

STATE AND LOCAL UPDATE**October 4, 2018****Policy and Politics****I. Trending Topics****Issue in Focus**

FORMER IOWA GOVERNOR WEIGHS IN: In the Des Moines Register, **U.S. AMBASSADOR TO CHINA TERRY BRANSTAD** [writes](#): "In disseminating its propaganda, China's government is availing itself of America's cherished tradition of free speech and a free press by placing a paid advertisement in the Des Moines Register. In contrast, at the newsstand down the street here in Beijing, you will find limited dissenting voices and will not see any true reflection of the disparate opinions that the Chinese people may have on China's troubling economic trajectory, given that media is under the firm thumb of the Chinese Communist Party. Even in the case of this op-ed, one of China's most prominent newspapers dodged the offer to publish."

A. BUDGETS, TAXES, & REVENUE

STATE BUSINESS TAX CLIMATE INDEX RELEASED: The Tax Foundation's [State Business Tax Climate Index](#) enables business leaders, government policymakers, and taxpayers to gauge how their states' tax systems compare. While there are many ways to show how much is collected in taxes by state governments, the Index is designed to show how well states structure their tax systems and provides a road map for improvement. See this year's report [here](#).

SOUTHERN STATES DOMINATE: The 2018 Top States for Doing Business [continue](#) to be dominated by Southern States with Georgia topping the list for the fifth year, and Texas, Tennessee, and South Carolina remaining in the top five. Alabama moved into the top five, edging out Louisiana, which remained in the top 10. From 2017 to 2018 the top 10 only changed slightly, with Florida moving from 12th to 10th place and edging Ohio out of the top 10. One observation is that most of the top states have aggressive utility economic development programs, such as TVA, FPL, the SC Power Team, and Georgia Power. This is important as these states have resources other than the state and local EDO that can provide additional funding and assistance with site development, incentives, and other programs.

ONLINE SALES TAX TAKES EFFECT IN THESE STATES: New taxes on e-commerce sales [went](#) into effect Monday in 10 states, making online shopping a little more costly for many consumers. A Supreme Court ruling in June gave states the green light to impose sales taxes on e-commerce companies, even if they don't have stores or warehouses within the state's borders. The case, South Dakota vs. Wayfair, made it likely that consumers would pay more for online purchases from out-of-state retailers. Several states, including Hawaii, Tennessee and Vermont, began collecting online sales taxes in July, according to the [Tax Foundation](#). Mississippi's taxes took effect in September. On Oct. 1, online sales taxes arrived in 10 more states: Alabama, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, North Dakota, Washington and Wisconsin. Colorado announced last month that it will begin requiring e-commerce businesses to collect sales taxes on Nov. 1, joining North Carolina. Connecticut's online sales taxes begin Dec. 1. Georgia, Iowa, Louisiana, Nebraska and Utah plan to start the clock on internet sales taxes on Jan. 1, 2019, the Tax Foundation said. In most states, new online sales taxes apply to companies with a minimum amount of annual sales revenue or transactions in the state.

STATES, CITIES REVERSE POSITIONS ON RED-LIGHT, SPEED CAMERAS: Have you had it with red-light and speed cameras? You're not alone; a growing number of states and cities are getting restless too. Several states have [moved](#) to

get rid of the cameras or squelch their use in local communities as complaints pour in from drivers who think the cameras are there to reap revenue rather than prevent accidents. The use of cameras has never survived a referendum, according to the National Motorists Association, a consumer group. But the insurance industry has fought back, pitting its own studies against others about the cameras' impact on traffic safety.

MOST STATES LACK RESERVES TO WEATHER NEXT RECESSION: While U.S. states' financial health has strengthened in 2018 compared with last year, [fewer](#) than half have enough financial reserves to weather the first year of a moderate recession, according to an S&P Global Ratings report. Only 20 states have the reserves needed to operate for the first year of an economic downturn without having to slash budgets or raise taxes, S&P said.

B. HEALTHCARE & INSURANCE

COURTS FORCE STATES TO PROVIDE COSTLY HELP C TREATMENT: A series of recent court rulings and settlements, [including](#) one last week in Indiana, have found that states cannot withhold potentially life-saving but expensive medications from Medicaid beneficiaries and prison inmates who have chronic hepatitis C. Hepatitis C [kills far more Americans](#) than any other infectious disease. But when new antiviral drugs that for the first time promised a cure for hepatitis C hit the market in 2014, states blanched at their eye-popping prices and took steps to sharply limit the availability of those treatments for Medicaid beneficiaries and inmates. According to one recent survey, only 3 percent of inmates in state penitentiaries with hepatitis C receive the cure. The antiviral drugs have since become cheaper, but judicial decisions and settlements have consistently found that states cannot deny treatment because of cost in any case. In the latest ruling, U.S. District Judge Jane Magnus-Stinson, chief judge of the U.S. Southern District of Indiana, said that withholding or delaying treatment from hepatitis C-infected inmates was unconstitutional, amounting to cruel and unusual punishment in violation of the Eighth Amendment. The U.S. Constitution requires state penitentiaries to provide health care to prisoners. The ruling follows a similar decision in Florida last year and settlements reached this year in Massachusetts and Colorado that require correctional systems in those states to provide treatment to virtually all infected inmates. Colorado has set aside \$41 million over two years to treat all inmates with the virus. Similar lawsuits are pending in Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Missouri and Tennessee.

C. ECONOMY, TRADE & INFRASTRUCTURE

WHICH STATES ARE VOTING ON TRANSPORTATION FUNDING THIS YEAR? Gas taxes may be the most practical way to raise money for transportation, but they can also be politically perilous. That's why transportation advocates are closely [watching](#) four statewide ballot measures this November that would affect fuel taxes or transportation funding. The questions that voters in California, Colorado, Missouri and Utah face are all the more contentious because they deal directly with issues that have stymied lawmakers for months, and in most cases, years. It is unusual to see as many statewide ballot measures on transportation funding; local measures are much more common. But these four statewide transportation questions could be in reaction to a growing willingness by state lawmakers to raise taxes or find other sources of new money to improve roads and other infrastructure. Over the last six years, 31 states have increased revenues for transportation, according to Joung Lee, the policy director for the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. Putting transportation funding questions to voters can be risky, at least for advocates hoping for more infrastructure money. Voters tend to respond viscerally to gas tax increases because it's easier for them to calculate how much more they'd be paying compared to, say, changes to property tax levies or income tax rates. That's because the federal government and most states use simple per-gallon taxes for motor fuels.

D. EDUCATION & THE ENVIRONMENT

ARE STATES PROVIDING ADEQUATE FINANCIAL LITERACY EDUCATION? Young people in America face an economic landscape marked by increasingly expensive higher education costs, more frequent job changes, and greater personal responsibility for retirement savings. It is more important than ever that youth are financially literate in order to navigate the many difficult decisions they will face during their lifetimes. Unfortunately, levels of financial literacy are persistently low among American youth. Brookings [conducted](#) a review of large-scale public and private efforts to provide financial education to students from kindergarten through high school. The main goal of this review was to identify gaps in access to high-quality financial education. In order to do this, we first select a set of criteria to evaluate state-level financial education.

What We Are Reading

AMERICANS AREN'T PRACTICING DEMOCRACY ANYMORE: Yoni Appelbaum [writes](#) in The Atlantic: "As the procedures that once conferred legitimacy on organizations have grown alien to many Americans, contempt for democratic institutions has risen...To stop the rot afflicting American government, Americans are going to have to get back in the habit of democracy...It is worth reengaging all Americans in the governance of daily life, even if that means sacrificing some degree of efficiency, and displacing expert administrators with elected amateurs. The American system of government functions properly only when embedded in a culture deeply committed to democracy; that culture sustains the Constitution, not the other way around."

FEDERAL COURT UPHOLDS NUCLEAR ZERO-CARBON SUBSIDIES: Two federal appeals courts have now [upheld](#) state nuclear power plant subsidies, and in doing so, they have also helped to solidify the legal footing for state renewable energy programs across the country. The decision from the [U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit](#) found that New York's Zero Emissions Credit (ZEC) program, designed to support the state's struggling nuclear power plants and keep their zero-carbon power, does not interfere with federal jurisdiction over interstate energy markets. This ruling is the [second in as many weeks](#), where a federal court on September 13 rejected a challenge to a similar law in Illinois. In both cases, the challenge came from the Electric Power Supply Association, a trade group for power plant owners.

E. TECHNOLOGY & PROCUREMENT

DOJ, STATE AGs DISCUSS CONSUMER PROTECTION ON SOCIAL MEDIA: The U.S. Justice Department [held](#) a "listening session" with officials from more than a dozen states to discuss consumer protection and the technology industry. The meeting, first announced on Sept. 5, was called by Attorney General Jeff Sessions to discuss whether social media companies have intentionally stifled "the free exchange of ideas." It followed criticisms by President Donald Trump of social media outlets, alleging unfair treatment of conservatives.

LOUISIANA AG PUSHES FOR CRACKDOWN, TECH BREAKUP: Louisiana **ATTORNEY GENERAL JEFF LANDRY** [wants](#) the federal government to do to the social media firms what it did to Standard Oil in 1911. Landry, president of the National Association of Attorneys General, had spent months with his colleagues probing what they described as anti-competitive practices by Facebook, Google and Twitter, according to the paper. The decision to push for a break-up of the social media companies came after Landry and his fellow attorneys general heard many complaints that companies routinely froze out conservative views, deliberately or accidentally, The Advocate [reported](#).

UBER TO PAY \$148 MILLION IN SETTLEMENT OVER 2016 DATA BREACH: Uber Technologies Inc. will [pay](#) \$148 million to settle claims related to a large-scale data breach that exposed the personal information of more than [25 million](#) of its U.S. users. The [settlement](#), spanning all 50 states and the District of Columbia, is the biggest data-breach payout in history, and marks the most sweeping rebuke by regulators against the San Francisco-based company, which earned a reputation for skirting rules in its push to dominate the ride-hailing market. The states' agreement stemmed from data compromised in 2016 by hackers, who obtained 607,000 U.S. driver's license numbers as well as tens of millions of consumer email addresses and phone numbers, a leak that Uber failed to disclose for more than a year after discovering the attack.

STATE-LEVEL POLICY FOR COMP. SCI. EDUCATION GROWS: With strong policy support, [adoption](#) of computer science curriculums for K-12 students continues its steady rise, though availability in some states remains scarce, according to a report published this week by Seattle-based nonprofit Code.org. The group's [2018 report](#) provides an overview of state edtech policy and how those policies are being implemented to achieve its ultimate goal of introducing technology skills to students early on, preparing them for an increasingly technology-based workforce. The report shows that 44 states have enacted at least one policy that brings computer science education to students. As a point of reference, the group points to its founding date of 2013, when just 14 states and Washington D.C. had one or more computer science education policies in place.

NASCIO PUTS 'FOUR FORCES' IDEA TO WORK: For years, the National Association of State Chief Information Officers has [published](#) linear lists that present the priorities and technologies that are most important to state IT leaders. But this year, the association shared in [a report](#), it's taking a "fresh approach" to recommendations that have guided state IT organizations nationwide. Rather than publish simple 1-through-10 lists, NASCIO says it will now reframe the priorities faced by CIOs through the lens of "four forces" — political, customer, market, and inertial. The idea was first [presented by NASCIO in April](#) with the recognition that state CIOs in 2018 are increasingly acting as brokers or orchestrators of services that must work at the intersection of competing interests inside state government. The notion is based on NASCIO's most recent survey data, which shows that 85 percent of state CIOs reported seeing themselves as brokers of services, with the remainder admitting a transition toward that model is already underway.

F. FEDERAL/STATE RELATIONS

STATES, CITIES BATTLE FOR CONTROL OF 5G REACHES FCC: The arrival of 5G [represents](#) a major advancement in wireless technology. It's expected to provide speeds at least 10 times faster than the typical 4G connection that many places now have. Testing is underway in select cities, and the FCC will start auctioning licenses for 5G spectrum in November. The first 5G-compatible smartphones are expected to follow next year.

TRUMP PLAN SAID TO DROP 10 US SELF-DRIVING CAR TEST SITES: Ten sites [picked](#) by the Obama administration to be nation's hotbeds of self-driving car testing will soon have to compete with the rest of the country as the Trump administration hones its approach to self-driving cars, according to two people familiar with the matter. The U.S. Transportation Department plans to disavow 10 locations from California to Florida that on President Barack Obama's last day in office were designated as federally-recognized "automated vehicle proving grounds," said the two people, who requested anonymity to discuss the plan. At the same time, the department is readying a new autonomous car testing initiative that officials envision will eventually lead to testing and demonstration pilots nationwide by companies, cities, states and others, the people said.

II. Politics

A. GOVERNORS & STATEWIDE OFFICES

WHERE INDEPENDENTS COULD SHAKE UP GOV. RACES: In about one-sixth of the 36 governor's races this fall, the [presence](#) of a third-party candidate could stir things up -- especially for the Democrats. While the national political environment and landscape of vulnerable seats [tilts in their favor this year](#), it is Democrats who have the most to lose from third-party candidacies. Only in Rhode Island, where a strong supporter of Donald Trump is on the ballot, is a third-party candidate a threat to Republicans' chances of winning. It's hardly unprecedented for third-party candidates to play a role in gubernatorial races. Four years ago -- the last time so many states elected a governor -- five states had credible third-party candidates. But the impact could be even bigger this year, with more states featuring independent candidates polling in the high single digits. Here is Governing's rundown of the states where independents could impact the outcome.

THE MIDWEST OFFERS DEMS BEST CHANCE TO FLIP GOVERNORS SEATS: Republicans [enjoy](#) nearly total dominance of the Midwest. The GOP holds every governor's office in the region, save for Minnesota, as well as every legislature except Illinois. That looks likely to change soon. The Midwest this year offers the Democratic Party its best opportunities for cutting into the Republicans' 2-to-1 advantage among governors nationwide.

Top Governors Races to Watch

THE BATTLE TO CONTROL STATEHOUSES: Using the Real Clear Politics polling average [aggregator](#), here is where the races stand in the top thirteen governors races this year:

1. Florida - Gillum (D) [+3.7](#)
2. Georgia - Kemp (R) [+0.5](#)
3. Ohio - Cordray (D) [+3.0](#)
4. Wisconsin - Evers (D) [+4.7](#)
5. Iowa - Hubbell (D) [+3.5](#)
6. Nevada - Sisolak (D) [+6.0](#)
7. Arizona - Ducey (R) [+9.0](#)
8. Oregon - Brown (D) [+3.6](#)
9. Minnesota - Walz (D) [+7.0](#)
10. Maryland - Hogan (R) [+17.7](#)
11. Tennessee - Lee (R) [+12.5](#)
12. Illinois - Pritzker (D) [+15.7](#)
13. Texas - Abbott (R) [+19.3](#)

GOP OBAMACARE LAWSUITS BOOST DEMS VYING FOR STATE AG: Democrats [believe](#) they have their best chance in years to flip crucial state attorney general seats by trumpeting the same message that drew furious protesters to town halls and to the polls last year: Republicans are trying to take away your health care. These down-ballot races usually fly under the radar, but they are front and center in 2018 as many Democratic officeholders have turned the positions into the cornerstone of resistance to President Donald Trump, challenging dozens of his policies in court, from the separation of immigrant families at the border, to the ban on travel from several Muslim countries, to the crackdown on marijuana

sales in states that legalized the drug. With a blue wave already forecast for this November's midterm elections, and the battle over the Affordable Care Act now playing out in the courts rather than in Congress, Democrats seeking to claim as many as a half dozen attorney general seats are using a lawsuit brought by 20 Republican AGs to abolish Obamacare as a political battering ram — highlighting its threat to the health law's popular protections for people with pre-existing conditions. The lawsuit has already injected unexpected energy and cash into many of the 30-plus races across the country for state attorneys general — a dozen of which are seen as competitive. Democratic challengers in battleground states like Florida, Wisconsin, Georgia and Arizona are attacking the incumbents for bringing the lawsuit and vowing to withdraw their states from the case or join with states defending Obamacare.

B. STATE LEGISLATURES & MAYORS

CONTROL OF CONGRESS AT STAKE IN STATE LEGISLATIVE RACES: Democrats looking to [regain](#) a foothold in state capitols largely led by Republicans had anticipated flipping control of up to a dozen legislative chambers during the last presidential election. It didn't work out that way. As Republicans remain in overwhelming control of state legislatures, Democrats are doubling their spending for this year's state House and Senate elections. It's a renewed and increasingly urgent attempt to put a dent in the Republican ranks before it's too late to influence the next round of redistricting, which is set to occur after the 2020 Census.

DEM PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFULS JOIN FIGHT TO FLIP STATEHOUSES: Four Democratic senators in the discussion as potential 2020 candidates are [joining](#) the fight to turn state legislatures blue, recording ads for Sister District, a Democratic group connecting volunteers to down-ballot campaigns from far away. Sister District has connected with 30,000 people through its website and broken them into 65 teams focused on races with the potential to flip, or begin to flip, Republican majorities in state capitols. In Democratic-heavy areas, they "adopt" districts in tougher-to-win areas, through phone banking, postcard-writing campaigns, and then traveling to them for door-knocking and other on-the-ground help closer to Election Day. Top priorities this fall are flipping statehouses in Arizona, Colorado and New Hampshire, holding the Democratic majority in Washington state and shifting the calculus on gerrymandering in Pennsylvania and Michigan.

C. BALLOT INITIATIVES & OTHER

CAMPAIGN TO REPEAL GAS TAX SHORT OF CASH: Top Republicans in California [appear](#) to be shifting resources away from an issue they hoped would lure voters to the polls in November: repealing the gas tax. After contributing \$1.7 million to put a repeal initiative on the November ballot, Republican congressional leaders and GOP gubernatorial candidate **JOHN COX** are now conspicuously absent from the list of donors spending money to help convince Californians to pass the measure. Construction firms, organized labor and Democrats have raised more than \$30 million to defeat Proposition 6, while the main campaign committee in favor of the measure had just \$83,291 in the bank as of Sept. 22, according to campaign finance statements made public. The opposition campaign includes the California Chamber of Commerce, the League of California Cities and dozens of deep-pocketed construction firms and labor unions that would benefit from the tax's billions targeted to road and bridge repair projects.

State of the States

ALABAMA

IVEY ANNOUNCES STATE'S FIRST SECURITY OPERATIONS CENTER: Gov. KAY IVEY [announced](#) the opening of the state's first cybersecurity operations center, or SOC, on Monday, which officials say will aid in faster detection and response to threats to the state's networks and data. Already since opening, the SOC has "provided 800 million blocks" on the state's firewalls and four million antivirus blocks for servers and personal computers, according to Ivey's office. Alabama joins a group of an estimated 10 to 15 other states that operate their own SOCs, said Brian Calkin, vice president of operations with the Center for Internet Security. The facilities provide a centralized location for monitoring things like log data and, subsequently, can aid in identifying and notifying the relevant agencies more quickly when an incident occurs, he said.

ALASKA

WALKER, MALLOTT OPPOSE KAVANAUGH NOMINATION: Gov. BILL WALKER and Lt. Gov. BYRON MALLOTT [released](#) a joint statement opposing the nomination of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court. Some people have expressed concern that Kavanaugh would support repeal of the Affordable Care Act, limiting the eligibility of lower income Americans for Medicaid. Walker and Mallott also expressed concern for the rights of Alaska Natives.

ARIZONA

DUCEY, GARCIA SPAR IN FIRST DEBATE: Incumbent Republican Gov. DOUG DUCEY and Democratic challenger DAVID GARCIA [pulled](#) no punches in their first public debate, sparring over the future of Arizona's public education system for more than half of the forum. The hourlong debate, broadcast on Arizona PBS in partnership with the Citizens Clean Elections Commission, also provided a platform for Green Party candidate Angel Torres to share his views. He was consistently drowned out, however, by the interruptions, challenges and scripted digs flying between Ducey and Garcia. The massive #RedForEd teacher walkout this spring, and the contentious decision to knock the #InvestinEd income-tax measure off the November ballot, gave Garcia ammunition to attack Ducey for "half-measures and broken promises" to teachers and schools. After nearly four years, Garcia said, "we are still in an education crisis" and are "one of the worst places in the country for teachers." Ducey fired back, promoting the 20x2020 teacher-raise plan he pushed through this spring and repeatedly demanding a detailed education-funding proposal from Garcia.

AG CANDIDATE PITS LOCAL POLICIES AGAINST STEYER CONTRIBUTIONS: Arizona ATTORNEY GENERAL MARK BRNOVICH is one of three attorneys general in the country who [knows](#) his opponent this fall has the backing of California billionaire and political activist Tom Steyer, but told the Washington Free Beacon he believes his track record of focusing on local issues and the rule of law will be a better hand come November. Steyer's efforts on the national stage have been flashy. He has poured his resources into the "Need to Impeach" television campaign and pledged hundreds of millions to help Democrats retake the majority in the House of Representatives.

ARKANSAS

HUTCHINSON LOOKS TO CUT CABINET-LEVEL AGENCIES: Gov. ASA HUTCHINSON [unveiled](#) his restructuring proposal Wednesday, which includes reducing the number of agencies from 42 to 15. The governor says no jobs will be cut, but changes will be made through attrition. This reduction is one of the governor's six key objectives to reform state government over the next four years.

CALIFORNIA

BROWN SIGNS CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORMS: Gov. JERRY BROWN [signed](#) a series of bills aimed at overhauling the state's juvenile justice system, reforms that advocates say will further their efforts to rehabilitate minors who commit crimes early in life. Brown signed a bill that would end the practice of trying some 14- and 15-year olds in adult court and he signed another measure to set the minimum age for prosecutions at 12, except in the case of serious crimes. A third bill would eliminate automatic penalties that add five years to the sentences of some convicted criminals, handing discretion back to sentencing judges.

LAW REQUIRES WOMEN ON CORPORATE BOARDS: California [became](#) the first state in the country to require that women be included on companies' boards of directors, as Gov. JERRY BROWN literally sent a message to Washington on Sunday in signing legislation that corporate associations opposed as unconstitutional. Brown signed [SB826](#) into law after it passed the Assembly and the Senate last month. The bill mandates that all publicly traded California companies have at least one woman on their boards by the end of 2019. The requirement ramps up in 2021: Five-member boards will be expected to have two female members, and boards with six or more members will be expected to have three.

STATE ENACTS NET NEUTRALITY LAW, FEDS SUE: Just after Gov. JERRY BROWN [signed](#) a state net neutrality bill in defiance of federal regulations, the Trump Administration asked a court to block California from attempting to restore Obama-era rules requiring open access to the internet. The measure signed Sunday by Brown, a Democrat, prohibits internet service providers in California from stratifying users and websites by who can pay for faster surfing speeds and service. If the law stands, broadband providers including [Comcast Corp.](#) and [AT&T Inc.](#) will be blocked in the state from slowing traffic on their airwaves while charging consumers for faster access. The Trump Administration filed a complaint in federal court in Sacramento accusing California of trying to "second-guess" the government's regulatory authority over internet providers. The [Federal Communications Commission](#) in January unraveled 2015 rules that prohibited companies from blocking or throttling content.

AUTOMATED ACCOUNTS REQUIRED TO REVEAL THEMSELVES: Gov. JERRY BROWN drew plenty of headlines when he signed the state's [net neutrality bill](#) into a law, a move that was immediately met with a lawsuit from the Department of Justice. But he [signed another bill that drew less attention](#) — a new law that bans automated accounts, more commonly known as bots, from pretending to be real people in pursuit of selling products or influencing elections. Automated accounts can still interact with Californians, according to the law, but they will need to disclose that they are bots. The law comes as concerns about social media manipulation remain elevated. With just more than a month to go before the 2018 U.S. midterm elections, social media companies have pledged to crack down on foreign interference.

STATE READIES NEW SECURITY REQUIREMENTS FOR IOT DEVICES: California [could](#) soon be the first state in the country to regulate the security of internet-connected devices, collectively called the "internet

of things," with the state's [SB 327](#) waiting on Gov. Jerry Brown's signature. The bill would require IoT manufacturers to raise the security standards of internet-connected gadgets sold in California to a level of "reasonable security." Reasonable, per the bill authored by Democratic State Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson, means that if users can log in to a device without the use of a local area network, or LAN, then it must be equipped with unique pre-programmed passwords or newly generated passwords before it can be accessed for the first time. Breaking into devices using default passwords is an old and still-common trick used to access everything from network routers to [electronic road signs](#).

COLORADO

POLIS LEADS STAPELTON: DEMOCRATIC U.S. REP. JARED POLIS [leads](#) Republican **STATE TREASURER WALKER STAPLETON** by 7 percentage points in the state's gubernatorial contest, according to the first publicly released poll of likely voters since this summer's primary election. Polis' lead was especially strong with Colorado's unaffiliated voters, women and those who make less than \$75,000 a year, found the poll, which was jointly conducted by one Democratic-leaning firm and one Republican-leaning firm. Stapleton beats Polis with male voters and those who make more than \$75,000 a year. The live telephone survey of 600 likely voters was conducted by Keating Research and Magellan Strategies between Sept. 18 and Sept. 20. The results are weighted to reflect historic voter turnout during non-presidential election years. It was commissioned by Healthier Colorado, a nonpartisan health care advocacy organization.

POLIS PROMISES DRUG IMPORTS FROM CANADA: Democrat **JARED POLIS** [pledged](#) to strengthen health care consumer protections, create a system to import prescription drugs from Canada and reform the state's health insurance zones as part of his [first 100 days if elected governor](#). Those new campaign promises are among more than a dozen policy proposals the Boulder congressman outlined in front of a doctor's office in this mountain town and said that if put in place they would immediately drive down the cost for health care.

CONNECTICUT

ERROR SHACKLES STATE TO DEBT LIMIT LAWMAKERS HAD LOOSENED: Nine law firms were [hired](#) by Connecticut and underwriter Bank of America Corp. to vet the state's \$492 million bond sale in June. But none appear to have caught what could be a costly mistake: The contract effectively promises that Connecticut will stick to a strict \$1.9 billion annual limit on a key type of debt sale, even though that cap was loosened by the state legislature. That misstep, which stemmed from confusion in **TREASURER DENISE NAPIER'S** office about when the legislature's step took effect, threatens to force the government to choose between saving money by refinancing debt or conserving its ability to fund public works with bonds backed by its general pledge to repay. It could also leave Connecticut facing a cash crunch if the economy lapses into a severe recession by curtailing its ability to sell short-term debt to cover temporary budget shortfalls.

NED LAMONT'S CANDIDATE TRANSITION: If there's anyone who [understands](#) the power of a single issue in a campaign, it's **NED LAMONT**, who in his first bid for statewide office harnessed opposition to the war in Iraq to push **JOE LIEBERMAN** to the brink of losing his Senate seat. But this year, it's Lamont's Republican opponent in the governor's race, **BOB STEFANOWSKI**, who has latched onto a signature cause: repealing the state income tax. Lamont's calling card is somewhat nebulous, which fellow Democrats and rival Republicans say makes him far from a sure thing in an anticipated "blue wave" election of resistance to Donald Trump in Connecticut. It's rooted in a populist idealism that the Greenwich

telecommunications magnate can usher in property tax reform, tap his business connections to rejuvenate the state's lethargic economy and build consensus in a way that **Gov. Dannel P. Malloy** hasn't in the eight years since handing Lamont a primary defeat. Along the way Lamont has pivoted and changed his position on some key policy areas, such as mandatory paid sick leave and highway tolls. He's pledged not to raise the income tax and wants to restore a property tax relief program, but hasn't said how the state would pay for it. To his detractors: Lamont is a flip-flopper whose positions are molded by internal polling, consultants and the power of unions.

FLORIDA

GILLUM CLINGS TO ONE-POINT LEAD: ANDREW GILLUM and **RON DESANTIS** are essentially [tied](#) in the latest poll of the Florida governor's race, which could be tightening amid the contentious Supreme Court confirmation hearings playing out in Washington. Gillum's 1-point lead is well within the Mason-Dixon Polling & Strategy [survey's](#) error-margin of 3.5 percentage points, and it's smaller than 10 other public polls of Florida's governor's race. All but one of the polls showed Gillum's lead inside their error margin.

HOW GILLUM, DESANTIS DIFFER ON EDUCATION: Education is always one of the most contentious issues every year in Florida, with yearly legislative [showdowns](#) between Republicans and Democrats over school funding and privately run public schools — with teachers' unions, school boards and superintendents also in the fray. **RON DESANTIS'** education proposal struck a deep contrast to the broad plan **ANDREW GILLUM** highlighted recently.

DOES GILLUM SUPPORT PUERTO RICO STATEHOOD? Shortly after the governor of Puerto Rico praised him as a fighter for "equality," Tallahassee **MAYOR ANDREW GILLUM** [urged](#) a crowd of supporters in a Kissimmee community center to make him the official gubernatorial candidate for Florida Boricuas. "I want that label," Gillum said. "And I want it not in a tokenizing way. I want it in a way that says that we understand one another. That we know what it means to fight for every inch, for every square inch, for every mile of what we get." But the Democratic candidate for Florida governor stopped short of explicitly supporting statehood for the island — even as he received the backing of **Gov. RICARDO ROSSELLÓ**, who leads Puerto Rico's pro-statehood party and calls the question of the island's status a civil rights issue. Florida's next governor would not have any formal power to change Puerto Rico's status. But the divisive topic has become difficult to avoid for candidates seeking to sway the over 1.1 million Boricuas estimated to reside in Florida. In an interview, Rosselló, also a Democrat, said he decided to back Gillum due to his support for "equal treatment and statehood" for the island, though he acknowledged Gillum believes it should be Puerto Ricans who chose what status they want.

GEORGIA

\$100 MILLION CYBER CENTER GETS NEW DIRECTOR: When Atlanta's government was [hit](#) with a [crippling ransomware attack](#) in March that took out dozens of city systems, Army Col. Eric Toler was focused on the war in Afghanistan. But Toler, who retired from the Army last month, says he'll be reading up on the cyberattack on Atlanta as he starts his new position as the first executive director of the new Georgia Cyber Center, a new \$100 million state facility dedicated to cybersecurity businesses and educational facilities. Toler, who [started at the Cyber Center](#) on Monday, spent most of his 27-year military career building up the Army's cyberwarfare capabilities, including a stint as the

commander of the National Security Agency's outpost at Fort Gordon in Augusta, not far from the campus of Augusta University, where the Georgia Cyber Center recently opened.

ABRAMS, KEMP TIED: A new NBC News/Survey Monkey Online poll [shows](#) Georgia's governor's race tied between **STACEY ABRAMS** and **BRIAN KEMP**, with 14% of voters undecided. The poll, released Monday, show Kemp and Abrams tied at 43%. The poll also showed voters in Southern states are likely to vote Republican in this fall's midterm elections except in Georgia, where 47% said they would vote for the Democratic candidate in Congress and 44% would vote for the GOP candidate. Abrams is seeking to become the nation's first African-American female governor, while Kemp, currently Georgia's secretary of state, is seeking to maintain the GOP's control of the governorship since 2002.

ILLINOIS

IN DEBATE, RAUNER, PRITZKER ARGUE OVER TOILETS, TAXES, VET DEATHS: Character [attacks](#) over a report that Democrat **J.B. PRITZKER** fraudulently benefited from a tax break and an investigation into Republican **GOV. BRUCE RAUNER'S** handling of a deadly veterans home illness dominated the second debate between the two major candidates for governor Wednesday night. Rauner, the first-term chief executive who is trailing Pritzker by double digits in recent polls, was clearly more aggressive. At one point Rauner accused Pritzker, a billionaire heir to the Hyatt Hotels fortune, of trying to buy the election "to be something for the first time in his life because if he wasn't a trust fund baby, he would be nothing." Pritzker, who has put \$146.5 million of his own money into his campaign, noted that the wealthy Rauner outspent former Democratic Gov. Pat Quinn by a 2-to-1 margin four years ago. As a private equity investor, Pritzker said, "Gov. Rauner in his business, he fired people to make money to get a better profit. The truth is that people have been abused under Gov. Rauner."

COOK COUNTY BOARD PRESIDENT RUNNING FOR CHICAGO MAYOR: Cook County Board President **TONI PRECKWINKLE** walked into the sweltering banquet room in a Hyde Park hotel packed full of supporters to [declare](#) she's running for Chicago mayor, a job she previously had passed on pursuing. In launching her campaign, Preckwinkle alluded to many of Chicago's ongoing problems: violent crime that claims too many lives, neighborhoods that long have had little economic opportunity and dozens of neighborhood schools that have disappeared as the city's student enrollment has shrunk. Preckwinkle, who would be the city's first African-American woman to become mayor, highlighted her work to tamp down gun violence, reduce the county jail population and call out misconduct in the Chicago Police Department. The field of candidates in the mayor's race now has swelled to 15, and some of the original dozen who joined the race before Emanuel dropped his bid for a third term wasted no time in taking shots at the new entrant Thursday, illustrating Preckwinkle's immediate status as a front-runner.

INDIANA

SCHOOLS CHIEF WON'T SEEK RE-ELECTION: Indiana's top education official abruptly [announced](#) that she will not seek a second term, saying politics is getting in the way of her education plans for the state. **JENNIFER MCCORMICK**, a Republican who is getting ready to begin her third year in office, said she has been getting questions about her future as an elected official that have become a distraction from the work she wants to carry out at the Department of Education. McCormick won her seat in a stunning victory over Democrat incumbent **GLENDIA RITZ** in 2016. McCormick will continue her term through 2020.

IOWA

BUDGET SURPLUS FOUR TIMES MORE THAN EXPECTED: The state budget surplus [surged](#) to end the 2017 fiscal year four times larger than expected. The Iowa Department of Management says it was protected that state government would finish the fiscal year with a surplus of \$31.7 million. After accounting for revenue accruals and taking into account adjustments to tax refunds and appropriations, the Department says that ending balance is actually \$127.3 million.

HUBBELL NARROWLY LEADS REYNOLDS: Democratic businessman **FRED HUBBELL** [edges](#) out Republican **Gov. KIM REYNOLDS** in a race for the governor's office that still falls within the margin of error just more than six weeks before Election Day, a new Des Moines Register/Mediacom Iowa Poll shows. Forty-three percent of likely voters say they support Hubbell, and 41 percent say they support Reynolds. Seven percent say they support Libertarian Jake Porter, and 9 percent are undecided. A majority of Hubbell and Reynolds supporters say they will not change their minds. But about a third of supporters in each camp — 32 percent for Hubbell and 28 percent for Reynolds — say they could still be persuaded to vote for someone else.

DEMOCRATS, TIRED OF GOP CONTROL, THINK THEY CAN FLIP THE IOWA HOUSE; REPUBLICANS WAVE OFF DEMS' CONFIDENCE: Iowa Democrats are [convinced they can flip](#) the Republican-controlled state House on Nov. 6, with a path to victory running through the suburbs around the state's largest cities. Republicans wave off that idea. In the final weeks before the election, they're highlighting what they see as the strength of their candidates and a winning strategy for picking up seats. The 2016 election brought a GOP trifecta to the Iowa Legislature — the first in nearly two decades. Democrats must secure 10 new seats to overtake the GOP's 59-member majority. Even reducing the GOP lead could also give the minority party more voting leverage on future legislation.

KANSAS

HOSPITAL CLOSING BRINGS NEW FIGHT OVER MEDICAID EXPANSION: Another Kansas hospital is closing. This time it's in Fort Scott, a town of nearly 8,000 only a couple miles away from the state's eastern border. But the [decision](#) by Mercy to shutter its 46-bed hospital there is echoing across the state, with the medical community and politicians once again sounding the alarm that the lack of Medicaid expansion in Kansas is harming rural hospitals trying to stay afloat financially. The Fort Scott decision follows the closure of Mercy's hospital in Independence in 2015, which also drove the push for expansion. And it comes as rural hospitals are struggling nationally. A report released last week by the Government Accountability Office found that the pace of rural hospital closures doubled in 2013-2017 compared to the previous five years, with 64 shutting their doors. In about a month, Kansas voters will head to the polls in an election for governor that could easily determine whether the state expands Medicaid or not.

GOVERNOR CANDIDATES WOO BUSINESS COMMUNITY: The Kansas candidates for governor [tried](#) to woo the state's business community at a dinner hosted by the Kansas Chamber of Commerce, a major player in past elections. All of them offered pro-business proposals, but each also differs from the chamber on some issues. Republican **KRIS KOBACH** takes a hardline position on immigration opposed by the chamber and splits with it on changes to workers compensation law. Neither Democrat **LAURA KELLY** nor independent **GREG ORMAN** supports a constitutional amendment on school spending favored by the chamber. The chamber's political arm has the ability to pour significant resources into aiding candidates, from sending out mailers to purchasing TV time. In 2012, the chamber significantly aided **THEN-GOV. SAM BROWNBACK'S** successful quest to sweep a number of moderate Republicans out of the Legislature.

MICHIGAN

MARIJUANA TAX HAUL GROWS: By the time Michigan's recreational marijuana market is fully [fleshed](#) out, \$134.5 million in tax revenues will be flowing into the state's coffers annually. But there's a big caveat: Michigan voters will first have to pass a ballot proposal on Nov. 6 to legalize marijuana for adult recreational use. The figures for state tax revenues — from the 6-percent sales tax and a 10-percent excise tax — come from VS Strategies, a Colorado-based cannabis consulting firm hired by the Coalition to Regulate Marijuana Like Alcohol, which is spearheading the campaign to legalize pot in Michigan.

POLL REVEALS SUPPORT FOR RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION, EASIER VOTING: If the election were held today, marijuana for recreational use [would](#) be legal in Michigan and voting would become much easier, according to a poll done for the Detroit Free Press. But a proposal to change the way state and federal legislative district lines are drawn, while ahead 48-32 percent, hasn't reached a winning threshold yet, according to EPIC/MRA pollster Bernie Porn. The proposal that would legalize marijuana for adult recreational use is leading 55-41 percent, in the poll of 600 active and likely voters that was taken Sept. 21-25 for the Free Press and its media partners. Only 3 percent of those surveyed are undecided on the issue.

WHITMER LEADS SCHUETTE: The race to [elect](#) Michigan's next governor may be tightening, according to a Free Press poll. But **PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP'S** unpopularity in Michigan continues to energize Democrats and hurt Republicans, including gubernatorial candidate **BILL SCHUETTE** and GOP congressional candidates, the poll suggests. Democrat **GRETCHEN WHITMER** has an eight-point lead over Schuette, according to the poll from EPIC-MRA of Lansing. Other recently published polls have shown Whitmer, the former Senate minority leader from East Lansing, with a double-digit lead over Schuette, of Midland, who has been state attorney general since 2011. The poll commissioned by the Free Press and its outstate media partners shows Whitmer with 45 percent support, compared with 37 percent for Schuette. Another 11 percent were either undecided or refused to answer, while 2 percent said they support Libertarian Bill Gelineau and 5 percent said they support another unspecified candidate.

MINNESOTA

STATE AG RACE CONTINUES GAINING ATTENTION: The midterm elections in Minnesota are packed with key races from an open governor's seat, two U.S. Senate races and four congressional races that are ranked as toss ups. But one of the most heated races is for Minnesota attorney general. It's one of those often overlooked offices. For nearly 12 years, **LORI SWANSON** has held the seat of Minnesota attorney general. However, she shockingly lost the party endorsement in June to little-known Minneapolis attorney **MATT PELIKAN**. That loss prompted Swanson to leave the AG's race and begin a gubernatorial campaign — prompting a number of well-known candidates to enter the race. **CONGRESSMAN KEITH ELLISON** easily won the Democratic primary despite 11th hour accusations from his former girlfriend that he had been physically and emotionally abusive. Ellison has strongly denied the charges, but they continue to cast a shadow over his campaign. Now he faces **DOUG WARDLOW**, the Republican nominee. Wardlow is an Eagan attorney and has been the legal counsel for the Alliance for Defending Freedom, an organization that has argued against gay marriage and against allowing transgender individuals from using restrooms that match their gender identities. Wardlow

is also a strong supporter of **PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP** and is opposed to sanctuary cities. Wardlow says his views are mainstream compared to the positions of Congressman Ellison, who he says is an extremist.

ABUSE ACCUSATION LOOMS OVER KEITH ELLISON'S BID FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL: Minnesota has been thrust into the national spotlight in the past year for being at the center of the Me Too movement. It has lost two state lawmakers and a popular U.S. senator amid sexual misconduct allegations. But of all the scandals, the biggest one looming over the midterm elections is a [domestic abuse allegation](#) against Keith Ellison, 55, the six-term Democratic congressman who is running for attorney general. Not only is it giving a jolt to the Republican side, but it's worrying some Democrats who would ordinarily vote for Ellison. His loss would take the state attorney general's office out of the Democratic Party's control for the first time since 1971 and deprive the state of a liberal advocate devoted to combating the Trump administration's hard-line immigration and health care policies.

NGA INITIATIVE COULD ENABLE DATA-SHARING ON POLICY BETWEEN AGENCIES: Minnesota officials hope a new collaboration with the National Governors Association (NGA) will yield new ideas around sharing health data, enabling the state to further capitalize on its work in [evidence-based policy-making](#) and do even more with data. The state is one of eight selected in June by the NGA to join a health policy partnership on data best practices, along with Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Indiana, Iowa, Vermont and Washington. NGA, which works with governors on public policy and governance issues, has long considered how best to help states improve their data systems while cutting costs and better assisting residents. It chose Minnesota for a shared desire to drill down on "cross-sector data sharing."

MISSISSIPPI

EARLY RESULTS OF LEGALIZED SPORTS BETTING ARE POSITIVE: The [legalization](#) of sports betting in Mississippi seems to be moving in a positive direction. It all started in New Jersey, when the state won its case to allow sports betting. The U.S. Supreme Court struck down [PASPA](#), that prohibits single-game wagering, was ruled unconstitutional. Since that decision in May of 2018, Mississippi's former legislation for sports betting was enacted ([SB 2541](#), [HB 967](#)) According to the [Legal Sports Report](#), casinos took in around \$6.3 million in sports bets for the first month of sports betting, August. A total revenue stream for casinos at \$644k and over \$77k in taxes for the state. In Mississippi casinos hold more than 10 percent of wagers, up from other states like Nevada with more than 5 percent. Football makes its own records in the state with a win as large as 26.8 percent in North Mississippi. Mississippi does not allow for mobile sports betting, those who want to participate must visit a local casino. However, officials expect mobile betting to be a reality before the end of the year. So far only 11 of the state's 28 casinos are participating in sports betting. And that's only from the beginning of college football season.

ATTORNEY GENERAL ANNOUNCES RUN FOR GOVERNOR: Mississippi's Democratic attorney general on Wednesday launched his 2019 [campaign](#) for governor of one of the poorest states in the nation, citing the biblical mandate to help the needy. "Jesus taught us to fight for the poor and the elderly and the widows and the children — the least among us," **JIM HOOD** said in announcing his candidacy in his hometown of Houston, Mississippi. Hood is the only Democrat currently holding statewide office in Mississippi. He criticized the Republican-led Legislature for enacting corporate tax cuts and said he wants to improve the state economy so young people won't have to move away to pursue higher salaries. He was joined on the steps of the Chickasaw County Courthouse by his wife Debbie and a diverse group of about 20 supporters, including two black state lawmakers. Another 150 or so watched from the courthouse lawn. Hood enters the race with solid name recognition after winning four terms as the state's top legal officer. However, he starts at a financial disadvantage. Republican **LT. GOV. TATE REEVES** is also expected run for governor and had \$5.4 million in

campaign cash at the end of 2017, to Hood's \$656,400, according to the most recent finance reports, which were filed in January. Hood said he has about \$750,000 now. Republicans have held the governor's office in Mississippi for six of the past seven terms. Republican **Gov. PHIL BRYANT** cannot seek re-election because of a two-term limit.

MISSOURI

KANDER ENDS CAMPAIGN FOR KANSAS CITY MAYOR: JASON KANDER, [citing](#) depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, is dropping out of the Kansas City mayor's race. Kander posted a message on [his campaign website and Facebook page](#) saying that in the 11 years since leaving Afghanistan as an Army intelligence officer, he has experienced depression, nightmares and suicidal thoughts. He said he needed to abandon the mayoral race, in which he was seen as a front-runner to win the 2019 contest, to focus on his mental health.

CHIEF INFORMATION SECURITY OFFICER TO RESIGN: Missouri **CHIEF INFORMATION SECURITY OFFICER MICHAEL ROLING** has [announced](#) that he will step down from his position at the end of the month, after nearly a decade with the state government. As the state's top cybersecurity official, Roling took Missouri's information security operation from an unfunded policy shop to a 20-person outfit that today is raising cybersecurity awareness from the lowest staff levels up to the governor's mansion. Heading to work for a private company that has some government clients but isn't specifically focused on government is "bittersweet," he said, but the right timing for his career. Roling says the state will be fine without him, having built a talented team that can outlast his tenure.

NEBRASKA

RICKETTS SAYS NEW BUDGET TO FOCUS ON PROPERTY TAXES: Gov. Pete Ricketts has [set](#) to work on a new state budget proposal he says will focus on property taxes and K-12 school funding, two of the many competing priorities lawmakers will consider in 2019. The Republican governor, who is up for re-election this year, is reviewing new budget requests submitted by state agencies this month and developing a two-year package to present to the Legislature in January.

NEVADA

LAXALT WON'T ROLLBACK MEDICAID EXPANSION, SUPPORTS WORK REQUIREMENTS: Republican gubernatorial candidate **ADAM LAXALT** is making it clear that he won't roll back **Gov. BRIAN SANDOVAL'S** expansion of Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act that helped more than 200,000 people get insurance, but he also says he hopes to adopt work requirements for low-income beneficiaries of the health-care program. A [health-care platform](#) Laxalt published in a press release comes after speculation that the Republican attorney general would reverse Medicaid expansion because of his vocal opposition to Obamacare and his noncommittal stance on the expansion when he announced his gubernatorial campaign last fall. The policy statement repeats his opposition to the federal health-care law but affirms some of its more popular elements.

NEW JERSEY

MURPHY PROPOSES \$500 MILLION VENTURE FUND, NEW TAX INCENTIVE PROGRAMS: Gov. PHIL MURPHY [proposed](#) an expansive new economic master plan for New Jersey on Monday, putting aside tax breaks for big companies in favor of capped and targeted investments in tech-oriented firms. The [blueprint](#), which calls for the creation of a state-run venture capital fund that would raise \$500 million, stitches together a patchwork of existing ideas with several new approaches. Taken together, Murphy argued, the efforts can drive the creation of 300,000 new jobs and set the bar for economic growth in the Northeast.

FIDUCIARY RULE COULD BE FIRST OF MANY AMONG STATES POST-DOL: New Jersey's [push](#) for a fiduciary rule governing brokerage firms in the state could be the first of many similar rules issued by other states following the death of the Department of Labor's fiduciary regulation earlier this year. Gov. PHIL MURPHY [announced](#) a forthcoming fiduciary regulation to be proposed and overseen by the state's Bureau of Securities last week. The rule would create a uniform fiduciary standard for both brokers and registered investment advisers. The regulation would have a greater impact on brokers than on RIAs. That's because RIAs are already held to a fiduciary standard under federal securities rules, but brokers are held to a less-stringent "suitability" standard. Only six other states have more brokerage firms than New Jersey, which has 472, [according to the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority Inc.](#), the industry's regulator. The Labor Department adopted a fiduciary rule that would have imposed a fiduciary standard for brokers giving investment advice to retirement savers, but an appellate court [quashed the rule earlier this year](#).

STATE COULD BECOME TOP SPORTS-BETTING MARKET IN US: Could New Jersey really [surpass](#) Nevada as the top sports-betting market in the nation? Say it ain't so! That's one of several projections made by Adam Krejcik, who heads analysis for the California-based Eilers & Krejcik digital and interactive gaming universe. The gaming industry has come a long way since Nevada blazed a trail more than a decade ago for gambling with real money over the internet. Krejcik said he believes the industry is ready for more technological leaps and shared them last week in a presentation at the EGR U.S. Power Summit in Miami. Some of his forecasts and predictions illustrate how the gaming industry is pushing the envelope with new opportunities to generate revenue. And state governments are responding favorably as they see the potential for new tax dollars.

NEW MEXICO

RACE FOR GOVERNOR PROVIDES STARK CHOICE ON GUN ISSUES: Two candidates for governor of New Mexico are offering [starkly](#) different visions on issues of gun control and public safety in a state where the Democrat-led Legislature has been reticent to approve major restrictions on firearms. An Associated Press review of all firearms-related legislation by states this year shows largely predictable and partisan patterns, with exceptions such as Florida and Vermont where Republican governors signed sweeping legislation. New Mexico lawmakers increased the penalty for illegal gun possession by violent felons and set aside about \$40 million for school safety improvements in coming years. Republican candidate **STEVE PEARCE**, an outspoken defender of the right to bear arms as a member of Congress, has highlighted the need to enforce existing gun regulations and hold law enforcement officials accountable in emergencies, while offering to help schools devise safety precautions that could include armed personnel with advanced training. He accuses his opponent of having of an extreme gun-control agenda. Democratic gubernatorial candidate and **CONGRESSWOMAN MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM**, who says she's never purchased a gun, has pledged support for a statewide ban on semi-automatic assault weapons and high-capacity magazines.

NEW YORK

CUOMO BEGINS PUSH TO FLIP LEGISLATURE: Having resoundingly won the Democratic Party nomination for a third term last month, **GOV. ANDREW CUOMO** is now [directing](#) the enormous campaign and party machinery that propelled his victory to focus its efforts on the New York State Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives. In a break from past cycles when he has been criticized for doing too little for his party and its candidates, Cuomo has pledged to leverage the significant resources, financial and human, at his fingertips to help Democrats flip control of the two legislative chambers, one each at the state and federal levels, to better counter what he says are harmful policies of the Trump administration and Republican-led Congress.

CUOMO WINS WORKING FAMILIES PARTY ENDORSEMENT: The Working Families Party [nominated](#) **GOV. ANDREW CUOMO** for re-election Wednesday night after he trounced its favored candidate **CYNTHIA NIXON** in last month's Democratic primary. Members of the left-wing party voted to put Cuomo and his running mate, Lt. Governor Kathy Hochul, on their ballot line with 62.8 percent of their members in favor and 37.2 percent opposed during a heated meeting in downtown Manhattan. In order to open the ballot line for Cuomo and Hochul, the party filed papers with the Board of Elections to have Nixon run on its ballot line for state Assembly in the Greenwich Village's 66th District.

WHICH CUOMO WILL WE SEE IN 2019? GOV. ANDREW CUOMO [arrived](#) in Albany as a centrist and a triangulator. In 2011, he encouraged creation of the Independent Democratic Conference, a breakaway group of Democrats who froze other Senate Democrats out of the majority when they formed a power-sharing agreement with the Republicans. Never wanting to face an emboldened Democratic majority, Cuomo helped cement this status quo. Then **DONALD TRUMP** became President. Half-a-loaf politics fell out of vogue. The IDC, to Democrats now paying attention, was rightfully viewed as an abomination. Cuomo, facing a challenge on his left flank from Cynthia Nixon, pivoted to forcing an IDC reunification with the mainline Democrats. Most ex-IDCers lost to primary challengers this month. Now what?

NEW YORK CAN'T AFFORD TO LET NEW JERSEY GO IN ALONE ON RETAIL POT: New York state [may](#) see potential tax dollars go up in a puff of pot smoke. With New Jersey **GOV. PHIL MURPHY** leading a fast-track push to legalize recreational marijuana, pot dispensaries could soon be as close as a seven-minute train ride from Manhattan. Once people start hopping the PATH train to Jersey City to purchase marijuana, New York lawmakers will start feeling pressure about losing taxable sales, said Hadley Ford, chief executive officer of pot retailer iAnthus Capital Holdings Inc.

NORTH CAROLINA

FLORENCE DISASTER SESSION COULD STRETCH ON FOR WEEKS: North Carolina lawmakers have [quickly](#) approved their initial legislation designed to address the damage and logistics problems caused by Hurricane Florence. The General Assembly gave unanimous approval Tuesday to a pair of bills now headed to **GOV. ROY COOPER**, who is expected to sign them into law. Cooper called legislators back for a special session to begin the recovery for what he called an "unprecedented disaster." The bills put more than \$56 million in a special Florence disaster relief fund, most of which can be used to match what the federal government provides in a preliminary relief package. They also allow schools in the hardest-hit areas to be forgiven up to 20 lost instructional days and ensure workers in shuttered schools are paid.

The deadline for traditional voter registration applications also would be extended by three days. Lawmakers are returning Oct. 15 to take up more recovery legislation.

OHIO

CORDRAY, DEWINE ON HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT: RICHARD CORDRAY and MIKE DEWINE both support mandated health insurance coverage for Ohioans with chronic conditions and the preservation of Medicaid expansion benefits, largely to the working poor. But how the Democrat and Republican running for Ohio governor arrived at the same spot ahead of the Nov. 6 election involved the traveling of different roads. The Columbus Dispatch [details](#) how each candidate views health and environmental issues.

CORDRAY, DEMS DOMINATE CASH RACE: Ohio's race for governor [will](#) be the most expensive ever. And in a rarity for the Buckeye State, Democratic candidates continue to raise more money monthly than their Republican opponents in every statewide campaign for an executive office. In the governor's race, however, total fundraising figures show that Republican **MIKE DEWINE**, with \$24.3 million, still outpaces Democrat Richard Cordray, who has \$13.8 million. The governor's race has now raised a combined total of \$38.1 million. That number well exceeds the record \$30.4 million spent in 2010 as Republican John Kasich ousted Democrat **TED STRICKLAND** from the governor's office for the first of Kasich's two terms. September campaign-fundraising totals were due to be filed by statewide candidates in the Secretary of State's office by Wednesday. As if Ohioans have not seen enough campaign commercials, the TV spots bought by that campaign cash will explode ahead of the Nov. 6 election — and not just in the gubernatorial race. Cordray raised \$2.6 million for his campaign in September, well ahead of Attorney General DeWine's \$2 million. The Democrat's amount included \$335,000 in in-kind spending from the Ohio Democratic Party; DeWine received no party money during the month.

ECOT, POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE CENTRAL IN AG RACE: The two men [running](#) for Ohio attorney general, Republican **DAVE YOST** and Democrat **STEVE DETTELBACH**, both boast that they've put away corrupt public officials and have a track record of political independence. But Yost charges that Dettelbach would use the office to advance a political agenda and Dettelbach paints Yost as a career politician, hop-skipping from one office to the next.

OREGON

CAN BROWN SELL STATE ON HER VISION? When **Gov. KATE BROWN** was first [swept](#) into office by scandal, she benefited from comparisons to the man she was [replacing](#), **Gov. JOHN KITZHABER**. Reporters often characterized Kitzhaber as a [lone wolf](#), a policy wonk, private. Brown was different. Shortly after Brown succeeded Kitzhaber, the New York Times wrote a glowing profile, noting her [verve set her apart from her predecessor](#). She breezed through the Capitol hallways offering unsolicited "hellos" to people — greeting them by their first names. She hosted BBQs at Mahonia Hall, the governor's mansion. When a member of the press corps had his first baby, the governor wrote a handwritten congratulatory note. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown in the living room of Mahonia Hall, the governor's official residence in Salem. In other words, Brown was friendly, personable, accessible. Now, she's been the state's leader for nearly four years. And she has a problem. In a state where Democrats outnumber Republicans and a year in which many strategists

expect a blue wave of progressive wins, the race between Brown and her GOP opponent, **KNUTE BUEHLER**, is considered competitive.

PENNSYLVANIA

LAWMAKER WANTS TO BAN TEACHERS FROM TALKING POLITICS, GOVERNMENT IN SCHOOL: Pennsylvania lawmaker **WILL TALLMAN** is not seeking re-election in November. But if the Adams County Republican has his way, he will go out with the passage of a monumental bill that [would](#) re-write free speech rules in schools by banning discussions centered around modern-day civics, politics and science in classrooms. Tallman sent a memo to the 203-member state House seeking support for a bill he dubbed the "Teacher Code of Ethics," which legal experts questioned as unconstitutional overreach. In the memo, Tallman said his bill would forbid public school teachers from endorsing, supporting or opposing candidates or incumbents for local, state and federal offices while in the classroom. On the job, teachers could not discuss enacted or pending legislation, regulations, executive orders or court cases involving any level or branch of government. They could not talk about activities "that hamper or impede" law enforcement actions or military recruiters on campus.

RHODE ISLAND

FORMER US ATTORNEY WINS BID FOR STATE AG: Former U.S. Attorney **PETER NERONHA** has [won](#) the Democratic nomination for Rhode Island attorney general, virtually guaranteeing him the job. He was unopposed in Wednesday's Democratic primary. Republicans didn't put forward a candidate and Neronha faces no significant opposition in November. Neronha was one of 46 U.S. attorneys appointed by **PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA** who was ordered to resign by **PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP**,

SOUTH CAROLINA

HOW THE NEW TAX BILL COULD AFFECT YOUR FAMILY: S.C. parents with children will get a tax [break](#) as part of a [proposal](#) that state lawmakers say will provide families with much-needed tax relief. Those with children under age 6 will get an even bigger break. If passed, it heads to the full Senate next week as part of a special legislative session. The proposal adds a state tax deduction for dependents of \$4,110, starting with the current tax year. It also adds another \$4,110 deduction for families with each child under 6 years old, meaning the parents of a toddler could get an \$8,220 exemption.

HOW DEMS ARE PITCHING IN TO HELP SMITH: When South Carolina's Republican **GOV. HENRY McMASTER** and **STATE REP. JAMES SMITH** face off in the November election for governor, the Democrat will [need](#) black voters to turn out in droves if he is to have a chance of winning the Governor's Mansion. But can it be done? Democrats say yes and note the behind-the-scenes involvement of the state's most prominent Democrat, **U.S. REP. JIM CLYBURN**. Yet Republicans remain skeptical, saying that more and more black voters — who traditionally account for more than 60 percent of Democratic voters in South Carolina — can not be pigeonholed as supporting only one party. Black voters increasingly are a political power in South Carolina.

UTAH

ECONOMY, RANKED #1, ADDED 55K JOBS IN PAST YEAR, UP 3.5%: Utah's economy [added](#) 54,700 jobs over the past 12 months — roughly matching the population of Taylorsville, according to federal data. That was an increase of 3.5 percent in nonfarm jobs since August 2017, which again ranked No. 1 in the nation — as it often has in recent months, according to [new estimates from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#).

WEST VIRGINIA

LAWMAKERS BRIEFED ON SPORTS BETTING ISSUE: Sports betting is [alive](#) at two West Virginia casinos with more to follow, but lawmakers are concerned about recent staff turnover at the West Virginia Lottery Commission and attempts to circumvent the will of the Legislature. The Joint Standing Committee on Finance met recently during the second day of the September legislative interim meetings at the State Capitol in Charleston. **DOUGLAS BUFFINGTON II**, acting state Lottery director, briefed lawmakers on the progress of sports betting. He replaces **FORMER LOTTERY DIRECTOR ALLEN LARRICK**, who resigned Aug. 31, the day before Hollywood Casino in Charles Town became the first racetrack and casino in the state to go live with sports betting.

WISCONSIN

WALKER, EVERS SPAR OVER TAXES: Wisconsin's tax climate for businesses [continues](#) to rank among the bottom 20 states despite several years of Republican tax cuts, according to a national think tank that advocates for lower tax rates and a more streamlined tax code. The latest business tax climate index rating from the Washington-based Tax Foundation comes as taxes become a major focus of the race between Republican **GOV. SCOTT WALKER** and his Democratic challenger, **STATE SUPERINTENDENT TONY EVERS**.

PENCE TO SHOW FOR WALKER: **VICE PRESIDENT MIKE PENCE** will [visit](#) Wisconsin next week to help raise money for **GOV. SCOTT WALKER'S** bid for a third term. Pence will host fundraisers in Green Bay and Eau Claire on Oct. 10, according to the Associated Press. Pence's visit comes as Walker and opponent **TONY EVERS**, the state schools chief, are locked in a tight race with some polling showing Evers leading the two-term governor.

STATE SUES OVER ACA HEALTH INSURANCE PROVIDERS FEE: **STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL BRAD SCHIMEL** [announced](#) the state had filed the lawsuit, along with a motion for a temporary restraining order against **PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP'S** Administration, as the deadline nears for Wisconsin to pay more than \$30 million through the health insurance providers fee. The suit was joined by Texas, Louisiana, Indiana, Kansas and Nebraska.

WALKER SAYS SENATE TO VOTE ON KIMBERLY-CLARK INCENTIVE PACKAGE: Republican leaders said they would take up an [incentive](#) package for Kimberly-Clark Corp. a week after the election, putting off a deal that would save 500 jobs and cost taxpayers tens of millions of dollars. It's still unknown whether backers of the measure can round up the votes to get it passed. The governor's office and control of the Senate are at stake in the Nov. 6 election, but the winners won't be seated until January. That means Republicans are assured of controlling state government for the rest of the year and will have a chance to change state laws in November and December.

PUERTO RICO

BOARD SAID TO SEE BIG JUMP IN LONG-TERM SURPLUS: Puerto Rico's federal overseers are [poised](#) to raise their forecast for the island's budget surplus over the next four decades after an influx of aid and rebuilding from last year's storm is expected to give a jolt to the economy. The change will increase Puerto Rico's cumulative surplus -- before any debt payments are made -- to more than \$20 billion through 2058, up from \$4 billion in the fiscal recovery plan certified by the board in June, according to people familiar with the matter. The jump is likely to please the island's creditors, who are fighting for a piece of Puerto Rico's revenues as it makes its way through bankruptcy. Yet such long-term fiscal projections have proven to be especially volatile, and the new estimates will follow an admission that the board made a \$4 billion error the last time it certified a fiscal plan.
