

**STATE AND LOCAL UPDATE**

February 28, 2020

**Policy and Politics****I. Trending Topics****Issue in Focus**

**CHINA TRADE WAR WALLOPED MORE THAN HALF OF U.S. STATES IN 2019:** Exporters from most U.S. states experienced [dismal](#) sales to China last year as tariffs slammed products ranging from wheat and whiskey to ginseng and gas. Total U.S. merchandise exports to China fell 11% last year to about \$107 billion, according to the latest data from the U.S. Commerce Department. Particularly hard hit were some of the nation's largest exporters to the Asian country - Texas, Florida and Alabama -- which each saw sales plunge by more than 25%. The figures don't yet reflect two significant developments for the world economy this year: The U.S-China trade deal signed in January that is supposed to significantly boost American exports to China and the coronavirus outbreak in the Asian nation. Amid the casualties, though, were some bright spots, including the presidential swing state of North Carolina, where exports to China jumped 40% last year to \$3.25 billion, driven in large part by pharmaceutical sales.

**A. BUDGETS, TAXES, & REVENUE**

**HOW HIGH ARE STATE AND LOCAL TAX COLLECTIONS?** The Tax Foundation's state tax map [shows](#) state and local tax collections per capita in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Tax collections of \$10,717 per capita in D.C. surpass those in any state. The five states with the highest tax collections per capita are New York (\$9,073), Connecticut (\$7,638), New Jersey (\$6,978), North Dakota (\$6,665), and Hawaii (\$6,640). The five states with the lowest tax collections per capita are Alabama (\$3,370), Tennessee (\$3,405), Arizona (\$3,472), South Carolina (\$3,522), and Oklahoma (\$3,544). Some of these results are less intuitive than others. For example, even though North Dakota ranks fourth for state and local tax collections, the resource-rich state generates a substantial part of its tax revenue from severance taxes on oil and natural gas, which are borne mainly by consumers outside North Dakota. As a result, North Dakota joins the ranks of high-tax states in terms of per capita collections even though the tax burden on North Dakotans is comparatively low. It's worth noting that severance taxes are only one of many examples of the "tax exporting" that states engage in. Travel taxes—such as hotel, car rental, and meal taxes—also disproportionately impact nonvoting nonresidents who have few means of redress. As a result, states that generate substantial amounts of tax revenue from tourism may also show tax collections per capita that are significantly higher than the actual tax burden that falls on the in-state population. It is important to keep both legal incidence and economic incidence in mind when evaluating the true costs of any tax.

**WHICH STATES RELY MOST ON FEDERAL AID?** State-levied [taxes](#) make up the vast majority of each state's general fund budget, and thus are the most obvious source of state revenue. But state governments also receive a notable amount of assistance from the federal government. In fiscal year (FY) 2017, 22.9 percent of state revenues came from federal grants-in-aid. Federal aid is allocated to states for a variety of purposes, primarily to supplement state funding for programs or projects deemed to be of national interest, such as Medicaid payments, education funding assistance, infrastructure assistance, and more. Some federal aid is awarded in the form of competitive grants, while other federal funding is given according to formulas established by law. Formula grants usually incorporate factors like population size, poverty statistics, and state matching dollars for distributing federal aid among states. Competitive grants are awarded on a discretionary basis and are more likely to fluctuate from year to year. The map below shows the extent to which federal aid comprised each state's total general revenue in FY 2017 (the most recent year of data available). That

year, the states where federal aid made up the largest share of general revenue were Montana (46.1 percent), Wyoming (44.5 percent), Louisiana (43.7 percent), Mississippi (43.3 percent), and Arizona (43.1 percent). The states for which federal aid made up the smallest share of state general revenue were Hawaii (20.7 percent), Virginia (21.1 percent), Kansas (23.3 percent), Utah (24.2 percent), and Minnesota (26.0 percent).

**TAX INCENTIVES, THE LOSING GAMBLE STATES, CITIES KEEP MAKING:** Perhaps there’s no government policy or program that’s as widely [reviled](#), yet universally pursued, as tax incentives. Study after study demonstrates that when states and cities give out tax breaks to companies looking to relocate or

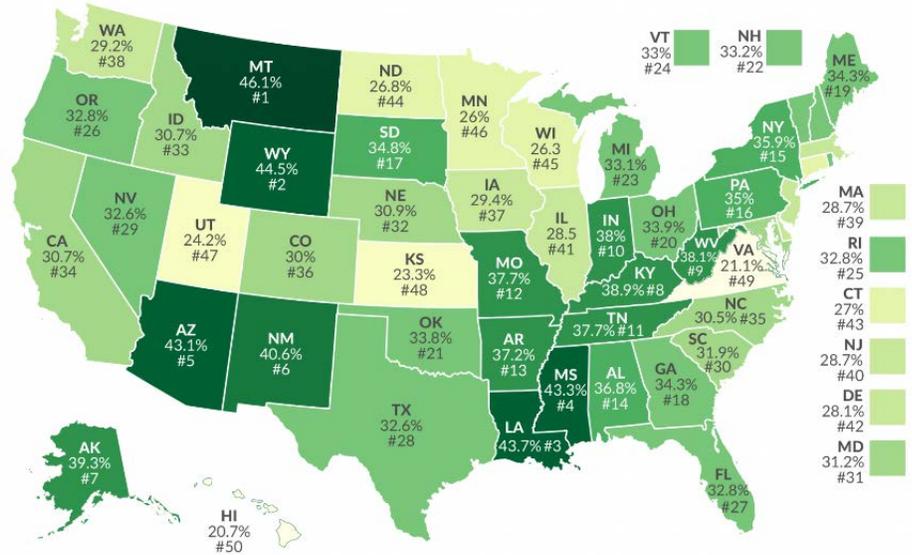
expand, they typically get very limited bang for their bucks, if any. Yet such incentives remain central to development strategies in most jurisdictions. A study published last summer found that three-quarters of local economic development dollars are devoted to tax incentives, with the amount spent on them tripling since the 1990s. A forthcoming study by economists at Columbia and Princeton found that the average firm-specific subsidy is \$160 million, presented in hopes of creating 1,500 jobs. That’s \$107,000 per job. And not all the promised jobs pan out.

**MURPHY’S MILLIONAIRE-TAX PITCH GAINS MOMENTUM IN NEW JERSEY:** Governor Phil Murphy’s third shot at a higher tax for New Jersey millionaires [may](#) be the charm. The first-term Democrat proposed a record \$40.9 billion budget with a tax boost for the rich to help underpin unprecedented spending on New Jersey Transit, pensions and schools. His odds are far better this year, with Senate President Stephen Sweeney saying he’d consider the levy if the governor would consider an even bigger-than-planned pension payment. “I thank the Senate president and welcome his willingness to embrace a millionaire’s tax in this budget,” Murphy said Tuesday to lawmakers in Trenton. “When we have tax fairness, we can continue our historic investments in our pension systems and in our middle-class families.” Murphy, 62, a Democrat and retired Goldman Sachs Group Inc. senior director, said his spending plan for the year that starts July 1 strikes a balance of fiscal responsibility and progressive spending.

**RURAL, POOREST STATES DEPEND ON CENSUS MOST:** West Virginia, Mississippi and Kentucky rely the [most](#) on census population counts for federal funding, according to a George Washington University study released today. That’s because they have more high-poverty and rural areas that tend to get the most funding. The Counting for Dollars 2020 project’s study shows that states have more at stake than just congressional representation, said Mary Jo Hoeksema, co-director

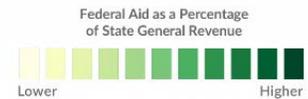
**Which States Rely the Most on Federal Aid?**

Federal Aid as a Percentage of State General Revenue, Fiscal Year 2017



Note: Figures are calculated by dividing each state’s “Federal Intergovernmental Revenue” by its “General Revenue.” “Federal Intergovernmental Revenue” includes money transferred from the federal government to states. “General Revenue” includes all tax revenue but excludes utility revenue, liquor store revenue, and investment income from state pension funds. D.C. is designated as a local entity by the U.S. Census Bureau and is thus not included here.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, “Annual Survey of State and Local Government Finances”; Tax Foundation calculations.



of the Census Project, a private-public partnership that saw the study in advance. Census-guided federal funding made up almost 17% of personal income in West Virginia in 2017, the year covered by the study, and more than 12% in Mississippi, Kentucky, Arkansas, New Mexico, Louisiana, Vermont, Delaware, Maine and Montana, the study found. The study used a ratio of funding to income as an indicator of how much the states depend on federal funds. The largest amount of the federal money, in states and nationally, comes from Medicare, the federal health insurance program for the elderly. Medicare makes up about 4% of personal income nationwide but about 8% in West Virginia and Mississippi. Compared with high-poverty and rural states, federal funds made up about 7% or less of personal income in more prosperous, faster-growing states such as Colorado, Utah, Virginia, Washington and Connecticut.

### **BGR Insights**

#### **BGR SENIOR DIRECTOR OF STATE AFFAIRS KRISTIN STROBEL WRITES ON WHAT'S NEXT FOR STATE ATTORNEY**

**GENERALS:** While several state legislative sessions are winding down later this spring, activity in the state attorneys general space is continuing to ramp up. Since January, state attorneys general have filed multi-state lawsuits against tech companies, e-cigarette manufacturers and both local and federal governmental entities. Democratic attorneys general have filed an unparalleled number of lawsuits, 103 to be exact, against the Trump Administration during the president's first three years in office and are planning to file another dozen in the months ahead. However, some of the AGs' lawsuits are non-partisan. Just last week, New York's attorney general filed a lawsuit against the City of New York over distressed cab medallion loans. And, this week, 42 attorneys general wrote a bi-partisan letter of support of the Bankruptcy Revenue Reform Act of 2019. The goal of the legislation is to help consumers while providing a level playing field for state attorneys general to guard their state's financial interest and to enforce their existing state consumer protection laws.

Republican attorneys general will convene this weekend for the Republican Attorneys General Association (RAGA)'s Winter National Meeting in Washington, DC. The conference, which runs from February 29-March 2, will host a political update on activities throughout the states and issue panels on Human Trafficking, the Equal Rights Amendment, Impeachment, and Over-Enforcement and the Rule of Law. Republican attorneys general from 21 states have committed to attend.

In March, the Democratic Attorneys General Association (DAGA) will convene for their 2020 Las Vegas Policy Conference from March 18-19. The agenda for the conference is still being finalized, but a large portion of the 25 Democratic state AGs are expected to attend.

Later this spring, the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) will host their Attorney General Symposium in Denver, Colorado from April 20-22. Their policy panels will include updates on the Supreme Court, Understanding and Respecting Political Differences, Addressing Rising Healthcare Costs, Hate Crimes, Ransomware, and the End to End Encryption.

*For any additional information about the upcoming state attorneys general meetings and relevant activity, please contact Kristin Strobel at [kstrobel@bgrdc.com](mailto:kstrobel@bgrdc.com).*

## **B. HEALTHCARE & INSURANCE**

**PENCE TALKS CORONAVIRUS WITH CUOMO, NEWSOM, OTHER GOVERNORS:** Vice President Pence on Thursday [spoke](#) to Republican and Democratic governors across the country to update them on the White House's efforts to

address the coronavirus. Pence, who a day earlier was tapped to oversee the federal government's response to the disease, spoke with Govs. Larry Hogan (R-Md.), Greg Abbott (R-Texas), Andrew Cuomo (D-N.Y.), Pete Ricketts (R-Neb.), Jay Inslee (D-Wash.) and Gavin Newsom (D-Calif.), according to an administration official. The vice president's discussion with Newsom came after the governor said at a press conference that 33 people in California have tested positive for coronavirus, with officials monitoring more than 8,400 people for signs of the disease.

**HOW U.S. CITIES ARE PREPARING FOR CORONAVIRUS:** Major cities around the U.S. didn't [wait](#) for federal health officials to tell them to brace for an outbreak of the coronavirus -- some have been preparing for weeks. In San Francisco, local officials have declared a state of emergency despite no confirmed cases. In Illinois, they're checking stockpiles of gloves, gowns and masks. In Dallas, they've set up war rooms to monitor the spread of the disease worldwide, designated quarantine beds and assigned medical teams for potential patients. Virus anxiety soared around the country on Tuesday when an official with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned that the agency expects the disease, called Covid-19, to begin spreading among U.S. communities, and that businesses, schools and local governments should prepare for the possibility of major disruptions. On Wednesday, federal authorities said they've identified the first U.S. case with an unknown origin, suggesting a possible wider outbreak. Earlier in the day, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo attempted to bring a calmer tone at a press conference to announce a \$40 million initiative to hire additional staff and obtain extra resources to combat a potential outbreak. Of 27 possible virus cases examined in the state, 26 have come back negative and one test is pending, Cuomo said. And while the state is expecting to eventually see a confirmed case, there's no reason for "undue fear," he said.

**GOVERNORS WARN TRUMP RULE COULD LEAD TO BIG MEDICAID CUTS:** Governors of both major political parties are [warning](#) that a little-noticed regulation proposed by President Donald Trump's administration could lead to big cuts in Medicaid, reducing access to health care for low-income Americans. The arcane fiscal accountability rule proposed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or CMS, would tighten federal oversight and approval over complex financing strategies states have long used to help pay for their share of the \$600 billion program. Also targeted are certain payments to hospitals that treat many low-income patients. Public comments closed last week amid a chorus of criticism from hospitals, nursing homes, insurers, doctors, and advocates for the poor. Against the backdrop of an election year, governors are warning the administration of potentially dire consequences.

**MEDICAID WAIVER DENIED, CUOMO CALLS IT POLITICS:** Gov. Andrew Cuomo [blamed](#) the federal government for denying a Medicaid waiver for a program that was hatched from the 2011 Medicaid redesign and could cost the state more than \$600 million. Cuomo at a news conference framed the issue as not necessarily dire for the state, but a sign of how the federal government continues to take a punitive posture toward a blue state. Cuomo is connecting some dots here: The Trump administration this month cancelled the ability of New Yorkers to re-register or apply for access to trusted traveler programs due to a state law that blocks federal immigration officials from receiving the state's motor vehicle database. But the program in question -- known as the Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment -- is not solely a New York-centric one, nor is it ending for just Democratic states. Texas, a state President Donald Trump carried in 2016, is having its money phased out as well. In a more narrow context, though, all this Medicaid certainly can feel like they are on a knife's edge, given the \$2.5 billion hole that must be plugged in the budget due March 31. A new redesign panel for the program is being tasked with developing savings and ways to slow the growth of spending by early next month.

**ABBOTT SAYS HOMELESS NEED MEDICAL CARE. ADVOCATES CALL FOR MEDICAID EXPANSION:** For years, Governor Abbott has [opposed](#) expanding Texas Medicaid, the state-federal insurance program, to cover poor adults as most other states do. But President Donald Trump's administration recently announced that states with expanded coverage will have greater flexibility to cut costs in Medicaid, an idea long championed by Republicans. A spokesman for the governor said this week that Abbott is exploring options with the federal government. Since Austin's City Council relaxed ordinances last year that prohibited lying and camping in public areas, Abbott has hurled criticism at city leaders for promoting "lawlessness." On Twitter this month, Abbott said fixing homelessness was "easy" and involved, among other interventions, providing mental health and drug addiction help. Advocates for the poor were quick to point out that Medicaid could help pay for those services for nearly a million Texans, including many experiencing homelessness.

**WHAT COLORADO'S HEALTH INSURANCE PUSH MEANS FOR DEMOCRATS:** For Democratic presidential candidates contemplating sweeping health-care overhauls, what [happens](#) in Colorado over the next few months will be instructive. Lawmakers in Denver are preparing to vote on a state-sponsored health plan that would compete with private insurance and offer lower premiums. Its approval could embolden Democrats eyeing the White House. Moderate Democratic candidates such as Pete Buttigieg, Michael Bloomberg, and Amy Klobuchar want to let people buy government coverage—like that offered to Americans 65 and older via Medicare—while their rivals to the left, Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders, would replace private insurance entirely with benefits funded by taxpayers. (Michael Bloomberg, founder and majority owner of Bloomberg LP, Bloomberg Businessweek's parent, is seeking the Democratic presidential nomination.) Colorado's proposal is more modest than what much of the Democratic field favors, since it relies on private insurers to manage the plans. But if the state is stymied by stiff opposition from hospitals and insurers, it could force voters to recalibrate their expectations for what a Democratic president could achieve.

## **B. ECONOMY, TRADE & INFRASTRUCTURE**

**WHERE AMERICA'S JOBS ARE CREATED, SUSTAINED:** How did US regional economies perform recently? What are the key factors driving their growth and decline? The Milken Institute's Best-Performing Cities series has [tracked](#) the economic performance of US metros for two decades using job, wage and salary, and high-tech gross domestic product (GDP) indicators. Metros are ranked on their performance, while indicators help identify the drivers behind their success or failure. With this publication, Milken hopes metros will learn from others' experiences and enhance urban economies in the long run.

**HOT HEMP PITS STATES AGAINST FEDS:** New federal [regulations](#) would make it harder for hemp growers to prove their plants are not marijuana, in what could be a major setback to a promising industry legalized just two years ago, farmers and state officials say. The U.S. Department of Agriculture in October unveiled stricter standards for hemp testing than many states had allowed under pilot programs that date to 2014. Now states are scrambling to adapt, and farmers are worrying they'll face a higher risk of having to destroy crops that test "hot" as marijuana. Hemp and marijuana are separated by a fine legal line: Federal law defines cannabis plants with a concentration greater than 0.3% of the psychoactive compound tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, as illegal marijuana. Plants with a lower concentration are defined as hemp, which can be legally sold anywhere. The interim USDA rule that states must adopt by November requires more rigorous testing within a shorter time frame than many states have required so far. It also gives farmers less wiggle room to salvage crops that grow hot, or above the 0.3% THC mark.

**CUOMO PLANS MARIJUANA TOUR:** Gov. Andrew Cuomo [plans](#) to visit states that have legalized marijuana to learn more about the issue and find out how New York could improve potential implementation. Cuomo said the tour could include Massachusetts, Illinois, Colorado and California. The trips will include a discussion surrounding "what they've done, what's worked, has the social equity piece worked, as the law enforcement piece worked," Cuomo said at a news conference in New York City. The trip comes as lawmakers and the governor in the coming weeks will negotiate a finalized state budget that Cuomo has said should include the marijuana legalization provision.

### BGR in the News

**BGR HOSTS NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN LEGISLATORS:** On Thursday, BGR Principal Kristin Strobel hosted the National Foundation for Women Legislators (NFWL). Special remarks were offered by Assemblywoman Serena DiMaso (R-NJ).



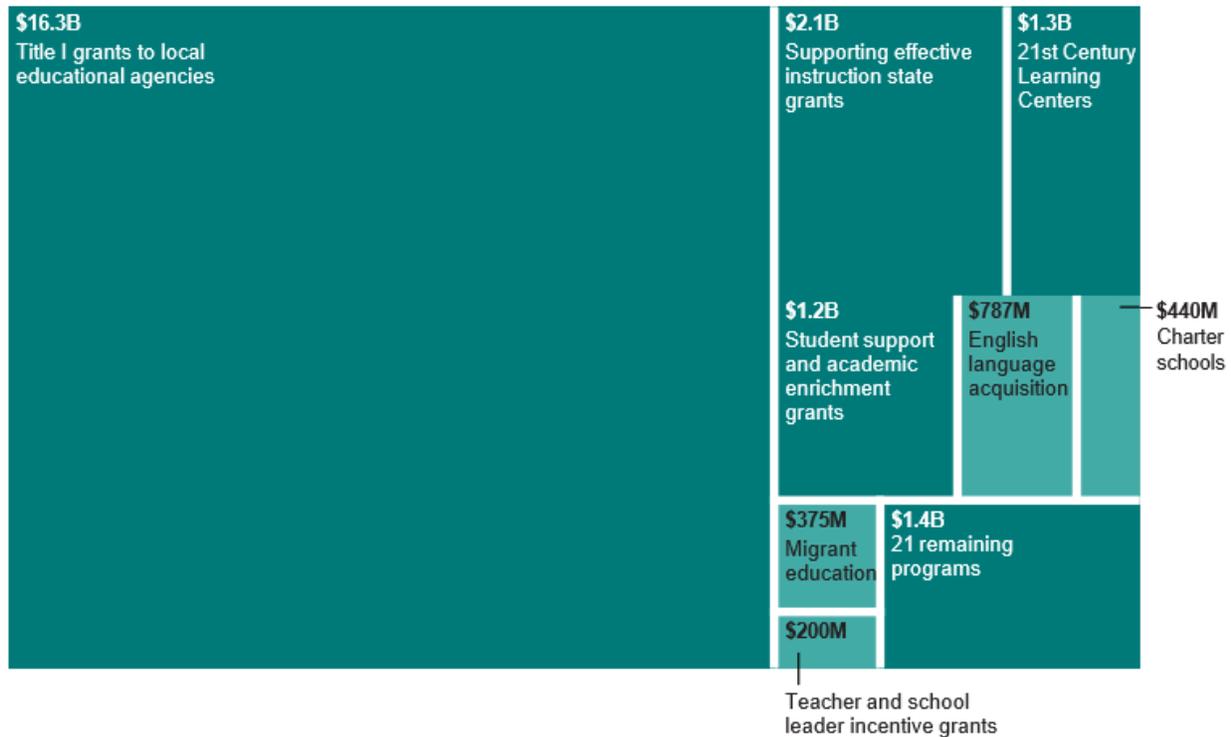
**CUOMO SAYS STATES SHOULD LEAD ON INFRASTRUCTURE:** Gov. Andrew Cuomo, at the winter meeting of the National Governors Association, [pitched](#) New York's efforts to invest in large-scale infrastructure projects, saying it's an issue that's largely been left up to the states to tackle. "If we want to keep pace with the rest of the world, we have to update our transportation network," Cuomo said. "And if the federal government won't do it, the states must do it as a basic matter of economic survival. Now, states getting into this business brings significant financial challenges for a state, as well as a highly specialized expertise." Cuomo at the meeting pitched infrastructure projects that are the result of a mix of private and public sector funding, pointing to major airport renovation projects that required the private leasing of terminal space. Cuomo has during his time in office focused heavily on bolstering the state's transportation network — including renovations of regional airports like LaGuardia and in upstate cities.

**D. EDUCATION & THE ENVIRONMENT**

**TRUMP BUDGET WOULD SHIFT EDUCATION PROGRAMS TO BLOCK GRANT:** President Donald Trump's budget request for fiscal 2021 includes \$66.6 billion in net discretionary budget authority for the Department of Education, a 7.8 percent decrease from fiscal 2020 enacted levels. The Department of Education's budget request proposes shifting funding for 29 programs to a collective block grant program. Currently these programs receive their own dedicated funding — in fiscal 2020, they received a combined \$24.1 billion in enacted funding. The total funding for the block grant program would be \$19.4 billion, a 20 percent decline from the cumulative enacted funding in 2020.

**Programs that would be wrapped in the proposed block grant program**

2020 ENACTED FUNDING LEVELS



Source: Politico

**ARIZONA BILL PROTECTS NATURAL GAS USE IN NEW BUILDINGS:** In the face of a growing interest [among](#) local governments in curbing natural gas use in new buildings as a climate mitigation move, Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey has signed into law a statute that protects gas as an alternative in building construction. The building permits law (HB 2686), backed by the state's largest gas-only distribution utility, Southwest Gas Co., effectively prohibits local governments from attempting to mitigate climate change by targeting specific energy sources. Major cities including Phoenix and Tucson opposed the measure, contending it adds to a growing list of state edicts that stifle actions by local elected officials. HB 2686 states that municipalities may not deny permit applications based on the utility provider proposed to serve the project. The law applies to all cities, towns and counties in the state.

**CUOMO PROPOSES FOSSIL FUEL CRACKDOWN:** Mayor Bill de Blasio, who has long sought to present himself as a leader on environmental initiatives, [unveiled](#) a spate of proposals to reduce the city's reliance on natural gas and oil during his State of the City address. What is less clear is how he will execute the plans, some of which are set to take effect decades after he leaves office and likely require action by the state. De Blasio pledged to convert the city's vehicle fleet to electric, funnel hydropower from Canada and ban city agencies from buying single-use plastic bottles — three issues he can manage as mayor. But a proposal to ban natural gas and other fossil fuels in large building systems by 2040 and an immediate pledge to block any new fossil infrastructure in the city will be harder to achieve in the two years left to his term. The move comes after the state passed an ambitious climate bill requiring it to achieve a carbon-free electricity system by 2040 and net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. But localities don't have the authority to block or approve fossil fuel projects like new pipelines or power plants, though their vocal opposition could theoretically influence state officials who have some power to do so.

**OREGON REPUBLICANS SHUT DOWN LEGISLATURE WITH WALKOUT TO BLOCK CAP-AND-TRADE BILLS:** The Oregon state legislature [adjourned](#) Tuesday after House Republicans joined their Senate counterparts in walking out over cap-and-trade bills designed to combat climate change. The walkout came as Republican legislators accused the majority Democrats of attempting to ram through the aggressive emissions restrictions on industry and business, arguing that the proposed limits should be placed on the ballot for the voters to decide. House Republican Leader Christine Drazan said in a statement that her party was "taking a stand, with working families, in opposing Cap and Trade and this rigged process." The House walkout came a day after Senate Republicans staged their own exit, denying Democrats the two-thirds majority needed to reach a quorum and conduct floor business, including reading and passing bills.

### What We Are Reading

**TRUMP, RNC ANNOUNCE \$10 MILLION PLAN TO BATTLE DEMS ON VOTING LAWSUITS:** President Donald Trump's reelection campaign and the Republican National Committee are [pumping](#) more than \$10 million into a legal campaign challenging Democratic voting-related lawsuits and building a massive Election Day operation. The multi-million-dollar effort pits the two parties against each other on the issue of voting rights, with Democrats contending that they're trying to make it easier for more people to cast ballots — and Republicans arguing that they must guard against potential fraud. The new endeavor includes a legal challenge in Michigan, a key battleground state that Trump won by an extremely narrow margin over Democrat Hillary Clinton in 2016. The RNC and Michigan Republican Party filed a motion to intervene in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan Southern Division to join a lawsuit as defendants against Priorities USA. The Democratic super PAC has filed multiple lawsuits in the state, including challenges to laws that restrict organizers from helping voters submit absentee ballots and make it a misdemeanor to organize vehicles to transport voters to their polling places unless the voters are "physically unable to walk."

**DEMS ADD SIX NEW STATES TO 2020 TARGET LIST:** The Democratic National Committee (DNC) is [expanding](#) its “Battleground Build-Up 2020” program to include six additional states, most notably Ohio, Texas and Georgia. The party said that it hopes to achieve three main objectives with the expansion: further lay the groundwork for the eventual Democratic presidential nominee, support Democratic candidates at every level of government and make early investments in communities of color around the country. The program targets key states with additional investments that will go toward opening additional field offices in the states, doubling the number of organizers and funding additional operations staff. Several of the new states — Georgia, New Hampshire, Texas and Virginia — have Senate races, and at the state level, Democrats in Texas are trying to reclaim the state House to for the first time in nearly two decades.

## E. TECHNOLOGY & PROCUREMENT

**GOOGLE REACHES SETTLEMENT WITH STATE AGs OVER CONSULTANTS:** Google has [reached](#) a settlement with state attorneys general over outside consultants hired to work on the states’ antitrust investigation. The settlement means that potential roadblocks to the states’ probe may be cleared for now, allowing the attorneys general to continue digging into Google’s business. A delay to the investigation could hinder the states’ ability to uncover important information about Google’s competitive practices. Though antitrust investigations are notoriously slow and fact-intensive, the rapid pace of change in the tech industry makes it especially important for investigators to move swiftly in order to impose remedies before they are no longer relevant. Texas is leading the probe into Google’s digital advertising business, which is backed by 49 other attorneys general from U.S. states and territories. The investigation is expanding into other areas of Google’s business as well, including search and Android.

**LEGISLATORS FACE TECH-HEAVY AGENDA AS THEY CONFRONT THE FUTURE:** It’s a common refrain: technology moves at warp speed; policy not so fast. But never before has so much new technology been adopted and put to use by the economy in a relatively short period of time, while raising a litany of concerns about its impact. In just a few years, technologies once considered niche have become mainstream. Just look at how fast artificial intelligence, drones, e-scooters and cryptocurrencies have emerged as major and disruptive players. Compounding this growth is the insatiable need for data. To feed the demand, telcom companies are building bigger and faster networks. Computing power needs to keep pace or stay ahead of the demand from these and other innovations, fueling new generations of automation, robotics and high-performance processing. In government, it has meant multiple hybrids of on-premises and cloud infrastructure even as industry players make competing claims about quantum breakthroughs. Once again, policymakers are playing catch-up, trying to constrain the worst elements of these new technologies without strangling their innovative and economic impact. Problems with data privacy have taken center stage and tied to it are some key tech elements, such as AI. Exacerbating these issues are the inconsistent, often weak efforts by government to protect everyone’s personal information from hackers and data thieves. And what to do about all those drones in the air and e-scooters on the streets? To make sense of what is going on with these very big digital issues, *Governing* has put together a [report](#) to bring some clarity and intelligence to the trends underway and what is happening on the regulatory and legislative fronts.

**STATES MAY FACE FISCAL RESTRAINTS WITH AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES:** Autonomous vehicles [have](#) the potential to do more than change the way we reach a destination or deliver goods. Vehicles that partially or entirely replace human drivers could change state economies as well. New research for The Pew Charitable Trusts shows that even moderate use of AVs could affect the fiscal outlook of states that collect substantial taxes and fees from cars and trucks through a range of revenue streams that would diminish. Although there is no consensus on how quickly driverless vehicles will be a common sight on the road or on their potential long-term market share, more than 80 companies are testing AVs across 36 states and the District of Columbia. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, the widespread introduction

of AVs could increase the productivity of workers, facilitate long-haul freight movement, and significantly improve road safety by reducing crashes caused by human error. Nevertheless, the prospect of extensive AV adoption raises other safety issues as well as concerns about cybersecurity, data privacy and the impact on the economy. States currently collect about 8 percent of their total revenues from vehicle-related taxes and fees on sales, licensing, registration, and fuel — a key source of funding for infrastructure maintenance and improvements. They also collectively receive billions more from a wide range of related economic activity, including car rentals, auto repairs, vehicle financing, parking, ridesharing and gas stations.

### BGR in the News

**BGR'S BIPARTISAN SHIFT:** *The Hill* [reports](#), "BGR, a staple on K street, launched in 1991 as a GOP-only firm and went bipartisan in 2007. 'The reasoning was fairly simple. When you look around, the majority of legislation that is passed has to be bipartisan,'" said BGR CEO Bob Wood. "Our clients needed both perspectives and interaction with both sides of the aisle.' At that time, former President Bush was in his final year in office and the House and Senate were both under Democratic control. 'It was more coincidental or fortuitous,'" Wood added. "Being recognized as a bipartisan firm took time."

**CYBERSECURITY BECOMES TOP PRIORITY FOR STATES, LOCAL GOVS:** Last week's cyberattack on Louisiana ITI College in Baton Rouge — which followed similar attacks in New Orleans and elsewhere in the state — [suggests](#) that hackers have no intention of leaving Louisiana alone. If that's the case, the state is in good company. More than 110 local and state governments across the country have faced similar problems, as cybersecurity, once a low priority for many jurisdictions, has become a top concern in the last year. The attack method of choice is ransomware: malicious software that locks up computers and demands payment from its victims to allow them access. While it is not a new phenomenon, it has boomed as some governments, overwhelmed by sophisticated technology, have paid out big sums that have kept the thieves coming.

**BROADBAND SCORECARD REPORT:** In 2018, the R Street Institute released its first Broadband Scorecard, which ranked every state according to how well their laws govern the various aspects of broadband deployment. When state laws provide a uniform and streamlined process for deployment, deployment becomes easier and those states earn a higher grade. While some states did very well, no state received a perfect score. [This](#) report updates the 2018 Broadband Scorecard data to incorporate legislative changes made across the country in 2019.1 Most notably, states continued to pass small cell legislation, opening up public rights of way to deployment of new wireless facilities. Because 5G broadband service requires a dense network of small cells in addition to traditional large wireless towers, these bills look to alleviate the burden by updating the permitting and zoning requirements that were designed for an earlier era.

## II. Politics

### A. GOVERNORS & ATTORNEYS GENERAL

**DEMOCRATIC GOVERNORS WORRIED ABOUT DRAWN-OUT 2020 FIGHT:** Democratic governors are [worried](#) that years of heated political rhetoric have left their voters exhausted ahead of this year's presidential contest, and that a drawn-out nominating fight risks exacerbating divides within a party that has to be united as it takes on President Trump. In interviews on the sidelines of the annual meeting of the National Governors Association this weekend in Washington, Democrats said they were keeping close tabs on the race for the White House. Their anxiety is rising in recent days, after the Senate voted to acquit Trump and after a disastrous Iowa caucus process marred by technical errors.

**POMPEO TELLS GOVERNORS TO BEWARE OF CHINA:** Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had a stark [message](#) for the governors who recently gathered in Washington: The Chinese government is watching them, and other state government officials, more closely than they think. Pompeo told some 44 governors at the National Governors Association winter meeting that they are being individually analyzed by at least one Chinese government-backed think-tank on how malleable they are, and how prone to cooperate with China. And he warned governors to be cautious on everything from business deals to pension funds to the D.C. Metro system.

**BEL EDWARDS CREATES 'RURAL REVITALIZATION' COUNCIL:** Gov. John Bel Edwards has [created](#) a study group aimed at identifying and responding to the decline in Louisiana's rural communities. Population in the state's rural areas has dwindled amid problems with job creation, infrastructure and education systems. The Democratic governor signed an executive order establishing a Governor's Advisory Council on Rural Revitalization. The 34-member panel is charged with determining the needs of rural communities on a long list of issues and finding financing options to help address the problems. A strategic plan is due by January 2021. Edwards announced the plans at the Police Jury Association of Louisiana's annual convention in Shreveport. The governor's former chief of staff, Ben Nevers, will serve as chairman of the advisory council.

**LAMONT ELECTED CHAIR OF COALITION OF NORTHEASTERN GOVERNORS:** Governor Ned Lamont has been unanimously [elected](#) to serve as chairman of the Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG), a nonpartisan association of the seven governors of the northeastern states, including Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The organization works with governors, their staff, and policy advisors to examine current and emerging regional issues, develop effective solutions, and work together to benefit individual states as well as the region. Within the region, states use CONEG as a forum to share information, learn from each other about best practices, and identify opportunities for cooperation among the states. The position of chairman is a one-year term.

**LAMONT TO GIVE UP ON TOLLS-FOR-TRUCKS THIS YEAR:** Facing [opposition](#) from voters and fellow Democrats, a frustrated Gov. Ned Lamont slammed the brakes on his plan for trucks-only highway tolls after the state legislature again failed to schedule a vote on the controversial proposal. While Lamont said he was done with tolls for this year, Democratic Senate leaders said they were still open to a vote next week. Democrats have repeatedly declined to vote on tolls, despite repeated proposals from Lamont over the last year. No Republicans in the General Assembly supported the tolls plan. Lamont said the state would now pay for improvements to roads, railroads and bridges by borrowing \$200 million per year to increase investment in fixing the state's aging transportation infrastructure, which he noted would now be paid for 100% by state taxpayers. Officials had predicted that out-of-state trucks would have paid 40% to 50% of the costs if the tolls bill had been enacted.

**EVERS SETS UP UNIQUE REDISTRICTING PANEL:** Gov. Tony Evers is [taking](#) a new weapon into the fight for control of the decennial redistricting process in a state where Democrats say Republicans have consistently built themselves a gerrymandered advantage. Evers has ordered a new independent redistricting panel to draw congressional and legislative district maps after the 2020 census results come in next year. The panel, he said in an interview, would craft lines with an eye toward creating competitive districts across the state, rather than seats that are heavily skewed toward one party or the other. Independent commissions are nothing new in the world of political map-making. Six states rely on commissions made up of nonpoliticians to draw their boundaries every 10 years, including California, Washington and Arizona. Nine other states use a commission made up of politicians — usually state legislators — to draw legislative or congressional district lines.

**ABBOTT ESTABLISHES CLEMENCY APPLICATION FOR TRAFFICKING, DOMESTIC ABUSE SURVIVORS:** Governor Greg Abbott [established](#) a customized clemency application specifically for survivors of human trafficking or domestic violence in coordination with the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles (BPP). The application will include a section that affords the applicant an opportunity to provide a statement to BPP about their human trafficking or domestic violence victimization. Human trafficking and domestic violence often lead victims down a path of offenses that entraps them in a vicious cycle of abuse and associated crime. This announcement coincides with the launch of a new public awareness campaign that educates survivors that they can submit an application for BPP to review and consider recommending to the Governor for a full pardon for crimes committed while under the grips of a trafficker or an abusive partner.

**BLOOMBERG'S ARMY OF CLIMATE LAWYERS:** A program [funded](#) by 2020 presidential candidate Michael Bloomberg is paying the salaries of lawyers who are farmed out to liberal state attorney general offices to pursue climate-based litigation -- a compact critics say amounts to Bloomberg buying state law enforcement employees to advance his preferred political agenda. The arrangement, which currently pays the salaries of Special Assistant Attorneys General (SAAGs) in 10 Democratic AG offices, is drawing new scrutiny now that Bloomberg is running for president. The New York University School of Law's State Energy & Environmental Impact Center, which was started in 2017 with \$5.6 million from Bloomberg's nonprofit, hires mid-career lawyers as "research fellows" before providing them to state AGs where they assist in pursuing "progressive" policy goals through the courts.

**NYS AG JAMES SUES OVER TRUSTED TRAVELER POLICY:** New York State Attorney General Letitia James has [filed](#) a lawsuit against the Trump Administration over its new policy that prohibits New Yorkers from enrolling or renewing in the federal government's Trusted Traveler Programs such as NEXUS, SENTRI, FAST and Global Entry. The move comes as part of the ongoing controversy with New York's "Green Light Law" which allows undocumented immigrants to apply for a NYS drivers license. The newly enacted law also prohibits sharing NYS Department of Motor Vehicles (NYSDMV) information with federal customs and border patrol agencies. All four U.S. Attorneys for New York State signed a statement saying the Green Light Law and lack of DMV information sharing "poses a grave risk to the safety of the officers, the person, and the public."

**STATES SUE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION AT RECORD PACE:** State attorneys general have [filed](#) an unprecedented number of lawsuits against the Trump administration, as Democratic-led states exercise new levers of power to block some of President Trump's most controversial initiatives. States have formed coalitions to file 103 multi-state suits against the administration in its first three years, according to data compiled by Paul Nolette, a political scientist at Marquette University. The vast majority of those suits, 96, have been led by Democratic attorneys general. By contrast, states filed 78 multi-state suits in the eight years of President Obama's administration, and 76 multi-state suits during President George W. Bush's eight years in office. Democratic attorneys general sued Trump 40 times in his first year in office alone, more lawsuits than have ever been filed against an administration in a single year.

## **B. STATE LEGISLATURES & MAYORS**

**TEXAS DEMS SWEAT A BERNIE SANDERS TICKET:** Bernie Sanders' staying power atop the 2020 field has Democratic insiders in Texas on [edge](#): They're worried nominating the Vermont senator would kneecap their hard-fought campaign to flip the Texas state house. Putting a self-proclaimed democratic socialist at the top of the ticket would squander a prime opportunity to seize statehouse seats — and congressional districts — that have long been out of reach, robbing the party of a hand in next year's crucial redistricting process, more than a half-dozen Democratic candidates, activists and political consultants said in interviews. Texas may not be a presidential battleground, but a wave of GOP retirements in Congress, shifting demographics and Donald Trump's lightning-rod presidency offer Democrats a shot at real power

after two decades of Republican dominance. And to insiders like Miller, plans to nationalize the health care and electricity sectors will spook voters and weigh down local Democrats who are trying to thread a needle in this still deeply conservative state.

**FORMER BALTIMORE CITY MAYOR SENTENCED TO THREE YEARS:** Catherine Pugh, the former mayor of Baltimore who was [sentenced](#) after pleading guilty to federal charges, speaks publicly. Former Baltimore Mayor Catherine Pugh, who held elected offices in Baltimore for two decades and was elevated by voters to lead the city after the upheaval of 2015, was sentenced to three years in federal prison Thursday for a fraud scheme involving a children's book series. U.S. District Judge Deborah K. Chasanow described Pugh's crimes as "astounding" and said she took advantage of a career spent doing good works to mislead organizations who purchased her "Healthy Holly" books.

## C. BALLOT INITIATIVES & POLITICS

**DEMOCRATS PREPARE TO SPEND BIG ON 2021 REDISTRICTING:** Democrats and Republicans are [raising](#) millions, preparing to battle for GOP-controlled state legislative majorities before a crucial, once-in-a-decade redistricting year in 2021. So far in the 2020 election cycle, the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee and Republican State Leadership Committee have raised \$16.7 and \$17.3 million, respectively, according to their reports to the IRS. The DLCC is launching a \$50 million "Flip Everything" campaign in preparation for the redistricting fight in key state legislative races, hoping to raise more money than ever before. The committee is targeting Republican-controlled state legislatures in North Carolina, Texas, Florida, Georgia and Ohio. State legislatures in those states are in charge of redrawing congressional lines based on the new 2020 census data. Democrats appear to have a growing number of voters in urban and suburban areas in those targeted states. Republicans are putting extra focus on North Carolina after state courts threw out maps drawn by the Republican-controlled Legislature. The state has been the focus of gerrymandering battles in the past decade, and is expected to gain a U.S. House seat after the census. After pouring close to \$1 million in Texas' special election last month, Democrats still lost the state legislative by a 16-point margin to the Texas GOP. The last time Democrats had this chance in 2010, Republicans outspent their competitors by more than \$20 million to win close to 700 seats in state legislatures nationwide and redraw congressional boundaries that benefited the party for the last 10 years.

**CLEAN MISSOURI GEARS UP TO FIGHT SENATE MOVE AGAINST VOTER-APPROVED REDISTRICTING:**

With Republican-led redistricting [changes](#) headed back to Missouri voters, efforts to defeat the proposal at the ballot box have already begun. The legislative proposal cleared a major hurdle Monday night when the Missouri Senate passed its version of redistricting reforms that would roll back changes made through the 2018 Clean Missouri ballot initiative. If it passes the House also, voters would once again decide on a new method to draw maps. Earlier in the day, the campaign that fronted Clean Missouri logged a \$100,000 contribution from a nonprofit that has focused on reducing partisan gerrymandering. In November 2018, 62 percent of Missourians voted to amend the state constitution to enact a series of campaign finance and legislative ethics proposals, along with a new system for redrawing legislative districts following the U.S. Census. Clean Missouri passed after a two-year campaign garnering hundreds of thousands of petition signers. Advocates included notable Republican names like Jack Danforth. About 1.4 million voted for the measure.

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## Campaign News

**AMERICAN SAMOA**

**TALAEUGA STEPS DOWN, ANNOUNCES BID FOR LT. GOV.:** At the [conclusion](#) of a Senate committee hearing, Talauega Eleasalo Va'alele Ale officially announced publicly that he was stepping down as Attorney General. During a cabinet meeting early last month, Gov. Lolo Matalasi Moliga announced that Talauega would be stepping down from his post after he argues ASG's case at a federal appeals court in early February. Lolo accepted the resignation on Feb. 10th. Before leaving office, Talauega had one last official duty, when he appeared to testify on an Administration bill. At the conclusion of the hearing, Talauega informed senators that it was his last official duty, as he was leaving the office that day.

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**INDIANA**

**JUST ONE CANDIDATE REMAINS FOR DEMOCRATIC GUBERNATORIAL NOMINATION:** Dr. Woody Myers is [poised](#) to become the Democratic nominee for Indiana governor after the only other candidate still in the race dropped out. Indianapolis businessman Josh Owens said he had enough support to qualify for the May 5 primary election ballot. But he's choosing instead to end his campaign to avoid forcing Hoosier Democrats to take sides in a potentially divisive contest. Myers, who led the State Department of Health from 1985 to 1990, said he welcomed Owens' withdrawal and endorsement "so that we can all focus on bringing new leadership to the governor's office to create solutions to benefit every Hoosier." Even without a primary opponent, Myers likely will struggle to mount a credible campaign against Gov. Eric Holcomb.

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**MAINE**

**LEPAGE TO RUN FOR GOVERNOR:** Former Gov. Paul LePage [said](#) Thursday he is exploring the possibility of running for his old office in 2022. "We are working on it. I want to see what happens this year with the election," he told WAGM, a local Maine media outlet. LePage also clarified that he and his wife, who own a residence in Florida, will be Maine residents. LePage, who served two terms as governor from 2011 to 2019, was blocked by term limits for running a third consecutive time.

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**MARYLAND**

**TRONE MAY BE MAKING MOVES TO RUN FOR GOVERNOR:** A number of sources close to U.S. Rep. David J. Trone [say](#) the first-term congressman is already eyeing an exit from Washington, setting his sights instead on Maryland's wide-open 2022 Democratic gubernatorial primary. Two sources close to Trone who requested not to be named in this report confirmed that the freshman congressman is making moves to launch a 2022 gubernatorial campaign. Trone announced in a late-January email to supporters that he would seek re-election in Maryland's 6th District, a heavily gerrymandered district encompassing all of Garrett, Allegany and Washington Counties and pieces of Frederick and Montgomery Counties. A multimillionaire alcohol mogul from Potomac, Trone is expected to dump millions of his personal fortune into a gubernatorial campaign, sources say. Trone spent nearly \$30 million of his own money between two back-to-back congressional races in 2016 (the 8th District; Trone was defeated in the primary) and 2018 (the 6th District).

**MISSOURI**

**PARSON, GALLOWAY ANNOUNCE THEY ARE RUNNING FOR GOVERNOR:** The governor's race [started](#) in earnest Tuesday when the two front-runners filed their bids for office. Incumbent Republican Gov. Mike Parson and Democratic State Auditor Nicole Galloway each held news conferences as they made their candidacies official. Parson said this is the first and probably last time he will file for governor. He ran for lieutenant governor in 2016 and moved up when former Gov. Eric Greitens resigned. Galloway spoke about her track record as state auditor, saying her investigations have led to almost 50 criminal charges for public officials over allegations of corruption. The primaries will be held Aug. 4. Other candidates who have filed to run for governor are State Rep. Jim Neely, R-Cameron, and Raleigh Ritter of Seneca. Democrats include Antoin Johnson and Jimmie Matthews, both of St. Louis. Libertarian Rik Combs of Lohman has also filed.

**CAN GALLOWAY BECOME NEXT GOVERNOR:** Nearly [every](#) day, Nicole Galloway eats a bowl of Kashi cereal for breakfast and a can of chicken fajita soup for lunch. Her favorite band is The Beatles. A Fenton native, she played soccer in college; now she and her husband are raising three boys near Mizzou's campus. She is a certified public accountant. She's also an extrovert with an air horn-grade laugh that, as a former colleague puts it, "can fill up a room from two rooms away." Many who know her describe her with the same adjective: "normal." She's just a normal person, they say, almost apologetically, as if unable to explain a normal person's entry into politics. Galloway is the sole Democrat among the six elected statewide officeholders in Jefferson City. The governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney general, treasurer—they're all Republicans (and all men). The General Assembly is ruby red, too, with a GOP supermajority. The woman crashing this party is Galloway, the state auditor since 2015. She presents herself as a good-government crusader and a "Missouri Democrat"—one whose stances on such issues as gun control and ethics reform are commonsense and shared by a majority of Show-Me State voters. Though Galloway hasn't won her party's primary for the gubernatorial race, she's the clear favorite, and her campaign is drawing national support. She's getting advice from the Democratic Governors Association, which spent millions in recent years notching gubernatorial wins in nine states that President Donald Trump carried. Trump won Missouri by 19 points in 2016, but the DGA has released a memo calling the upcoming governor's race "wide open" and praising Galloway for her "unique cross-party appeal." (She was reelected as auditor in 2018 after winning eight Missouri counties that, on the same day, picked conservative Josh Hawley for U.S. senator.)

**SCHMITT ANNOUNCES RUN TO KEEP ATTORNEY GENERAL SEAT:** Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt [announced](#) his candidacy to keep the seat. Schmitt was appointed to the position in 2019 by Governor Parson after Josh Hawley was elected to the U.S. Senate. Schmitt was previously elected as the state's treasurer in 2016. Schmitt is the only republican candidate to publicly launch a campaign for the office. In the Democratic primary, former assistant attorney general Elad Gross and former federal prosecutor Rich Finneran previously announced their candidacy. Candidates have until March 31 to officially file to run. The statewide primary will be held August 4 with the general election taking place November 3.

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**MONTANA**

**SCHREINER ENDS CAMPAIGN FOR GOVERNOR:** House Minority Leader Casey Schreiner of Great Falls [ended](#) his campaign for the Democratic nomination for governor of Montana, saying he does not have the resources to run a competitive campaign. Schreiner's campaign raised just over \$15,000 in the final three months of 2019 and was left with just over \$8,000 in the bank for the primary, campaign finance records show. Schreiner is prevented by term limits from seeking re-election to the House and told The Associated Press he has "no immediate plans" to run for another office. Schreiner's withdrawal leaves Lt. Gov. Mike Cooney and businesswoman Whitney Williams as the two remaining Democrats running in the June 2 primary. Schreiner did not announce an endorsement.

**LEADING DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL ACCUSED INELIGIBLE:** A former Montana Democratic legislator [accused](#) a fellow Democrat running for attorney general of the state of being ineligible for the post. The Montana Constitution stipulates that to be the state's attorney general, an individual must be an "attorney in good standing admitted to practice law in Montana who has engaged in the active practice thereof for at least five years before election." But Raph Graybill, who's running for Montana Attorney General in a two-way Democratic primary, has only three years of experience actively practicing law in the state, disqualifying him from holding the position, according to a complaint filed Monday by former state legislator David Wanzenried.

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## **NORTH CAROLINA**

**GUBERNATORIAL PRIMARIES ARE UNDERWAY:** A new year could bring about changes in leadership in North Carolina. With the North Carolina primaries on March 3, the election for governor will soon be in full swing. Incumbent Democratic candidate Gov. Roy Cooper is [running](#) again for office, but not uncontested. There are two candidates running for the Republican bid for governor, N.C. Lieutenant Governor Dan Forest of Charlotte and N.C. Rep. Holly Grange (R-New Hanover) of Wilmington. Ernest Reeves is challenging Cooper for the Democratic bid. Forest has been lieutenant governor since being elected in 2012, presiding over the N.C. Senate. He also sits on the State Board of Education and the State Board of Community Colleges. Forest has campaigned on making rural towns more of a priority.

**GOP HOPING TO DEFEAT AG STEIN:** North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein [frequently](#) takes on President Donald Trump in court. Republican primary voters have three choices for who will try to beat Stein in November, and they come from three different legal backgrounds. They are Sam Hayes, Chris Mumma and Jim O'Neill. Stein won by only fractions of a percent in 2016 — a rare bright spot for North Carolina Democrats in a year Trump carried the state. Like many other statewide races in 2020, the race for attorney general is expected to be close yet again. As the state's top lawyer, and the head of the NC Department of Justice, the attorney general is an important elected position that takes the lead on both criminal and civil issues. Stein was a deputy to then-attorney general (and now governor) Roy Cooper in the early 2000s. He represented Wake County in the state Senate from 2008 until 2016, when he won the election to replace Cooper as attorney general. Stein has been more active than some of the state's past AGs in involving North Carolina in national politics, joining numerous lawsuits against the Trump administration. Pew Charitable Trusts, which monitors public policy trends, has called Stein one of the most politically active Democratic attorneys general of the Trump era.

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## **UTAH**

**GARBETT JOINS CROWDED GOP GUBERNATORIAL FIELD:** Jan Garbett, who briefly ran for Congress in 2018 as a member of the new United Utah Party and for lieutenant governor as a Democrat two years earlier, [said](#) she's running for governor as a Republican to give voters like her who don't support GOP President Donald Trump a choice. Garbett, who co-founded Garbett Homes with her husband more than 30 years ago, said she was "all set" to make another run against Rep. Chris Stewart, R-Utah, in the 2nd Congressional District, this time as a Republican, after dropping out of that race in 2018 to help with the family business. But Garbett said she changed her mind after hearing that all of the six Republicans running for governor backed the president during their first debate at the Silicon Slopes Tech Summit at the Salt Palace Convention Center on Jan. 31. GOP Gov. Gary Herbert is not seeking reelection after more than a decade in office.

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### VERMONT

**SCOTT IS IN A POSITION OF STRENGTH, POLL:** Nine months before the general election, Republican Gov. Phil Scott [leads](#) his only announced Democratic rivals by more than 20% in head to head contests, according to the VPR-Vermont PBS 2020 poll. Scott enjoys substantial leads in overall support, name recognition and favorability among both Democrats and Republicans compared with his two gubernatorial challengers. If the November election was held today, Scott would receive 52% of the vote to Progressive/Democrat Lt. Gov. David Zuckerman's 29%, according to the poll. If the governor's opponent is former education Secretary Rebecca Holcombe, the margin of victory would be even steeper, with 55% of the 600 Vermonters polled saying they would support the governor, while 20% said they would vote for Holcombe. In a race between Scott and Zuckerman, 15% of voters said they did not know who they would support; between Holcombe and the governor 22% said they were undecided.

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### WASHINGTON

**INSLEE, EYMAN LEAD AS TOP CANDIDATES FOR GOVERNOR:** Gov. Jay Inslee is [heading](#) into the 2020 election with a less-than-ideal approval rating, but the lack of a viable Republican challenger could play well in Inslee's favor, according to two political analysts' take on an exclusive KING 5 News poll. The poll found 41% of Washington registered voters surveyed approve of the job Jay Inslee is doing as governor, and 39% disapprove. Another 20% aren't sure.

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