Michigan and Minnesota, important developments surfaced late in 2020 about the future of two of these pipelines, both of which are owned and operated by the Canadian company Enbridge.

SHUTDOWN OF LINE 5 IN MICHIGAN

Enbridge’s Line 5 carries oil and natural gas liquids from Superior, Wis., to Sarnia, Ontario, including a stretch that runs underwater through the Great Lakes toward Michigan’s Mackinac Island.

In November, Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said she would revoke a 1953 easement that permits Enbridge to run the dual pipeline through the Straits of Mackinac. It must be shut down by May, she said, citing unaddressed structural problems and an unacceptable risk of a catastrophic oil spill in the Great Lakes. The time between now and May 2021 will “allow for an orderly transition to ensure Michigan’s energy needs are met,” Whitmer added.

Her announcement came after a 15-month study done by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources on Enbridge’s compliance with the state easement. Along with noting “historic failures and current non-compliance,” Whitmer and DNR officials said Line 5 is vulnerable to anchor strikes and other damage because of its location in a busy shipping channel. In response, Enbridge noted that a federal regulator has confirmed the pipeline’s safety. It also criticized the DNR’s review process.

Enbridge already has been planning to develop a Great Lakes tunnel to enclose the dual pipeline, but completion of that project is still several years away. Michigan Sen. Ed McBroom believes “the decision to shut down the pipeline, and particularly the timing, was faulty.” Enbridge has accelerated its timeline to build the tunnel, he says, and “there are already mitigation efforts underway.” A state law from 2018 also strengthened oversight in order to improve pipeline safety.

McBroom represents a district in the Upper Peninsula that relies on Line 5-delivered propane to heat homes. (The pipeline supplies 65 percent of the UP’s propane needs.) “Alternatives for providing heating fuel after the pipeline shuts down are not well laid out,” McBroom said.

When a closure of the pipeline would pose supply problems across the region, Supporters of keeping Line 5 open also note that its closure will lead to a greater use of riskier, costly modes of transport (truck, rail or ship).

MINNESOTA OKS LINE 3 PERMITS

Enbridge’s Line 3 is a 1,070-mile crude oil pipeline that begins in Edmonton, Alberta, and passes through North Dakota (13 miles of pipeline) and Minnesota (337 miles of pipeline) before reaching Superior, Wis.

The company recently received positive news about its Line 3 replacement project from Minnesota. In November, the state Department of Natural Resources issued the remaining approvals of the company’s proposal to replace one of its six pipelines that cross the state. Eight permits were issued, setting conditions for parts of the project, including for crossing public wetlands, the use of water for the project, and the protection of threatened and endangered species. Enbridge will provide $2.5 million to fund research, conservation planning and recovery efforts for plant species affected by the project. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency approved the same day as the DNR, including water quality certification. The Line 3 Replacement Project still requires other permits, including a determination from the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

The new legislation was supported by the Midwest’s nuclear power plants in the region still store spent nuclear fuel and are within 50 miles of Native American land (see table). State and tribal leaders, though, can maintain their sovereignty while working together and learning from one another.

Part of relationship building is understanding the perspectives of others. To help members of the MRMMC learn about tribal history, customs and perspectives, the committee recently began opening its meetings by acknowledging tribal land and nations.

This recognition of indigenous people and the tribal people as the traditional caretakers of the land seeks to pay respect, as well as increase awareness of history and the often-overlooked wisdom of Native Americans.

CSG’s Midwest Regional Materials Transportation Committee brings the Midwestern states together to identify, prioritize and work with the U.S. Department of Energy to resolve regional issues related to the transport of radioactive waste and materials.
THE MIDWEST AND THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE: STATE LAWS SHAPE THE PROCESS; POPULATION TRENDS HAVE REGION’S VOTE SHARE FALLING

by Tim Anderson (tanderson@csg.org)

On Dec. 14, presidential electors in the 50 states and District of Columbia met in different places across the country (usually state capital buildings, as required under most state laws), marking the start of the final phase of the race for president. These electors — chosen by the political party of the winning candidate in their respective states — cast votes for president and vice president. The results, in the form of “certificates of the vote,” were then sent to the president of the U.S. Senate, among others, in preparation for a special joint session of Congress (see sidebar). At this joint session, the electors’ votes are counted and results read aloud. The race for president officially ends. This year, about 19 percent of the nation’s presidential electors came from the 11-state Midwest. Here is an overview of the U.S. Electoral College, the impact of state laws on the process, and trends in vote allocation for the Midwest.

1 STATES FILL GAPS IN CONSTITUTIONAL LANGUAGE ON ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Under the U.S. Constitution, written before the rise of national political parties and national elections, state legislatures are given the power to appoint electors in their respective states. And in the nation’s first presidential elections, legislatures appointed electors without direct public input, notes the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. Today, though, state laws are in place to ensure that the individuals chosen to vote in the Electoral College represent the party of the presidential candidate who won the state’s popular vote. Michigan has one of the Midwest’s more direct statutory provisions on this subject: “The candidates for electors of president and vice-president who shall be considered elected are those whose names have been certified to the secretary of state by that political party receiving the greatest number of votes.”

2 MIDWEST’S LAWS VARY ON HOW TO DEAL WITH ‘FAITHLESS ELECTORS’ — IF AT ALL

The language of state laws also determines what electors can, or cannot, do when casting their votes for president and vice president.

In the Midwest, electors in Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota and Nebraska must pledge to cast their vote for the presidential candidate of the party they were selected to represent. These states also have specific statutory language for canceling the vote of an elector who doesn’t fulfill the pledge, as well as for removing/replacing this “faithless elector.” Two other Midwestern states don’t require such pledges, but they do have provisions to prevent so-called “faithless electors.” Wisconsin electors “shall vote” for the candidates of the political party which nominated them; in Ohio, an individual must “cast his electoral vote for the nominees for president and vice president of the political party which certified him … as a presidential elector.” According to the National Association of Secretaries of State, 31 states require presidential electors to cast their vote for the candidate of the party they were selected to represent. A handful of states (none in the Midwest) establishes penalties for “faithless electors” — for example, a fine of $1,000 or possible imprisonment in California and criminal conviction in South Carolina, according to the nonpartisan group FairVote. In a July 2020 decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, justices ruled that states have the constitutional authority to punish faithless electors.

3 REGION EXPECTED TO HAVE AT LEAST THREE FEWER PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORS IN 2024

The Midwest is expected to lose three Electoral College votes — and maybe more — during the nation’s next reapportionment, the political consulting firm Election Data Services noted in a 2019 analysis of population data from the U.S. Census Bureau. Its analysis showed Illinois, Michigan and Minnesota losing one vote each; Ohio also lost one when trends were projected for 2020. For part of the latter half of this decade (2010-2020), Minnesota’s population has been growing at a faster rate than the nation’s; if this trend continues, its Electoral College vote number could remain the same. On the flip side, Illinois appears close to losing two seats. In 1972, the 11-state Midwest held 133 Electoral College votes; that was 45.2 percent of the 290 needed to win the presidency. In contrast, in 2020, 108 of the Electoral College votes came from the Midwest (40 percent of the total needed to win).

4 WHY THE WINNER DOESN’T TAKE ALL IN NEBRASKA, AND HOW THE ‘SMALL-STATE BUMP’ WORKS

Most states employ a “winner-take-all” method for allocating presidential electors: whichever political party’s candidate wins the popular vote of the entire state is awarded all of the state’s presidential electors. Nebraska is one of two exceptions (along with Maine).

Of Nebraska’s five Electoral College votes, only two are awarded based on the state’s popular-vote winner. The other three are allocated based on results in each of Nebraska’s three congressional districts. In 2020, the state’s vote for president was split — four for Donald Trump, one for Joe Biden. Bills have been introduced in Nebraska in recent years to move to a winner-take-all system, with one argument being to consolidate the state’s already-limited power in presidential elections.

Nebraska, though, is one of seven states in the Midwest that gets a slight bump in its allocation of Electoral College votes compared to its share of the total U.S. population (see table). This “small-state” bump is the result of how Electoral College votes are allocated — two votes for every state, regardless of population size, in addition to votes being allocated based on the state’s number of congressional districts (which is based on population).

This small-state bump is one way a presidential candidate who wins the national popular vote can lose in the Electoral College.

THE MIDWEST EXPECTED TO HAVE AT LEAST THREE FEWER PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORS IN 2024

Expected to or at risk of losing one vote in the Electoral College

Expected to or at risk of losing one vote in the Electoral College

Laws Governing Votes of State Electors in Electoral College

VARIATIONS IN MIDWEST STATES: SHARE OF U.S. POPULATION COMPARED TO SHARE OF U.S. ELECTORAL COLLEGE VOTES

State | State’s % share of U.S. population (July 2019) | State’s % share of votes in Electoral College (2020) | Higher or lower share of votes in Electoral College due to ‘small-state bump’?
--- | --- | --- | ---
Illinois | 3.86% | 3.72% | Lower
Indiana | 2.05% | 2.04% | Lower
Iowa | 0.96% | 1.12% | Higher
Kansas | 0.89% | 1.12% | Higher
Michigan | 3.04% | 2.97% | Lower
Minnesota | 1.72% | 1.86% | Higher
Nebraska | 0.39% | 0.93% | Higher
North Dakota | 0.23% | 0.56% | Higher
Ohio | 3.56% | 3.35% | Lower
South Dakota | 0.27% | 0.56% | Higher
Wisconsin | 1.77% | 1.86% | Higher
Midwest | 18.95% | 20.07% | Higher

Source: National Association of Secretaries of State and CSG Midwest analysis of statutes
A UNIQUE CASE, AND DISPUTE, OVER LEGISLATIVE VACANCIES ENDS IN NORTH DAKOTA

by Tim Anderson (tanderson@csg.org)

Vacancies in state legislatures occur on a regular basis. A member dies or resigns. A member is elected or appointed to a new position. States in the Midwest handle the filling of these vacancies in different ways, with some requiring special elections, and others handing this authority to the governor, political parties or a party caucus in the state legislature (see table).

But what happens if the vacancy occurs before the person ever takes office, or is even elected? Do the same state laws on legislative vacancy still apply?

This unusual circumstance occurred in North Dakota in 2020, and it took a ruling by the state Supreme Court to answer these questions and resolve a dispute between the governor and legislature.

David Anderahl, a candidate for state representative, died on Oct. 5 due to complications from the coronavirus. 29 days later, he won 35.5 percent of the vote — enough to secure a seat in the North Dakota House, where the two top vote-getters win election. A day after the election, Gov. Doug Burgum appointed someone to fill the seat. The problem: North Dakota doesn’t typically grant this power to the governor.

Instead, legislative vacancies are filled by the district committee of the political party that the former member represented in the district.”

Burgum argued this statutory language did not apply.

“The law is only triggered when there is an office-holding member of the legislature who fails to serve out his or her term,” the governor’s attorney, Robert Patrieoff, said during oral arguments. A provision in the North Dakota Constitution gives the governor the power to fill a vacancy when “no other method is provided.”

Burgum argued that his “gap-filling” authority would initially be created for this program.

In a split opinion, the court said in its opinion.

Yes, the justices said, there is a vacancy in this case; as a result, the law on filling legislative vacancies applies.

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

A Day After Election, Something’s Going Wrong, by John D. Solum, University of Missouri School of Law

QUESTION | How have states in the Midwest sought to expand access to broadband in rural and underserved areas?

Many states have long identified broadband access as essential to quality of life, population stabilization and economic growth in their rural areas. Access became even more vital in 2020, as most of the nation rapidly transitioned to working and learning at home and the use of services such as telehealth exploded.

All Midwestern states have programs to expand connectivity. The most common funding approach is to use general fund dollars for grants or loans; recipients are typically service providers, nonprofit utility cooperatives or other local governments, according to the Pew-Charitable Trusts. Other state revenue sources for broadband access, Pew noted in a 2019 issue brief, include toll road revenue, right-of-way fees on providers and money from legal settlements.

In 2019, the Illinois General Assembly approved a six-year, $45 billion capital/bonding plan, funded largely by an increase in the state’s gas tax and other fuel-related taxes. This plan includes $420 million to upgrade and expand broadband through Connect Illinois state grants. Another $20 million will go to repair and expand the Illinois Century Network, a high-speed, broadband network serving schools, public libraries and museums, state and local governments, and broadband service providers.

Likewise, Indiana’s Next Level Connections program allotted over $250 million for fiscal years 2019 and 2020; it is part of a larger $1 billion infrastructure plan. It is funded by toll road revenue. Wisconsin and Nebraska use money from their universal service funds to help finance broadband expansion. Wisconsin legislators this year also approved a repeal of property taxes on infrastructure used to provide internet service in rural and underserved areas. This measure, AB 344, is an incentive for cooperatives and smaller providers to build capacity.

Through a program known as Empower Rural Iowa, service providers in that state receive grants to build infrastructure in targeted areas. Iowa also has provided a property tax exemption for broadband infrastructure installed between July 2015 and July 2020.

Minnesota’s Border-to-Border initiative, created by legislation in 2014, aims to bring broadband to the state’s underserved areas. Lawmakers in 2019 appropriated $40 million for the program in the state’s biennial budget. The law also created a special account for this fund, allowing it to accrue earnings such as interest and dividends.

North Dakota helps ensure access by requiring state agencies, colleges and universities, local governments and K-12 schools to participate in a 20-year-old statewide network (STAGEnet). And South Dakota launched a K-12 Connect program in October to offer free internet connections for qualifying families through June 2022.

Earlier this year, the Ohio House passed HB 13, which would create the Residential Broadband Expansion Grant program. If signed into law, HB 13 would award grants to service providers to close the “last mile” from existing infrastructure to residential customers. A $20 million fund would initially be created for this program.

This fall, Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly announced plans for her state to invest for the first time in a “concerted effort” to expand broadband access.

疑问：在密西西比州，立法机构出现空缺时，应如何填补？

密西西比州的立法机构在出现空缺时，有两种填补方式。一种是立法机构根据法律填补空缺。另一种是根据法律填补空缺。但无论是哪一种方式，填补空缺都必须符合法律规定的条件。如果填补空缺的人员不符合法律规定的条件，那么填补空缺的方法就不符合法律规定。

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A HISTORICALLY HIGH NUMBER OF WOMEN LAWMAKERS WILL BE PART OF U.S. STATE LEGISLATURES IN 2021

For the first time in U.S. history, more than 30 percent of the nation’s legislators are women. As a result of the November 2020 elections, the number of female legislators increased in 31 U.S. states, including seven states in the Midwest (see map), according to the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University. Women make up the majority of legislators in one state, Nevada, and account for a third of the seats in six states and four state houses (none in the Midwest).

In 2020, in the Midwest’s 21 legislative chambers, the percentage of representatives and senators who were women ranged from 37.3 percent in Illinois (ninth highest in the nation) to 22.0 percent in North Dakota (second lowest in the nation). Scholars who study the gender gap in politics often point to the “decision to run” stage as being the most important factor (women candidates win at about the same rates as men). For example, as a group, male candidates tend to seek office based on a general interest in politics, whereas female candidates more likely need to be motivated by a specific policy issue or problem. Women also report higher levels of concern about being able to raise enough campaign money.

This election cycle, a record number of women were on the ballot as state legislative candidates. One notable development from the 2020 election cycle was a rise in the number of Republican female candidates on the November ballot—1,106 compared to 993 in 2018.

INDIANA HITS RECORD-LOW RATE FOR INFANT MORTALITY, POLICIES IN PLACE AIM TO CONTINUE THIS TRENDS

Indiana’s infant mortality rate fell last year to the state’s lowest level ever since 1900, when records began to be kept, state officials announced this fall. Preliminary data released by the Indiana Department of Health also show the mortality rate for Black infants fell from 13.0 in 2018 to 11.0 in 2019. This marks the third year of decline in the state’s rate of infant mortality, which is defined as the death of a baby before his or her first birthday. Gov. Eric Holcomb said the data show that the state’s various initiatives to reduce infant mortality are working.

Improving birth outcomes has been a priority of Holcomb and state legislators for several years now. In 2019, for example, lawmakers passed HB 1007, which created the My Healthy Baby program. It connects expectant or new mothers to the health, social, and community services that they need. Holcomb said that the program was a “navigator”—a home visitor who provides personalized guidance and support. My Healthy Baby targets state supports for pregnant women who are covered by Medicaid and reside in areas of the state with high infant mortality rates. The legislation committed $6.6 million toward the program over two years. The program launched in January with a goal of serving 20 counties by the end of 2020. Another 25 counties are expected to be added in 2021; the ultimate goal is to make these services available to all pregnant women who are insured through Medicaid.

In 2018, Holcomb also signed a law (SB 360) creating a perinatal “levels of care” rating system for hospitals and birthing centers. The Department of Health now has a six-level system classifying obstetric and neonatal care in the state’s hospitals. These facilities are measured in six categories, ranging from organization to obstetric capabilities, personnel, equipment and medications. The goal is to give pregnant women (especially those experiencing high-risk pregnancies) and their doctors information to help them choose a facility that is best for them.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, states with these kinds of levels-of-care programs have lower infant mortality rates, lower health care costs and better outcomes. Illinois and Iowa are among the states with similar rating systems.

IN MICHIGAN, NEW LAWS AIM TO GIVE ‘CLEAN SLATE’ TO HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF RESIDENTS

Six bipartisan bills signed into law this fall will give hundreds of thousands of Michigan residents the chance to have their criminal records expunged, a move that legislative supporters say will remove barriers to employment and housing opportunities. Among the changes in HB 4980-4985 and HB 5120:

- The creation of an automatic process for setting aside eligible misdemeanors after seven years and eligible non-assault felonies after 10 years.
- An expansion of the types of felonies and misdemeanors eligible to be expunged.
- The treatment of multiple felonies or misdemeanor offenses arising from the same transaction as a single felony or misdemeanor conviction, provided the offenses happened within 24 hours of one another, were not assault crimes, and did not involve possession or use of a dangerous weapon.
- Ensure that people with past marijuana convictions can have those convictions set aside if the behavior that led to the conviction would be permissible under current state law. (The use of recreational marijuana is now legal in Michigan.)

Michigan Rep. Graham Filler, who helped lead work on this legislative package, wrote last year in Stateline Midwest about the impact that these measures could have on individual residents. “People whose criminal records are cleared tend to experience a sharp upturn in their wage and employment trajectories,” he wrote. According to the Restoration of Rights Project, state laws vary widely on expungement—for example, some allow no records to be closed, others only allow for the expungement of misdemeanors.

MIDWESTERN STATES SEEK TO IMPROVE INVESTIGATIONS OF MISSING, MURDERED INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Michigan and Minnesota will be among the first states to join a pilot program that aims to improve cooperation in investigations of missing or murdered indigenous people.

Led by the U.S. Department of Justice, the Tribal Community Response Plan will begin in Oklahoma and require federal, state, and tribal law enforcement agencies to work in coordination to create “culturally appropriate guidelines when investigating emergent cases.” The guidelines will include instructions for law enforcement, victim services, community outreach, and public communications.

A mix of federal and state projects and initiatives have been launched in recent years to improve the investigation of missing or murdered indigenous people. The Department of Justice launched a national strategy in 2019, including the establishment of state-level coordinators and specialized FBI rapid deployment teams.

In 2019, North Dakota legislators passed two bills to raise awareness and improve law enforcement’s responses to cases of missing and murdered indigenous people within the state, but outside of tribal lands: HB 1311 promotes training for the state’s police officers and prosecutors on these specific types of cases; and HB 1313 requires the state’s existing information-sharing system for law enforcement to include “data related to missing and murdered indigenous people.” That same year, a law was enacted in Nebraska (LB 154) to study ways to improve the reporting and investigation of these cases.

Minnesota has a Task Force on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. It was established in 2019, and the result of legislation passed that same year (HF 70). Indigenous women between the ages of 25 and 54 are five times more likely to experience a violent death, as compared to any other race, according to a 2019 study from the Journal of Indigenous Research.

INFANT MORTALITY RATES PER 1,000 LIVE BIRTHS IN MIDWEST STATES (2018)

Source: 2020 March of Dimes Report Card

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Rate per 1,000 births</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Ohio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

STATELINE MIDWEST  | DECEMBER 2020

CRIMINAL RECORD

# OF CASES OF MISSING/MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN IN MIDWEST STATES (2018)*

* Case numbers were compiled across 71 cities nationwide from law enforcement data, local news and social media coverage, and family accounts.

Source: Urban Indian Health Institute, “Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls,” November 2018
**TARGETED MESSAGING CAN BOOST VACCINATION RATES**

All Midwestern states’ vaccination plans include references to public communication, with many noting the need for messages targeting specific audiences and in multiple languages. Minnesota’s plan, for example, says: “Existing relationships with partner and community organizations will be leveraged to help reach key audiences with information” about the new vaccines.

“...to build trust and encourage cooperation with our recommendations, communications will be respectful of people’s concerns and recognize that different communities will have different needs for information.”

Health officials in that state can draw on their experience containing a 2017 measles outbreak in the Somali-American community for guidance.

To bolster immunization rates, the state hired Somali speakers and crafted messages targeting schools, child care centers and the faith community. Somali imams helped by asking for information that they could pass on to their congregations. Rates increased after this targeted approach.

Michigan’s vaccination plan details how inter-agency and public communications plans will evolve with each phase of increased distribution, while North Dakota is planning to begin with a broad media campaign and adjust its approach as public response warrants.

Vaccination plans do likewise (including weekly briefings for legislative caucus staff), while noting that a major component of the public awareness campaign is ensuring all lowns are able to receive and understand messages, regardless of an individual’s ability to read, speak or write English.

Nebraska’s plan states that “information shared must be evidence-based, truthful/credible, respectful and shared with a sense of urgency.”

Nationally, Osterholm says, it will be important for scientists and front center “to talk about why it’s important to get the vaccine, and to show leadership by getting it ourselves.”

**METEING THE CHALLENGE OF STORAGE & DISTRIBUTION**

Not all potential COVID-19 vaccines will require ultra-cold storage, but Pfizer’s vaccine must be stored at or below minus-80 degrees to still be able to receive and administer the vaccine,” noted Schauer, adding Wisconsin’s manufacturers of dry ice offered assistance to ensure a steady supply.

COVID-19 vaccination planning and dissemination have been “even more complicated than we had ever imagined,” Willem’s van Dijk said. “It will be the most extraordinary public health intervention our state has ever seen.”

States such as Illinois, Indiana, Kansas and Minnesota will make use of their existing vaccine registry systems to track COVID-19 vaccinations. Systems in Illinois and Minnesota can provide automated reminders for second-dose shots; the Minnesota Department of Health plans special training sessions on how to use this reminder feature.

Kansas and Michigan plan to give a card to vaccine recipients with instructions to save and have it available for the second dose. Michigan is also developing an optional second-dose text reminder.

Osterholm warns against expecting miracles. Even after distribution of a vaccine, or multiple vaccines, begins, the pandemic won’t go away quickly; it will last through at least the second quarter of 2021, he says. “The vaccine isn’t vaccination. Vaccinations are what will make the difference,” Osterholm adds.

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**FORER NATO COMMANDER OVERSEEING VACCINATION LOGISTICS IN CANADA; PROVINCES HAVE DISTRIBUTION PLANS IN PLACE**

Saskatchewan’s health ministry announced in December that the province’s COVID-19 vaccination scheme would play out in three phases, starting with an “isolated pilot” of 1,950 doses for health care workers in the provincial capital, Regina, and then expanding as supplies of vaccine allow.

Like states vis-a-vis the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Saskatchewan’s plan is based on guidance from Canada’s National Advisory Committee on Immunization, which recommended that initial, limited doses of authorized COVID-19 vaccine(s) should be offered to:

- residents and staff of congregate living settings that authorized COVID-19 vaccine(s) should be offered to:
- adults in indigenous communities where infection can have disproportionate consequences.
- health care workers (including all those who work in health care settings, as well as personal support workers whose work involves direct contact with patients); and
- adults in indigenous communities where infection can have disproportionate consequences.

Saskatchewan’s pilot vaccination program was to be followed by “targeted” immunizations for health care workers in intensive care and COVID units and COVID testing/assessment staff, as well as residents in long-term care and “other vulnerable populations” — those 80 and older in all communities and those 90 and older in the province’s remote northern half.

Like the United States, Canada’s federal government signed deals with multiple vaccine manufacturers to deliver doses of any vaccine that clears clinical trials and wins approval from regulatory agencies.

In late November, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau named a former NATO commander, Major Gen. Dany Fortin, to oversee federal vaccine logistics and operations within a new branch of the Public Health Agency of Canada.

According to the Canadian Broadcasting Company, Trudeau said the country’s military “will assist in planning for and tackling pressing challenges, such as the cold-storage requirements for the promising Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. The military also will help Ottawa get shots to some indigenous and rural communities where health care services are limited at the best of times.”

Federal authorities allocated one ultra-cool freezer to Saskatchewan, and the province bought 25 such freezers to aid in distribution of Pfizer’s vaccine (it must be stored at extremely low temperatures). Manitoba Premier Brian Pallister said in early December that the province already had installed one specialized freezer to store the Pfizer vaccine and was awaiting four more, giving officials capacity to store one million doses.

In Ontario, Premier Doug Ford also has tapped a retired general to lead the province’s vaccine distribution program. Provincial health officials said a distribution plan was expected to be released by the end of the year. Alberta officials have said they expect to get 681,000 doses early in 2021.

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**COVID-19 DEATHS IN CANADA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Actual deaths as of Dec. 8</th>
<th>Projected deaths as of Feb. 1*</th>
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<tr>
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<td>60</td>
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<td>Alberta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
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<td>21,449</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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* Projected deaths are based on current mortality and mandate conditions.

Source: Public Health Agency of Canada; Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (University of Washington)
A passion for helping fellow veterans led the Michigan native to elective office: only four years later, he’s set to serve as one of the state’s top political leaders

by Tim Anderson (tanderson@csg.org)

PROFILE: MICHIGAN SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE JASON WENTWORTH

A passion for helping fellow veterans led the Michigan native to elective office: only four years later, he’s set to serve as one of the state’s top political leaders.

Q: What are some of the lessons you took away from your role in changing the state’s auto insurance laws?
A: One is that the people you have to spend the most time with are your fellow members. Learn where they are at in the debate. On auto insurance, for example, some members might not know much at all about it. Others have been in their own car accidents or have had family members seriously injured in car accidents, or have trial attorney experience. I made a point of having one-on-one conversations with every Republican member on the issue so I could figure out where they were at, personally. What made them tick? What did they want to know? … I was literally on the phone more in that one year [of working on the auto insurance law] than I had been my entire life.

Q: You came to the Legislature focused on improving services for veterans. Why was that such a priority for you?
A: Michigan has among the highest populations of veterans in the country. The majority of them are 65 years old and older, and so for the first time in their lives they’re needing to access benefits. They’ve never asked for help their entire lives, but they need it now. We owe it to them to be available to help. If people want to go to our [Department of Health and Human Services], they can get a benefit. It’s always open, it’s always there. Why don’t we do the same thing for veterans?

Q: What legislative action was taken to improve access?
A: One of the things we did was create a grant program for counties to increase funding for services or to create new veterans departments, because you have some counties where there has only been a single person working part-time to help veterans. Veterans benefits can be convoluted and complex. There’s red tape. We have veterans service officers who are experienced and can help. We should make sure those officers are more visible. That’s our goal. We’re still working to implement the legislation, and to advertise and expand outreach to veterans and their families.

Q: What do you view as the most important attributes of legislative leadership?
A: For me, everything is rooted in communication. … You can’t make progress on policy without communication, and you can’t sustain legislative success without it. Members know they’re not always going to agree with you. But at the same time, they want to be heard, they want their districts to be heard. If they feel like they’ve been heard, they can still get there on something.

It takes a commitment to prioritize that communication, that building of relations, but it’s critical to success.

When we’re on the floor of the House, for example, it’s the only time that we all get together that day. I have a strategy of who to talk to and why.

Then I have a hour-and-a half drive home every night. On that drive home, I communicate during that time — not just talking about each other’s weekend, but strategically communicating about where we want to go.

Q: What have you learned from observing other legislative leaders?
A: Remember sitting in the back row during my first term and just watching the organized chaos of the chamber. And you see that more than politics or any individual policies, this business is about people and relationships. If you try to build those relationships, and are genuine about what you’re doing, you can be successful.

Also, there are ups and downs in the Legislature; there’s no doubt that this job is a roller coaster. But specifically from Speaker [Lee] Chatfield, I’ve seen how being even-keeled all the time has a whole lot of benefits for a leader.

Stay even, and realize other people have things they want to accomplish that may be outside of where you want to go. If you have that mindset, you can take every situation as it comes and not get too excited about things — not have your pants on fire all the time.

People will see that about you and follow you.

“A passion for helping fellow veterans led the Michigan native to elective office: only four years later, he’s set to serve as one of the state’s top political leaders.”
FIRST PERSON: RESTRUCTURING OF STATE’S SOCIAL SERVICES IS LESSON IN LEGISLATIVE PERSEVERANCE

System was 22 years in making, and will improve service quality, efficiency

“These new human service zones, and the counties in them, can share staff resources, specialization and expertise amongst each other.”

by North Dakota Rep. Robin Weisz
(rweisz@nd.gov)

In 2019, the North Dakota Legislature passed a bill (SB 2124) providing for major restructuring of how we deliver and finance our system of social services. This legislation was actually 22 years in the making.

Historically, North Dakota’s social service programs have been run by each of our state’s 53 counties, with the costs of administration and the programs themselves being shared by the state and individual counties. While this system had certain advantages — for example, local control and the delivery of services close to the people who need them — it had many disadvantages as well. Counties were expected to pay for their share of costs through a local property tax, yet they had almost no control of what those costs might be. In particular, counties that had a large portion of land on an Indian reservation were not able to generate property taxes on reservation lands, and also were experiencing much higher caseloads. This, of course, resulted in much higher property tax bills for those residents compared to homeowners and businesses in other counties.

Another major disadvantage: A person had to receive services within the county where he or she lived, even if it was closer or more convenient to receive those same services in another county. Some counties also were not providing quality services, and the state had very little ability to rectify the situation.

THE SLOW, STEADY PACE OF SYSTEM REFORM

While it was apparent our county-led system needed improvement, change comes hard. In the Legislature, we passed a measure in 1997 transferring all administrative costs to the counties in exchange for the state taking on more of the program costs. Because of funding limitations, the state was unable to take on all of the program costs, but this “swap” was at least a step in the right direction.

We also put in place additional funding for those counties affected by reservation lands to help offset their additional tax burdens. These changes gave counties greater ability to manage their overall costs, because they had more leeway in determining staffing and other expenses.

Still, many of us in the Legislature were advocating that the state take over all of the costs of social services, as well as overall management of the system. It seemed patently unfair that local taxpayer dollars should be used to pay for services they had virtually no control over, and for services that could vary dramatically from one county to the next.

Because of ongoing issues dealing with the administration of child support in some regions of North Dakota, the Legislature did pass a bill in 2007 that had the state take over all costs and administration in this particular program area. That decision came with a lot of pushback from the counties, as they were afraid of losing employees and local control. In the end, though, the move was a success in all areas. Complaints over child support issues dropped dramatically, we saw greater efficiencies, and existing employees were able to remain in their local communities.

This experience helped give more credibility for those of us advocating for a total redesign of our system.

PATIENCE PAYS OFF: MAJOR RESTRUCTURING NOW IN PLACE

In 2015, we passed legislation for the state to take over the rest of the counties’ share of program costs for social services. Two years later, we agreed to pay the counties their current costs of running the programs, a total that came to about $180 million. As part of this legislative appropriation, a study commission was established and charged with working out how best to deliver services going forward.

The result of that study was SB 2124, passed during our most recent legislative session. Our new system divides the state into “human service” zones, each of which is made up of multiple counties. These counties hire a zone director with approval from the state’s Department of Human Services. The zones are reimbursed based on the services they perform. Importantly, these zones, and the counties in them, can share staff resources, areas of specialization and expertise amongst each other.

I believe North Dakotans will be much better served, as they can now go wherever is most convenient to them. Also, because we are no longer worried about multiple jurisdictions, we have employees that can specialize in each area to better deliver services to each client. This makes for better efficiencies, as our human-service workers are able to become experts in their focus area.

This restructuring is also a good deal for the counties; all costs are paid for by the state, the newly created zones provide for overall management, and oversight comes from our state Department of Human Services.

Sometimes the legislative process can move very slowly, and I will admit that I became frustrated many times at my inability to convince my fellow lawmakers of what I believed was a necessary change in how we dealt with social services. It certainly tested my and other legislators’ patience.

As the saying goes, “Good things come to those who wait.” I believe that even though it may have taken 22 years, we have put in place a much better system that will offer better service to our citizens at a lower cost to North Dakota’s taxpayers.

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 Institute for Legislative Leadership Conference. Responses to any first-person article are welcome, as are pieces written on other topics. For more information, contact Tim Anderson at 630.925.1922 or tanderson@csg.org.

TIMELINE OF NORTH DAKOTA’S GRADUAL REFORM OF ITS SOCIAL SERVICES SYSTEM

Early 1990s

Social service delivery is one of the largest single items in many county budgets, and is growing much faster than property values

1997

State takes on more program costs; counties assume all administrative costs

Counties are relieved of the local share of Medicaid payments to hospitals, doctors and nursing homes

2007

Child support enforcement and all related costs are shifted from the county to the state

2015 & 2017

Legislation passed to have state take over counties’ share of costs for running social services programs

Study commission formed to restructure system

2019

Passage of SB 214 restructures administration and delivery of social services; new “human service” zones (made of multiple counties) created and overseen by state Department of Health Services

Source: North Dakota Department of Human Services and North Dakota Rep. Robin Weisz

Rep. Robin Weisz has been a member of the North Dakota House since 1996. He is a graduate of CSG Midwest’s Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development.

STATELINE MIDWEST | DECEMBER 2020
CSG JUSTICE CENTER LAUNCHING NEW PROJECT TO HELP LAWMAKERS MAKE DATA-DRIVEN POLICY DECISIONS

In these unpredictable times, there is one common guidance post that policymakers and the public should look to: up-to-date, accessible data. But in criminal justice systems across the country, such data can be hard to come by. This information is often collected but not analyzed, analyzed but not shared, or shared but not acted upon.

Justice Counts, a new project of The Council of State Governments’ Justice Center, will help close these gaps for state legislators and other leaders in criminal justice policy. With the assistance of a large network of partners who have connections in all 50 states, as well as thousands of counties and cities, Justice Counts will develop a set of criminal justice metrics that are attainable and impactful for any state or agency, and that help inform sound budget and policy decisions.

The Justice Counts project is being overseen by a 23-member steering committee that includes judges, legislators, executive branch officials and other criminal justice leaders. It is being supported by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance.

It is being supported by the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance.

Four-member officer team guides MLC’s work for state, provincial legislators

Led by South Dakota Sen. Gary Cammack, four legislators from the Midwest will guide the work of the nonpartisan, binational Midwestern Legislative Conference in 2021. The MLC includes all legislators from 11 Midwestern states and the province of Saskatchewan as members. The provinces of Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario are affiliate members. In all, more than 700 state and provincial legislators from the Midwest are regular or affiliate members of the MLC.

The Midwestern Office of The Council of State Governments provides staff support to the MLC, which has seven interstate policy committees; holds an Annual Meeting; provides leadership training and individualized policy research assistance to legislators; and helps build interstate, binational relations among state leaders.

The officer team assumed its duties in December.

SOUTH DAKOTA SEN. GARY CAMMACK

Cammack has been a member of the South Dakota Legislature since 2013 and recently was chosen Senate majority leader. As MLC chair, he will lead his South Dakota colleagues in helping plan and host the MLC Annual Meeting. This event for the region’s state and provincial legislators is scheduled to be held July 11-14 in Rapid City, S.D.

KANSAS SEN. CAROLYN MCGINN

Kansas Sen. Carolyn McGinn will serve as first vice chair of the MLC. A member of the Kansas Legislature since 2005, she is chair of the Kansas Senate Ways and Means Committee. Her involvement with CSG has included past work as financial officer for the Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission. She also is a graduate of CSG’s Henry Toll Fellowship Program.

MICHIGAN SEN. JOHN BIZON

A physician, Michigan Sen. John Bizon was first elected to the state’s upper legislative chamber in 2018 after serving four years in the House. He is a 2017 graduate of CSG Midwest’s Bowman Institute for Legislative Leadership Development (BILLID). Dr. Bizon serves as Michigan Senate majority whip and as majority vice chair of the Health Policy and Human Services Committee.

MICHIGAN SEN. KEN HORN

Michigan Sen. Ken Horn is the MLC’s immediate past chair. He is a longtime member of the MLC Executive Committee, a former co-chair of the MLC’s Economic Development Committee, and a graduate of two CSG leadership programs: BILLID and the Toll Fellows Program. He serves as chair of the Michigan Senate’s Economic and Small Business Development Committee.

MLC TO SUPPORT 7 COMMITTEES OF LEGISLATORS IN 2021

With the goal of helping legislators share information with each other, learn from national experts and collaborate on public policy, the Midwestern Legislative Conference will support seven committees over the next biennium. These bipartisan committees include participation from legislators in each of the region’s 11 states and four Canadian provinces.

These committees will be led by legislative co-chairs and at least one vice chair. Committee officers will be selected early in 2021 by South Dakota Sen. Gary Cammack, MLC chair.

These committees develop biennial work plans, and typically host policy-focused events (both in person and virtually) for members. The Midwestern Office of The Council of State Governments provides staff support to the MLC and its committees. Legislators interested in serving on a committee can contact CSG Midwest director Mike McCabe at mmccabe@csg.org.

South Dakota Sen. Gary Cammack, MLC chair

Kansas Sen. Carolyn McGinn, MLC first vice chair

Michigan Sen. John Bizon, MLC second vice chair

Michigan Sen. Ken Horn, MLC immediate past chair

WISCONSIN SEN. JOAN BALLWEG

KANSAS INSURANCE COMMISSIONER VICKI SCHMIDT

ILLINOIS SEN. ELDIE SIMS

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY DIRECTOR TOM STICKRATH

The Midwestern Legislative Conference in 2021 will support seven committees over the next biennium. These bipartisan committees include participation from legislators in each of the region’s 11 states and four Canadian provinces.

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MLC COMMITTEE LINEUP

- Agriculture & Natural Resources
- Criminal Justice & Public Safety
- Economic Development
- Education
- Fiscal Affairs
- Health & Human Services
- Midwest-Canada Relations
NEW OFFICES

BILLD alumni notes:

reached at

Please submit Alumni News to Laura Tomaka, CSG

Other BILLD alumni also are assuming new elective office.

2005) was re-elected to her second term in 2018. In addition, U.S. Sen. Deb Fischer (class of 1996), Nebraska state senator remain as clear as ever. I had a friend share with me a letter that Willa Cather wrote to her life partner, Edith Lewis. In it, Cather talked about watching the stars at night: “Edith,” she wrote, “we [humans] are the only wonderful things — because we can wonder.” It has always been a wonder to me to get to work in the Legislature, with all of my colleagues, and to have shared incredible successes and agonizing losses. What an absolute wonder to have had this opportunity. As my tenure came to an end this year, and I had an opportunity to deliver a parting speech to my colleagues, I talked about what I learned, and what had served me well during my eight years of service. Here are excerpts of that speech.

UNDERSTAND THE UPS AND DOWNS, AND BE RESILIENT

You will have a hard time in the legislature, and you will get close to losing your faith in yourself and humanity. Just know that as the poet Rainer Maria Rilke said, “No feeling is final.” You are far stronger than you know, and you get to decide how you will get back up from all of your challenges.

KEEP YOUR GOOD HUMOR DURING TOUGH MOMENTS

Try to remember to keep your good humor, even during tough moments, and to leave disagreements on the floor of the legislature. Don’t take them home with you, don’t put them on social media.

TAKE CARE OF EACH OTHER, AND REMAIN CIVIL

Remember that each person brings his or her own unique brand of magic to the work of the legislature. Each legislator is trying his or her best for constituents back home. Be kind to one another, and when you fight, do so with civility and grace.

APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE FOR 2021 BILLD PROGRAM

A pplications for the 26th annual Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development (BILLD) are now available. Designed for newer state and provincial legislators from the Midwest, the 2021 training program is scheduled to be held July 30-Aug. 3 in Minneapolis.

Graduates of the BILLD program are asked to help encourage colleagues in their first four years of legislative service to apply. Thirty-nine fellowships will be awarded through a competitive process overseen by the bipartisan BILLD Steering Committee. Fellowships cover the cost of tuition, lodging and meals, as well as a partial travel stipend. Visit csgmidwest.org for the application and more information.

Never forget that there are people who are depending on us to do this job well.

FOCUS ON THE WORK, AND HOW IMPORTANT IT IS

I was told early on, on the floor of our legislature, there are two kinds of people: workhorses and showhorses. Be a workhorse, become an expert in a specific area of law, and never forget that there are people who are depending on us to do this job well.

BE INTENTIONAL ABOUT THE LEGISLATIVE INSTITUTION

In this period of great change within our legislative institutions, it is important to be thoughtful about what the legislature means to us — and to our state. I believe the legislature isn’t one fixed thing. It can evolve, and individual members can all look at the work differently. But it’s important to decide what it means for us to uphold our highest values in the legislature and represent [our state] with dignity, integrity and civility.

Sixth BILLD Graduate Heads to Washington, D.C., and Congress

In November, Iowa Rep. Ashley Hinson (BILLD class of 2017) was elected to the U.S. Congress. As she prepares for this new position, Hinson reflected on how her state-level legislative experience will help.

“First, procedurally, I understand how to work a bill from inception to passage,” she said to CSG Midwest. “Second, I learned firsthand how to lead and run a committee, which will no doubt help me to prioritize how I navigate the political process. Third, I believe good federal policy should really take into context the impact on states and municipalities. Having the state legislative experience, I believe, will help me to have that full context of impact.”

Hinson was first elected to the Iowa House in 2016 and has been serving in Congress and were re-elected this fall. Hinson will join several other BILLD alumni who have been serving in Congress and were re-elected this fall.

• U.S. Rep. Adrian Smith, Nebraska (class of 2001)
• U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, Wisconsin (class of 1996)
In addition, U.S. Sen. Deb Fischer of Nebraska (class of 2005) was re-elected to her second term in 2018.

Hinson will join several other BILLD alumni who have been serving in Congress and were re-elected this fall.

• U.S. Rep. Adrian Smith, Nebraska (class of 2001)
• U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, Wisconsin (class of 1996)
In addition, U.S. Sen. Deb Fischer of Nebraska (class of 2005) was re-elected to her second term in 2018.

MOVES TO STATE TREASURER, LOCAL BOARDS, JUDGESHIP AND COURT CLERK

Other BILLD alumni also are assuming new elective office.

• North Dakota Rep. Thomas Beadle (class of 2013): North Dakota state treasurer
• Minnesota Rep. Laurie Halverson (class of 2015): Dakota County commissioner
• Nebraska Sen. Sara Howard (class of 2013): Omaha Public Power District board director
• Illinois Sen. Iris Martinez (class of 2006): Cook County Circuit Court clerk

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

Through the Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development, or BILLD, CSG Midwest provides annual training on leadership and professional development for newer state and provincial legislators from this region. This page provides information related to the BILLD program, leadership development and legislative leadership. CSG’s Midwestern Legislative Conference BILLD Steering Committee — a bipartisan group of state and provincial legislators from the Midwest — oversees the program, including the annual selection of BILLD Fellows.
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.

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 Midwestern Legislative Conference
CSG Henry Toll Fellowship Program
CSG National Conference
CSG Henry Toll Fellowship Program
CSG National Conference

Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus Annual Meeting
September 24-25, 2021 | Québec City, QC
Contact: Lisa Janairo – ljanairo@csg.org
630.925.1922 | greatlakeslegislators.org

Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus

CSG Events

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