

January 19, 2014

Internal Divisions



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The next issue of Capitol Journal will be available on February 2nd.

Top Story

Washington gridlock has driven both parties to the states to advance their agendas. But perhaps surprisingly, neither party is as unified as they might seem.

SNCJ Spotlight

States leave partisan fold on health care and the minimum wage

As the nation's capital resumes its customary political gridlock, both political parties are turning to the states to advance national agendas. In the process of doing so, however, they are finding that they are far from united within their own ranks.

Republicans in Washington want states to help them limit the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the singular

A Cannon Perspective



With Lou Cannon



this issue. Republican governors in Wyoming, Utah, Idaho, North Carolina, and Tennessee have said they will try to persuade their legislatures to accept funding for Medicaid expansion. Democratic governors in Pennsylvania and Montana will do the same. All of these legislatures are Republican controlled and generally more conservative than the governors, so the outcome is uncertain.

Typifying the practical approach of the state governors who want federal funds, Gov. Matt Mead (R) of Wyoming told *The Washington Post* that he thought the ACA was bad policy and unconstitutional, “but the courts said I was wrong.” Mead said since the ACA is law the question is: “How do we as a state make the best of it?”

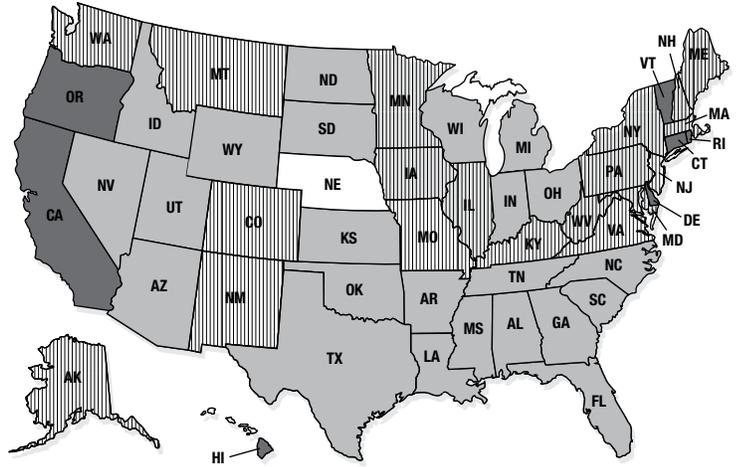
Brian Sandoval of Nevada, the only Republican governor to embrace Medicaid expansion from the outset, coasted to victory in November a state where the GOP also won control of the state senate. Joining GOP moderates in the legislature, Gov. Sandoval has proposed tax reform and revamping of education funding and appears to have the upper hand over conservatives opposed to any tax increase.

On an issue crucial to organized labor, Republicans have high hopes of expanding “right-to-work” legislation, which allows employees to opt out of joining a union. Twenty-four states have such laws, which have been or will be proposed in nine other states this year.

Even on this issue, though, Republicans are not entirely in synch. In Wisconsin, Gov. Scott Walker, who is said to have presidential ambitions, has called a right-to-work bill pending in the legislature a distraction. With the state facing a \$2.2 billion budget gap, Walker has also backed away from talk of cutting income taxes.

Democrats have internal divisions, too. The gun control movement cheered in November when Washington state voters approved an initiative strengthening background checks for gun buyers and rejected another initiative that would have weakened such checks. In the wake of this rare victory, advocates of “gun safety” — the term now favored by anti-gun groups — are rallying behind a similar initiative

Bird's eye view



Source: NCSL.org

Legend: Republican controlled state government (light gray), Democrat controlled government (dark gray), Divided government (vertical lines), Other (white)

GOP holds distinct edge in state government control

Primarily as a result of the November elections, Republicans now control both the governor's office and legislature in 23 states, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. The GOP also holds the governor's office in Nebraska, which has a unicameral Legislature that is officially nonpartisan. Democrats have total control of the state government in only 7 states. Government control is divided in the remaining 19 states.





that has qualified for the 2016 ballot in Nevada and pushing for initiatives in Arizona, Maine, and Oregon.

So far, however, relatively few Democratic officeholders have signed on to these gun-safety efforts. Perhaps they remember that two Democratic state senators in Colorado who supported tighter gun laws after the 2012 Aurora movie theater massacre were recalled by the voters following well-financed campaigns by pro-gun groups.

In contrast, Democrats even in Republican strongholds are rushing to board the bandwagon for increasing the minimum wage. Twenty-nine states now pay more than the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour, which President Obama has vainly tried to raise to \$10.10. Democratic legislators in Indiana and Kansas have submitted bills in 2015 that would raise the minimum wage in their states.

This is an issue where the people have galloped ahead of the politicians. Last year 21 states and the District of Columbia raised the minimum wage through legislative or voter action. Except in Congress, where the Republican majority remains opposed, the issue is no longer partisan. Last November, for example, voters in Arkansas, Alaska, Nebraska and South Dakota overwhelmingly approved ballot measures to raise the minimum wage at the same time they were sending Republicans to the U.S. Senate and other important offices.

At least a residue of bipartisan support remains for Common Core, the national education standards adopted by 46 states and the District of Columbia over the past few years, even though conservatives opposed to the plan seek to make it a partisan issue. Among prospective Republican presidential candidates, only Jeb Bush supports Common Core. Opposition from conservatives and community groups led three states — Indiana, Oklahoma and South Carolina — to drop out of the program.

Climate change is another, and more partisan, front. National Republicans appear largely aligned with their state counterparts in contesting the reach of the Environmental Protection Agency, which in the absence of new legislation has proposed state-by-state targets for reducing carbon emissions. A dozen states, cheered on by Republicans in Congress, have challenged the proposed EPA regulations in federal court.

The culture wars also continue in the states, although partisan lines have blurred on same-sex marriage, now legal in 36 states. This represents a sea change in the law and public attitudes; a decade ago Massachusetts was the only state where same-sex marriage was legal.

Abortion is another matter. Since Republicans flexed their muscles in the 2010 legislative elections, GOP-controlled states have passed more than 200 restrictions on abortion and more are likely this year. Measures to ban abortions after 20 weeks

Upcoming elections

(1/16/2014 - 2/06/2014)

01/27/2015

Florida Special Primary
House Districts 17 and 24
Senate District 6

02/03/2015

Georgia Runoff
House Districts 50 and 120



of pregnancy are given strong chances of passing in South Carolina, Wisconsin and West Virginia. Tennessee voters in 2014 gave the legislature powers to regulate abortion. State House Speaker Beth Harwell (R) said her chamber will take up measures requiring mandatory counseling, a waiting period and stricter inspection of abortion clinics.

So overall, it's fair to say that recognizable party lines on several issues continue to exist in Washington D.C. and many states. But voters and those who represent them in state legislatures are not automatons who dial up prepared meals from partisan menus. On the vital issues of education, health care, and the minimum wage, there's still plenty of independent thinking in the states.

— *By Lou Cannon*

Budget & taxes

SUPREME COURT TO DECIDE FATE OF CO TABOR: Colorado's Taxpayer's Bill of Rights — requiring lawmakers to obtain voter approval to raise taxes and to issue refunds to taxpayers when revenues grow faster than inflation and population growth — has survived repeated challenges since it was approved by the state's voters in 1992. But the fate of the law is now in the hands of the U.S. Supreme Court.

The justices are scheduled this month to consider whether to hear a lawsuit originally filed in 2011 alleging that TABOR denies the Colorado government its “authority to tax” and, consequently, violates the U.S. Constitution's mandate that each state have “a republican form of government,” in which the governing is done by elected representatives rather than directly by the people.

“Colorado is the *only* state in the history of the Republic to strip its state and local elected officials of the power to tax and so limit their ability to spend,” the plaintiffs, who include Democrats Sen. Andy Kerr and House Speaker Dickey Lee Hullinghorst, wrote in their filings with the court.

Ilya Shapiro of the Cato Institute, which filed a brief last year opposing the plaintiff's argument, said the “republican” angle isn't one that “comes up too often” with “serious plaintiffs.” But he admits it's been pretty successful so far.

“The fact that it is a serious [question] with good lawyers on both sides, and that [the lawsuit] has gone this far, is notable in itself,” he said.

Attorneys for the state have asserted the plaintiffs are attempting to defy the will of the people.

“The People of Colorado have chosen to maintain a direct voice in the state’s tax policy and overall level of appropriations. Plaintiffs here challenge that choice and ask the federal courts to undo it,” they wrote in their court filings.

Gov. John Hickenlooper (D) appears to have mixed feelings about TABOR, saying last month that he supports refunding taxpayers the up to \$200 million they could be entitled to this year under the law but bemoaning the bind the law puts on the state’s budget.

“I’m not saying we should get rid of TABOR,” the governor said. “I think people should have the right to vote. But they need to have the facts. Inflation plus population growth doesn’t solve all the fiscal challenges we need.” (DENVER POST, LEXISNEXIS STATE NET)

ADDICTION TREATMENT COULD BE KEY TO KEEPING MEDICAID COSTS DOWN: Pregnant women, children, the elderly and the disabled have long made up the bulk of Medicaid beneficiaries. But as a result of the expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, younger and more able-bodied adults have been enrolling in the program. And one striking characteristic of that new population is its higher rate of drug and alcohol addiction.

As of May, the number of new Medicaid beneficiaries in California who had signed up for addiction services was up 30 percent. The number of adults receiving addiction treatment at Medicaid facilities in Washington doubled in the first six months of the year. And the number of Medicaid enrollees receiving such treatment nationwide could more than double, from 1.5 million to about 4 million, within the next five years.

The silver lining for states is that there is mounting evidence addiction treatment can dramatically lower physical health care costs for people with substance abuse problems. And with addiction treatment part of the overall plan for Medicaid, states can potentially improve health outcomes and reduce costs by better integrating physical and behavioral health.

“We’re at the point where we’re actually treating substance use illness the way we treat other illnesses,” said Art Schut, CEO of Arapahoe House, the leading provider of drug and alcohol addiction services in Colorado. “There’s a realization in the commercial and public marketplace that health outcomes are important and that SUD [substance use disorder] treatment contributes significantly to overall health. It’s transformational for health care, not just substance use.” (STATELINE.ORG)

BUDGETS IN BRIEF: The GOP-controlled WASHINGTON Senate adopted a rule last week requiring a two-thirds vote to bring bills creating new taxes to the floor for a final vote. Raising an existing tax still requires only a simple majority vote (NORTHWEST PUBLIC RADIO). • NEW JERSEY will receive a federal grant of as much as \$29.4 million to help provide job training for unemployed casino workers



in Atlantic City, according to the state’s congressional delegation. The city lost four of its 12 casinos last year due to increased competition from gambling operations in neighboring states (NJ.COM). • **MAINE** Gov. Paul LePage (R) vowed to cut income taxes, reform welfare and reduce the size of the state’s government over the next four years in his inaugural speech this month. “The people of Maine have told us that they want us to keep reforming government, they want better jobs, they want welfare reform, they want lower energy costs, lower taxes,” he said. “They want a smaller, more efficient state government” (PORTLAND PRESS HERALD). • Last week **NEW MEXICO** Gov. Susana Martinez (R) proposed a \$6.3 billion budget, calling for a \$141 million, or 2.3 percent increase in state spending. Martinez said despite the state’s uncertain revenue picture, education and job-creation programs need to be bolstered (ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL NEWS, LEXISNEXIS STATE NET).

In case you missed it

California Gov. Jerry Brown started his historic fourth term with a call for the Golden State to strengthen its green agenda. In case you missed it, the story can be found on our Web site at http://www.statenet.com/capitol_journal/01-12-2015/html#snj_spotlight

— *Compiled by KOREY CLARK*

Politics & leadership

DEMOCRATIC DEFECTIONS IN NC: A couple of weeks ago, North Carolina state Rep. Paul Tine changed his political party designation from Democrat to unaffiliated.

“Independent fits for me, and I think when you look at voter registration, it’s fitting for a lot of people,” he said, adding, “I don’t expect that I’m starting a movement.”

Tine may be wrong about that. With Republicans holding supermajorities in both chambers, other moderate Democrats may follow his lead in the belief they’ll be able to “get more done,” as he put it.

Rep. Ken Waddell is one such Democrat who said he hasn’t ruled out such a switch.

“I always keep my options open,” he said. “Most of the constituents I have in my rural area are conservative Democrats that are somewhat dismayed with some of the positions that the national Democratic Party has taken.”

The House doesn’t have many moderate Democrats to spare. There are only about a half-dozen in the chamber, down from over a dozen four years ago.

Waddell said Democratic lawmakers need to widen their appeal.

“Democrats always had a big tent,” he said. “We need to get back to that.”

But Rep. Ken Goodman (D) said the way legislative districts are drawn, with few lawmakers in either party at risk of losing their seats, there’s not much incentive for moderation or compromise.

“The Republicans do not have to run toward the center to get elected, and the Democrats don’t either,” he said. “I think that’s bad for good government.” (NEWS OBSERVER [RALEIGH])

GRAND JURY RECOMMENDS CRIMINAL CHARGES FOR PA AG

KANE: A special prosecutor and grand jury has recommended that Pennsylvania AG Kathleen Kane (D) face criminal charges for allegedly leaking secret information to a newspaper. The grand jury’s recommendation stems from a 2010 investigation of the theft of \$220,000 in state grants by two employees of a Philadelphia nonprofit and a grand jury investigation by then-AG Tom Corbett (R) of their boss, J Whyatt Mondesire, that didn’t result in any charges. A new grand jury investigation of the Mondesire case was prompted last year by the leak of a memo to the *Daily News* outlining details of the original grand jury probe. Kane has acknowledged that her office was the source of that leak, but her lawyer maintains that she is not bound by grand jury secrecy laws in the case because she was not in office at the time of the original investigation.

“The attorney general has done nothing wrong or illegal and, to my knowledge, there is no credible evidence that she has,” attorney Lanny J. Davis, said in a statement this month.

The leak isn’t the only controversy of Kane’s tenure. Last year the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that she secretly shut down an undercover “sting” that had caught Philadelphia elected officials accepting bribes.

But if Kane is ultimately charged, it would mark a stunning turnaround from the landslide election victory in 2012 that made her the first woman and Democrat elected attorney general in the state. (PENNLIVE.COM, ASSOCIATED PRESS, PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, MORNING CALL [ALLENTOWN])

WV PARTY CHAIRMEN ALSO LOBBYISTS: A week after leaving then-West Virginia Gov. Joe Manchin’s (D) staff in early 2010, Larry Puccio became a lobbyist. Five months after that, he was elected chairman of West Virginia’s Democratic Party. Conrad Lucas, chairman of that state’s Republican Party since 2012, registered as a lobbyist in early December.

Such arrangements are rare nationally. Of the 101 state party chairs in the 50 states (South Dakota’s Republican Party has co-chairs), only two others — John Daniello, chairman of Delaware’s Democratic Party, and Kim Vanneman, co-chairwoman of South Dakota’s Republican Party — are active registered lobbyists.

Craig Holman, government affairs lobbyist for the Washington D.C.-based, non-partisan think tank Public Citizen, said the dual roles are a conflict of interest.

“One could very reasonably ask which master is the chairman more obligated to, the party or his or her paying clients,” he said. “The interest of the paying clients may not be the same as the interest of the political party.”



But Puccio and Lucas point out that in their state, party chairman is an unpaid position, and neither of them is the first in that position to double as a lobbyist. (CHARLESTON GAZETTE)

POLITICS IN BRIEF: A pair of Democratic **MISSISSIPPI** lawmakers — Reps. Tom Miles and Michael Evans — have proposed a bill to make the Bible the official state book. “Me and my constituents, we were talking about it and one of them made a comment that people ought to start reading the Bible,” said Evans (AL. COM). • A bill introduced in **NORTH DAKOTA** (HB 1157) would allow elected public officials with a valid concealed weapons license to carry a gun in the Capitol and other public buildings. The bill’s primary sponsor, Rep. Ben Koppelman (R), said the bill was motivated by the Oct. 22, 2014 shootings at the Canadian parliament in Ottawa (GRAND FORKS HERALD, LEXISNEXIS STATE NET). • **MAINE** Rep. Stanley Short (D) plans to sponsor a bill this session that would make it more difficult for out-of-state residents to work on citizen initiative drives. The bill was reportedly spurred by the failed bid last year to ban certain methods of bear hunting statewide, a campaign funded mostly by The Humane Society, which recruited out-of-state workers to get the question on the ballot (PORTLAND PRESS HERALD).

— *Compiled by KOREY CLARK*

Governors

RAUNER ORDERS IL SPENDING FREEZE: New Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner’s (R) first few days in office were anything but dull. Rauner, who replaced Democrat Pat Quinn on Monday, issued new rules for both public employees and lobbyists, met with lawmakers and vowed to undo a long list of actions Quinn took before leaving office.

Rauner’s first directive, Executive Order 15-08, imposed a freeze on all state agency hiring and discretionary spending and ordered the sale of all surplus state property. He issued a second order, EO 15-09, which bars state employees from negotiating to become a lobbyist while still employed by the state. It also imposes new disclosure requirements on state workers, including if they, their spouse or children own 5 percent or more of a property the state has a financial interest in. Last Thursday, Rauner issued a third order (EO 15-10) that requires most state employees to be listed on a state website.

Rauner also took steps to reverse dozens of appointments and hires Quinn made in the closing weeks of his administration.



“We have too much evidence that he was not making decisions that were good for the people for the long term,” Rauner told reporters. “It’s been clear that there has been some inappropriate decisions.”

Rauner said he would also disclose more about his personal finances but declined to say if he would comply with another of Quinn’s late executive orders that requires Prairie State governors to make public their entire income tax returns before May 1 each year as part of the statement of economic interests they must file. (CHICAGO SUN-TIMES, CHICAGO TRIBUNE)

DEAL PROPOSES STATE INTERVENTION

IN STRUGGLING SCHOOLS: Georgia Gov.

Nathan Deal (R) has proposed giving the state power to take over failing public schools. Doing so would require lawmakers to pass a constitutional amendment, with voters getting the final say in the 2016 election. Under Georgia law, schools are considered to be failing if they received D or F grades for three consecutive years, a designation that currently applies to approximately one in every four Peach State schools.

Deal also proposed a slight increase in school funding and said he would appoint a commission made up of parents, teachers and lawmakers to update the state’s formula for how that money is dispersed. But he said more money alone is not the solution to improving bad schools.

“More money without fundamental changes in the delivery system will not alter the results; it will only make state and local taxpayers greater enablers of chronic failure,” he said. (ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION, FLORIDA TIMES-UNION)

CUOMO PONDERING GRANDY JURY REFORMS: New York Gov.

Andrew Cuomo (D) said he is meeting with people from both law enforcement and the community to consider ways to make the Empire State grand jury system more transparent. Some media outlets have reported he is weighing the possibility of lifting grand jury secrecy in cases involving residents who are killed by police, but Cuomo said he has not settled on any one proposal.

“I’m looking for a way to provide more confidence in the criminal justice system,” Cuomo told reporters. “[Secrecy] was designed for obvious protections, but the challenge for us is how do you have transparency so people can understand what went on, and it’s not a black box — people can see what happened without violating individuals’ rights to protections? That’s what we’re working through.”

Cuomo is expected to introduce criminal justice reform during his joint State of the State/budget address this week. (NEW YORK DAILY NEWS)

In the hopper

At any given time, State Net tracks tens of thousands of bills in all 50 states, the US Congress and the District of Columbia. Here’s a snapshot of what’s in the legislative works:

Number of 2015 Prefiles last week: 3824

Number of Intros last week: 11,182

Number of Enacted/Adopted last week: 446

Number of 2015 Prefiles to date: 4409

Number of 2015 Enacted/Adopted overall to date: 528

Number of bills currently in State Net Database: 33,546

— Compiled By DENA BLODGETT
(measures current as of 1/13/2015)
Source: State Net database



LAWMAKERS ELECT SHUMLIN TO NEW TERM: Vermont lawmakers re-elected incumbent Gov. Pete Shumlin (D) last week. Shumlin defeated Republican challenger Scott Milne and Libertarian Dan Feliciano, garnering 110 votes to Milne's 69. Feliciano did not receive a vote. The decision fell to lawmakers after no candidate received at least 50 percent of the vote in the November general election. (BURLINGTON FREE PRESS, POLITICO)

GOVERNORS IN BRIEF: Faced with ongoing scrutiny over his fiancée's consulting work, **OREGON** Gov. John Kitzhaber (D) and fiancée Cylvia Hayes have hired attorneys to represent them in an investigation by the Oregon Government Ethics Commission. The governor said he and Hayes would both cooperate fully with any investigations into whether she inappropriately used her connection to him to bolster her business (KGW.COM [PORTLAND]). • **SOUTH DAKOTA** Gov. Dennis Daugaard (R) has thrown his support behind a bill that would overhaul the state's juvenile justice system by placing focus on diversion programs over state jail time (ARGUS LEADER [SIOUX FALLS]). • **WISCONSIN** Gov. Scott Walker (R) used his State of the State speech last week to propose merging two state economic development agencies, the public-private Wisconsin Economic Development Corp. and the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority. He also urged lawmakers to combine the state Department of Financial Institutions and state Department of Safety and Professional Services into a "one-stop shop for professional and financial services" (WISCONSIN STATE JOURNAL [MADISON]).

— *Compiled by RICH EHISEN*

Hot issues

B **BUSINESS: MICHIGAN** Gov. Rick Snyder (R) signs House Bills 4882 and 5421, which together allow homeowners facing financial hardship to use a payment plan to meet tax responsibilities and avoid foreclosure and further allow county treasurers to waive additional monthly interest accrued in delinquent tax cases once the payment plan is completed (LEXIS NEXIS STATE NET, MICHIGAN GOVERNOR'S OFFICE). • Also in **MICHIGAN**, Gov. Snyder signs HB 5418, which allows employers to give hiring preference to military veterans (LEXIS NEXIS STATE NET, MICHIGAN GOVERNOR'S OFFICE). • Staying in **MICHIGAN**, Snyder signs SB 730, which requires certified food safety managers in licensed food establishments, to take a training course with an allergen awareness component. Requiring this training will better protect patrons from severe life-threatening allergic reactions (LEXIS NEXIS STATE NET, MICHIGAN GOVERNOR'S OFFICE).



CRIME: MICHIGAN Gov. Rick Snyder (R) signs SB 1140, which clarifies that anyone involved with stealing a vehicle, whether driving or not, is not entitled to personal injury insurance benefits (LEXIS NEXIS STATE NET, MICHIGAN GOVERNOR’S OFFICE). • Also in **MICHIGAN**, Gov. Snyder vetoes SB 789, which would have allowed someone who is the subject of a personal protection order to obtain a concealed pistol license (LEXIS NEXIS STATE NET, MICHIGAN GOVERNOR’S OFFICE).

Upcoming stories

Here are some of the topics you may see covered in upcoming issues of the *State Net Capitol Journal*:

- **Common Core**
- **State worker exodus**
- **Legalizing pot**

EDUCATION: MICHIGAN Gov. Rick Snyder (R) signs SB 74, which adds cyberbullying to the forms of harassment specifically barred under the state’s anti-bullying law. The law defines cyberbullying as any form of electronic communication intended to harm or harass another person. Wolverine State schools have six months to work an anti-cyberbullying policy into their current anti-bullying policies (MLIVE.COM). • Also in **MICHIGAN**, Snyder signs HB 5669, which allows private school teachers to receive the same credit for professional development as do public school instructors (MICHIGAN GOVERNOR’S OFFICE).

ENVIRONMENT: MICHIGAN Gov. Rick Snyder (R) signs a series of bills (SBs 795, 796, 797, 799 and 800) that collectively increase fines and penalties for anyone caught possessing, transporting and introducing non-native plant or animal species into the Wolverine State ecosystems, particularly lakes and rivers (LEXIS NEXIS STATE NET, MICHIGAN GOVERNOR’S OFFICE). • Staying in **MICHIGAN**, Snyder also vetoes SB 78, which would have barred the state Department of Natural Resources from designating certain public and private lands as biodiversity stewardship areas. Such designations would allow the state to limit activities in those areas that threaten native species (DETROIT NEWS).

HEALTH & SCIENCE: MICHIGAN Gov. Rick Snyder (R) signs SB 879, a bill that requires radiologists to provide patients with written summaries of a mammogram, including about breast density (LEXIS NEXIS STATE NET, MICHIGAN GOVERNOR’S OFFICE). • Also in **MICHIGAN**, Gov. Snyder signs SB 1033, which allows health care providers an alternative to commercial insurance by letting them contract directly with a patient, without regulatory oversight (LEXIS NEXIS STATE NET, MICHIGAN GOVERNOR’S OFFICE). • Staying in **MICHIGAN**, Gov. Snyder signs HB 4736, which allows doctors treating a patient for a sexually transmitted disease to also prescribe medications for the patient’s sexual partner in order to prevent reinfection (LEXIS NEXIS STATE NET, MICHIGAN GOVERNOR’S OFFICE).



SOCIAL POLICY: The United States Supreme Court declines to hear a case seeking to overturn a **LOUISIANA** law barring same-sex marriage. A challenge to the law is still being heard in the Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals (**TIMES-PICAYUNE [NEW ORLEANS]**). • **MAINE** Attorney General Janet Mills (D) gives final approval to a Pine Tree State law allowing welfare officials to drug test applicants who have been convicted of drug-related felonies in the last 20 years. Opponents of the law are weighing a lawsuit to attempt to stop it from being implemented (**ASSOCIATED PRESS**).

POTPOURRI: Outgoing **ILLINOIS** Gov. Pat Quinn (D) vetoes HB 4226, which would have ended a four-decade ban on the hunting of bobcats in the Prairie State (**CHICAGO TRIBUNE**). • **MICHIGAN** Gov. Rick Snyder (R) signs a pair of bills (HBs 5045 and 5636) that together allow villages, cities or townships with a population under 30,000, by resolution, to permit golf carts to be driven on streets and excludes golf carts, commercial quadricycles and power-driven mobility devices from the list of motor vehicles requiring no-fault auto insurance (**LEXIS NEXIS STATE NET, MICHIGAN GOVERNOR'S OFFICE**).

— Compiled by *RICH EHISEN*

Once around the statehouse lightly

FROM RATS TO ROACHES: If you think that after the wave of malfeasance in the California Senate last year that all the dirty, greasy stuff is contained in legislative chambers, think again. As the *Sacramento Bee* reports, health inspectors recently shut down Griselda's World Café, the eatery located in the Capitol's basement. After failing two inspections in which inspectors found roaches, excessive grease buildup and other health violations, the café finally passed a third inspection. That wasn't enough for Capitol administrators, who ordered the eatery to remain closed until further notice. Altogether now: Oooooohhh!

MY CAP IS BETTER THAN YOUR CAP: In case you are pondering using your vacation time to visit a state capital, you should know they are not all created equal. In fact, as the *USA Today* reports, some are downright spiffy places to hang out. The top of the list, according to a reader survey, is Carson City, the hub of Nevada state government. Top perks for voters include the city's affordable food and lodging and proximity to great resort areas like Lake Tahoe and Reno. Carson City



nudged out runner-up Juneau, Alaska, third place Little Rock, Arkansas and fourth place Boise, Idaho. Cockroaches in the actual Capitol building notwithstanding, Sacramento came in fifth. No word on the worst capital cities to visit.

WOODY WOULD HAVE APPROVED: Getting elected to a second term as governor is a big deal, no doubt about it. But in Ohio, nothing is bigger than the Ohio State Buckeyes playing for the college football national championship. To his credit, Gov. John Kasich gets it. Which is why when the Buckeyes landed a spot in last Monday's title game, he promised that attendees of his inaugural gala — also on Monday — wouldn't miss a minute of the game. As the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* reports, Kasich was true to his word. The party hall was fitted with six big screen televisions as well as a 14 X 8 foot projection screen, all featuring the game. Kasich basically stayed out of the way, offering a brief speech at halftime and otherwise holding off on his official swearing-in and any other pomp and circumstance until after the game.

RHYME TIME AT THE FINISH LINE: The earth moved in California last week, but it was only a political earthquake rather than a real geological trembler. More accurately, the earth moved twice: once when United States Sen. Barbara Boxer announced she would not seek another term in 2016 and the other when a small army of Golden State politicians began tripping over themselves to announce either they would or would not be seeking her job. Love her or hate her — and there are plenty in both camps — few can top the ever-flamboyant Boxer for how she announced her long-awaited decision: in a three-minute video on her website in which she is interviewed by her oldest grandson. After the big reveal, she ended the video with a rhyme — no, really — in which she vows not to retire but to keep working on progressive issues through her PAC. You can't make this stuff up.

AND THEN THERE'S THIS: Recently termed-out Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer has apparently never warmed up to new Gov. Doug Ducey, a fellow Republican but not the guy she initially backed in the GOP primary last year. (That would be Mesa mayor Scott Smith, who lost out to Ducey in that election.) How chilly is her relationship with the new gov? Well, as the *Washington Post* reports, Brewer last week opted for the first time in 33 years to forgo attending the gov's State of the State address. But at least she had a great reason: she went out for some ice cream instead. Brrrrr...

— By RICH EHISEN



Editor: Rich Ehsen — capj@statenet.com
Associate Editor: Korey Clark — capj@statenet.com
Contributing Editors: Mary Peck
Editorial Advisor: Lou Cannon
Correspondents: Richard Cox (CA), Steve Karas (CA), James Ross (CA), Lauren Davis (MA), Ben Livingood (PA), Cathy Santsche (CA) and Felicia Carrillo (CA)

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