



# SUMMARIES OF GOVERNORS' 2019 STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESSES

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## Overview

As of April 15th, all 50 governors have given a State of the State speech or an inaugural address detailing the condition of their state. Following the election of 20 new governors in November, this year saw the most new governors give a State of the State speech since 2011. In the majority of addresses, governors highlighted the current economic and fiscal strength of their state including low unemployment, job growth, and increasing state revenues, with many noting that the state of their state is strong. However, many governors also discussed uneven economic progress in their state and the need to ensure that no segment of the population is left behind.

While governors discussed a wide-range of policy proposals in their State of the State speeches, several issues received increased attention. Many governors stated that education is their top priority, while also discussing providing a quality education for all. Several governors spoke about the need to support underperforming school districts in either rural or urban areas. Continuing the trend of last year, a large number of governors called for teacher pay raises including setting minimum salary levels, while several also detailed various other strategies to recruit and retain teachers. Many governors focused on supporting early education, especially in the area of expanding preschool access, while others spoke about increasing the number of students in full-day kindergarten. An area of increased emphasis this year was school safety with proposals centering around increased funding for law enforcement officers at schools and school counselors. In the area of higher education, many governors called for

increasing resources to colleges and universities with several proposing increased student financial aid including free tuition programs. Governors also stressed the linkage between education and workforce development while talking about the need to build a 21st century workforce. Several governors outlined a comprehensive strategy on workforce development and job training, while discussing ways to address the skills gap and provide increased career and technical education opportunities.

Issues associated with health and human services was another area of focus for governors, including the need to increase affordable healthcare options. A few governors from states that have not already expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act called for the expansion of Medicaid, while others discussed ways to implement recent voter approved Medicaid expansion. Several governors highlighted new proposals focused on behavioral and mental health, while calling for increased funding. Other areas of healthcare focus included expanding home and community based services, and the need to increase spending for the Children's Health Insurance Program due to the decreasing federal share. As has been the case in the past several years, many governors spoke about the drug crisis. While several noted recent successes in tackling opioids, they also talked about the need to remain vigilant while calling for increased drug treatment options. Governors also once again spoke about the need to address child welfare, including increasing the number of caseworkers and supporting foster care and adoption. An area that received increased focus this year was housing, with several governors highlighting proposals to address affordable housing and homelessness.



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Other critical state policy issues were also highlighted in the speeches. In the area of corrections, much of the focus was on continuing criminal justice reforms that have begun in recent years. Governors also discussed increasing salaries for correctional officers, efforts to reduce recidivism, parole and probation reform, expanding drug treatment options for offenders, addressing prison overcapacity, the need for juvenile justice reforms, increased penalties for violent offenders, and restoring voting rights for felons. While a large number of states have increased transportation funding over the past several years, a few governors spoke about the continuing infrastructure crisis in their state and the need to find a new, bipartisan transportation funding solution. Governors also spoke about a number of other infrastructure challenges including modernizing transportation systems, addressing deferred maintenance, increased funding and reforms for mass transit, and expanding broadband. One program area that received added focus in this year's State of the State speeches was the environment and natural resources. Several governors spoke about the need to increase clean and renewable energy in their state, while others discussed addressing climate change, improving clean water, disaster response reforms, and supporting agriculture.

While many governors highlighted recent efforts in lowering taxes and maintaining a competitive tax system, only a few governors discussed significant tax reform plans this year. Specific major proposals included increasing the tax rate on high-income earners, lowering personal income taxes, and expanding the sales tax base. Other proposals included efforts to reduce local property tax burdens, expanding the earned income tax credit, tax breaks for small business owners, and tax exemptions for military retirement pay. Governors also spoke about the need for tax modernization, simplifying the tax code, examining tax incentives, and responding to changes included in 2017's federal tax reform bill. Additionally, a handful of governors called for the legalization and taxation of marijuana, while a few others called for legalizing and taxing sports betting.

Finally, governors spoke about various government reform efforts. Regarding state finances, several stressed the need to increase the size of reserves, maintain structural budget balance, ensure long-term budget sustainability, use one-time money for one-time purposes, protect bond ratings, and address long-term pension challenges. Additionally, more governors called for increasing state employee pay than has been seen in recent years. Governors also stressed the need for increased transparency, cutting red tape, reducing regulations, and increased bipartisanship.

Below are state-by-state summaries of State of the State addresses with links to the speeches. Additionally, click [here](#) to access governors' proposed budgets for fiscal 2020.

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[Alabama's](#) governor said that the state is growing stronger every day. The governor noted a series of recent successes including new capital investments, strong job growth, a low unemployment rate, a middle-class tax cut, a leaner state government, and educational advancements. She then focused on steps the state can make to improve its infrastructure, prisons, and education system. Regarding infrastructure, the governor called for a phased in 10-cent increase in the state gas tax to help address the poor condition of the state's roads and bridges. Concerning prisons, the governor proposed including an additional \$31 million in the general fund budget to hire 500 new correctional officers and increase the pay scale for all prison security personnel. The governor said her education budget will provide \$25 million to expand pre-K, increase higher education spending by \$75 million, and allow a four percent raise for all teachers. Finally, the governor spoke about several other issues including launching an Alabama Counts campaign to ensure that the state has maximum participation in the 2020 U.S. Census, funding a new co-op program for Alabama's Historically Black Colleges and Universities, establishing the Governor's Office of Education and Workforce Transformation, additional funding for mental health programs, funding to hire 50 new state troopers, and a two percent raise for all state employees.

[Alaska's](#) new governor said that his plan for the state includes declaring war on criminals, getting spending in line with revenue, protecting Alaska's Permanent Fund dividends, growing the economy and putting residents to work, and restoring public trust in government and elected officials. Regarding fiscal issues, the governor highlighted his plan to pay back money owed to Alaskans on their Permanent Fund Dividends and discussed his order to centralize the budget-making functions of all departments under the Office of Management and Budget. The governor also stressed the need for an honest budget and announced plans to propose three constitutional amendments to limit spending and increase savings, prevent changes to the Permanent Fund without a vote of the people, and prohibit tax changes without a vote of the people. He also highlighted planned efforts to diversify the economy of the state. Finally, the governor talked about making public safety a priority and called for additional state troopers, more local control, and more prosecutors, among other items.

[Arizona's](#) governor called on state leaders to put party labels aside and focus on things that matter such as securing the state's water future, expanding economic opportunity, keeping students safe, investing in public education with a focus on results and reforms, preparing against future downturns, and protecting public safety. Specific proposals include ratifying the Drought Contingency Plan, implementing elements of the Safe Arizona Schools Plan, making sure that school districts use previously approved increased funds for teacher raises, expanding the Arizona Teachers Academy, and greater investments in career and technical education. The governor also said that his budget proposal is balanced, funds priorities such as public safety, child safety, and education above and beyond inflation, includes targeted investments in critical areas, and increases the rainy day fund to a record balance of \$1 billion.

[Arkansas'](#) governor began by highlighting successes in the state over the past four years including population growth, moving residents out of poverty, reforming the child welfare system, reforming the criminal justice system, transforming the lottery, lowering taxes for individuals making less than \$75,000, investing in pre-K and technology education, improving the healthcare system, and increased savings for difficult times. Later in his speech, the governor reaffirmed his intent to transform state government, raise teacher pay, develop a long-term highway plan, and implement a growth agenda that includes more and better-paying jobs, increased attainment levels in higher education, a strong diversified economy and competitive tax rates. The governor also said that his budget includes additional funding for public safety, allocates \$60 million to raise the minimum teacher pay by \$4,000 over the next four years, increases funding for agriculture, and continues funding of \$2.5 million per year for Crisis Stabilization Units. Finally, the governor called for a third phase of tax cuts as well as simplifying the rate structure and raising the standard deduction.

[California's](#) new governor said that by every traditional measure the state of the state is strong including a record-breaking surplus, rising jobs, robust job creation, and the finest system of higher education anywhere in the world. However, he also talked about the need to work together on challenges like rail, water, energy, protecting migrants, care for seniors, help for the homeless, and tackling the affordability crisis. The governor discussed a number of specific proposals including redeploying National Guard units, shortening a planned high-speed rail link, altering a water plan to only build one tunnel instead of two, providing sustained funding for clean water, and making sure that PG&E upholds its obligations. Additionally, the governor called for examining K-12 funding, providing transparency for all public schools, tackling homelessness including increased funding for emergency shelters, developing a master plan on aging, providing \$750 million for localities to help address affordable housing, devoting more than \$1 billion to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates and address the provider shortage, expanding the earned income tax credit, and developing a comprehensive strategy on workforce development and job training. Finally, the governor said that in the coming months he will be discussing issues such as climate change, reforming the tax code and the criminal justice system, paid family leave, universal pre-school, and free community college.

[Colorado's](#) new governor focused on ensuring that every Coloradan has the opportunity to succeed, and his priorities included ensuring a quality education, increasing access to affordable health care, bolstering renewable energy, and simplifying the tax code. Regarding education, the governor wants to ensure that all school districts offer free, full-day kindergarten while also expanding free preschool to 8,000 more children. Additionally, he discussed offering student loan relief to teachers, reforming the student loan process, and steps to improve graduation rates. In the area of health care, the governor proposed providing paid parental leave for all state employees and announced the creation of the Office of Saving People Money on Health Care. Other areas of focus also include finding a sustainable funding source for the Colorado Water Plan, addressing climate change including 100 percent renewable energy by 2040, finding a bipartisan funding mechanism for future



transportation needs, expanding access to broadband, reforming the tax code to make it fairer for all, and the need for criminal justice reform.

[Connecticut's](#) new governor said that it is time to return to the state's inventive and entrepreneurial roots, and that its future lies in doubling down on what makes us great and reimagining our potential; he added that it all starts with the best educated workforce in the world. The governor said that his budget proposal will be balanced not just for this year but for the foreseeable future, and will contain no funny math or budgetary gamesmanship. He also said that he will listen to any good idea and reach out to business leaders, philanthropic leaders and volunteers, state employees and labor leaders, and local officials. The governor concluded by discussing economic revitalization and said that he will focus on four areas: investing in an all-digital government; investing wisely in urban centers in order to attract millennials, top talent, and leading companies; creating a 21<sup>st</sup> century transportation system; and bringing its workforce into the 21<sup>st</sup> century including closely aligning with job training.

[Delaware's](#) governor outlined his priorities of strengthening the state's economy, improving public schools, and protecting the state's quality of life. The governor highlighted economic successes over the past two years and said that the state will aggressively pursue developers to take advantage of Opportunity Zones, expand the Downtown Development District program, will direct more funding to housing programs, and will work to expand broadband access. Regarding education, the governor said the focus should be on early childhood education, supporting teachers, and getting children to perform at grade level. Specifically, he discussed helping low-income parents afford childcare, providing student loan assistance for teachers, and the creation of a new Opportunity Funding Program to help provide more funding for low-income students. The governor also highlighted efforts in lowering healthcare costs, tackling drug abuse, reforming the criminal justice system, creating a Budget Stabilization Fund to use in an economic downturn, and a new program to offer monetary rewards to state employees who come up with innovative cost-saving initiatives.

[Florida's](#) new governor said that the political branches must work together to build off the foundation that has been laid and set the stage for the future success of the state. He added that in order to accomplish this task, the state needs to be bold including in the areas of championing economic opportunity, protecting the environment, improving education, and defending the safety of communities. The governor highlighted actions he has already taken to protect natural resources and improve water quality, while requesting \$2.5 billion over the next four years for water resources projects and Everglades restoration. When talking about the economy and jobs, the governor called for remaining a low tax state with no income tax, modernizing infrastructure to help promote economic development, and reforms to the occupational licensing process. Another area of focus was education and the governor said that he will continue to support four-year institutions, expand workforce education, replace Common Core with a high-quality curriculum, create a new teacher bonus program with bonuses approaching \$10,000, and expand a scholarship program for low-

income students. Concerning healthcare, the governor said that he supports allowing Floridians to purchase prescription drugs from Canada at lower prices, will work to maintain private health insurance policies, and foster innovation and competition in the health care system. Finally, the governor spoke about several other areas including his support for a series of recommendations to improve security at schools, his desire to prohibit sanctuary cities in Florida, and his opposition to the regimes in Venezuela and Cuba while offering support to Israel.

[Georgia's](#) new governor began his speech by highlighting economic successes in the state over the past sixteen years and said that he will work to expand economic opportunities, recruit industry leaders, and review regulations that make it difficult for job creators. The governor then discussed items in his budget proposal including a \$3,000 pay increase for certified teachers, a 2 percent merit increase for all state employees, \$69 million in one-time funding for school safety grants, and \$8.4 million in additional funding to address mental health issues in schools. The governor also spoke of the need to expand access to high-speed internet, quality healthcare, and good education in rural areas of the state. Finally, he discussed the need for additional criminal justice reform, the creation of a new gang taskforce, and \$1 million to help craft flexibility options for the state's Medicaid plan.

[Hawaii's](#) governor began by noting that the state is sound, highlighting their level of health coverage, low unemployment, the highest bond rating in the state's history, and a budget that does not spend all that the state brings in. He then highlighted his proposals regarding early childhood education, homelessness, affordable housing, and the Transit Accommodations Tax. Regarding education, the governor called for making early learning an integral part of children's overall elementary curriculum and proposed shifting schools that are currently kindergarten through sixth grade to pre-K through fifth grade. The governor said that in order to address homelessness the state must tackle affordable housing and said his budget includes \$315 million for housing over the next two years, and proposed building condominiums for sale on state land. The governor also called for a focus on land conservation, sustainability, the continued replacement of an outdated correctional center, and reforming the Transit Accommodations Tax to grant counties a straight percentage of funds collected from the tax.

[Idaho's](#) new governor said that he will make decisions with a long-term focus of creating a regulatory and tax environment where residents can get good-paying jobs, having world-class schools, delivering accessible and affordable healthcare, and making government responsive, transparent, and accountable. The governor said that the budget will remain balanced and that he hopes to use the budget surplus to eliminate the grocery tax next year. Additionally, he said that the number one priority for the budget is education and called for creating a children's cabinet, doubling literacy program funding, raising starting teacher pay to \$40,000, expanding career technical opportunities, increasing funding for Opportunity Scholarship applicants, and creating a new task force to look at the education system holistically. The governor also said that he will honor

the will of the people and expand Medicaid, wants to modernize IT and cybersecurity, is calling for increased beds to relief prison overcrowding, will issue an executive order on substance abuse, and wants to create a First-Time Home Buyers Savings Account. He also expressed plans to work with the legislature to increase broadband connectivity, issue executive orders to reduce regulatory burdens, and address transportation deficiencies. Finally, the governor said the state needs to increase efforts to expand water infrastructure and protect public lands.

[Illinois'](#) new governor, in his budget address, said that the state must be honest about its challenges and that real fiscal stability requires a long-term commitment to paying down debt, investing in critical infrastructure, and stabilizing the pension system. The governor stated that in order to reduce costs and increase revenue over the long-term the state must make investments in education, livable wages, innovative human service programs, and job training. He added that the state needs a fairer tax system where wealthier individuals pay a higher income tax rate, instead of the current flat tax system. Additionally, he said that a fairer tax system would be part of a long-term solution to the state's pension crisis. The governor also called for various near-term revenue increases including legalizing and regulating marijuana bringing in \$170 million, legalizing and taxing sports betting generating \$200 million, and enacting a tax on insurance companies which would lead to an additional \$390 million to cover part of the state's share for Medicaid. The governor said that his fiscal 2020 budget proposal reprioritizes and controls spending while targeting increases in the areas of education, health and human services, and public safety. Specific proposals included increasing the Early Childhood Block Grant by \$100 million, a five percent increase for universities and community colleges, a \$50 million increase in the Monetary Award Program for low and moderate income students, increasing the income eligibility threshold for the Childcare Assistance Program, opening a new veterans' home, hiring an additional 126 Department of Child and Family Services caseworkers, and two new Illinois State Police cadet classes.

[Indiana's](#) governor began his speech by highlighting the strong financial condition of the state before discussing the five pillars in his Next Level Agenda. The governor said that operating within an honestly balance budget, protecting the state's triple A credit rating, and keeping eleven percent in reserves has helped to cultivate a strong and diverse economy. In the area of infrastructure, the governor wants to accelerate certain road projects and invest more in broadband. To help support workforce development, the governor called for an expansion of the Next Level Jobs initiative and to help more students earn postsecondary credentials before they graduate. He also spoke of public health initiatives such as adopting recommendations from the school safety report, implementing child welfare reform, and improving access to substance abuse treatments. Additionally, he highlighted efforts to modernize state government. Finally, the governor discussed efforts to increase teacher pay including spending \$140 million to pay off a pension liability to allow local school districts more flexibility to increase pay, and the creation of the Next Level Teacher Pay Commission.

[Iowa's](#) governor said the condition of the state is strong and that the budget is balanced, cash reserves are full, wages are going up, and unemployment is at an all-time low. She then called on the legislature to appropriate \$20 million for her Future Ready Iowa initiative to help prepare residents for in demand careers. Regarding education, the governor called for \$93 million in additional funding for preschool through high school, \$11.2 million to help districts with disproportionate transportation costs, and a \$1 million increase in STEM funding. The governor also discussed her rural programs including expanding broadband, doubling workforce housing tax credits, and the establishment of a Center for Rural Revitalization. Mental health was another area of emphasis with the governor calling for increased funding, additional psychiatric residencies at the University of Iowa, more money for home and community based children's mental health services, and \$3 million to train teachers to better recognize the early signs of mental illness. Finally, the governor highlighted job-training programs in prisons, efforts to direct people to rehabilitation instead of prison or jail, and called for a constitutional amendment to restore voting rights to felons.

[Kansas'](#) new governor said that the state of state is improving, and that 2019 offers an unmatched opportunity for Kansas to continue its upward climb, adding that in order to rebuild the state there will need to be cooperation, compromise, and bipartisanship. The governor stated that her number one priority will always be public schools and that the state will properly fund its schools every year moving forward and will end the cycle of litigation. Additionally, the governor separated education funding from the rest of the budget in order to more easily and quickly consider school funding. Another area of focus was rural communities with the governor saying that she will release a strategic plan for rural development that includes developing infrastructure, addressing the shortage of affordable housing, and supporting agribusiness. Furthermore, she stated that by expanding Medicaid the state would be able to help rural hospitals and provide healthcare to 150,000 more Kansans. A final critical challenge highlighted by the governor was the foster care system and she said that her budget provides funding for the Families First Prevention Services Act, hiring more social workers, and prioritizing the State Children's Health Insurance Program, while also proposing rebuilding the Department for Children and Families. The governor also stated that her budget proposal will be balanced without raising taxes, will prioritize what matters most, and will live within its means.

[Kentucky's](#) governor, in his State of the Commonwealth and budget address, said that the state of the commonwealth is very strong, and that we have much to celebrate. He noted a series of successes over the past three years including enacting right to work legislation, repealing prevailing wage, tax modernization, increased pension funding, reducing government regulations, increased per-pupil funding, scholarships for in-demand fields, and healthcare reforms. Even with the recent successes, the governor said that the state still faces a series of challenges, calling for structural reforms to the pension system to address unfunded liabilities, moving to more of a consumption-based tax system, implementing work and community service requirements in the Medicaid



program, needing to pass legislation to protect students in the classroom, and improving the foster care and adoption system to help find homes for children throughout the state. Finally, the governor said the state is in a strong position for future growth given its central location, strong workforce, low cost of living, appealing climate, and low energy rates.

[Louisiana's](#) governor, in his regular session remarks, said that the state is moving in the right direction and is much stronger and in a better place than it was a few years ago. The governor noted that the state now has a budget surplus instead of a deficit, funding for higher education has stabilized, healthcare services are not on the chopping block, and that the state's GDP is the highest it has ever been. Other recent successes highlighted by the governor include ending the waiting list for developmental disability waiver services, increasing the number of children adopted out of foster care, toughening laws against human trafficking, criminal justice reform, and disaster response. He added that the reason for the state's success is an improving economy, an attractive business climate, a productive workforce, and a healthy workforce, partly due to Medicaid expansion. However, the governor said that there is still much work to do to continue moving Louisiana forward. Regarding education, he called for a multi-year process to increase teacher pay beginning with \$1,000 pay raise this year, a \$500 raise for school support personnel, increased K-12 funding, and ensuring that all high school students have access to dual enrollment opportunities at colleges. The governor also highlighted a series of other proposals including increasing the minimum wage to \$9 per hour, eliminating pay secrecy, added protections to ensure coverage for pre-existing conditions, enhanced data reporting of drug overdoses, coordinated efforts to address water infrastructure challenges, and additional support for veterans including establishing the Veterans First Business Initiative.

[Maine's](#) new governor, in her state of the budget address, said that Maine has many assets but also has many challenges and it cannot afford to stand still. She stated that her budget is about health, opportunity, prosperity, education, and in sum, about hope. The governor spoke about implementing Medicaid expansion and said that it will help up to 70,000 people who currently lack affordable healthcare as well as help rural hospitals, lower inflation pressures on private health insurance, and will help the economy. The governor also spoke about a series of steps to tackle the opioid crisis and other public health measures including expanding access to low-cost drugs for the elderly and disabled. In the area of education, the governor said that her budget will provide an additional \$126 million for K-12, make pre-K programs available to every four-year old, ensure that no teacher makes less than \$40,000, increase funding for adult education and career technical high schools, and increase funding for higher education institutions as well as scholarships. The governor also noted that her budget will help localities and provide relief for property taxpayers through a combination of more local school aid, more revenue sharing, more homestead reimbursements, more disaster assistance, and more money for jails. Other areas of emphasis included investing more in infrastructure, expanding broadband, increasing funds for rural development, tackling climate change, and bolstering public safety. Finally, the governor said that her budget is sustainable, does

not increase taxes, includes no gimmicks, does not have a negative balance, and is pro-growth, pro-jobs, and pro-people.

[Maryland's](#) governor spoke about bipartisan cooperation and progress in the state over the past four years including increasing reserves, cutting taxes, strong economic growth, record job creation, increased education funding, tackling the opioid crisis, and infrastructure improvements. He said that he will introduce eight different proposals for additional tax relief including tax cuts to help retirees, tax incentives to help provide paid parental leave, tax cuts for college graduates, tax breaks for small business owners, and tax incentives for job training and workforce development. The governor noted that his budget proposal increases school funding for every school district, while the casino lockbox will provide an additional \$4.4 billion for schools; he also called on the legislature to pass both the Building Opportunity Fund for increased school construction and the Accountability in Education Act. Additionally, he spoke about the need for increased efforts to address violent crimes including approving the Repeat Firearms Offenders Act. Finally, the governor called for passing the Clean Cars Act and to support clean and renewable energy solutions, and asked the legislature to support redistricting reform.

[Massachusetts'](#) governor, in his second inaugural address, talked about progress Massachusetts has made over the past four years including erasing a structural budget deficit, depositing over \$650 million in the stabilization fund, slowing the growth rate of Medicaid, adding seats to vocational schools, reforms to the Department of Children and Families, doubling the earned income tax credit, investments in clean energy, and regulatory reform. The governor then discussed areas in which there remains work to be done. Specifically, the governor mentioned new opportunities to help underperforming school districts, the need to continue to invest in public transportation, making investments to prepare the commonwealth for zero emission and autonomous vehicles, reducing greenhouse gases, increasing housing production to make housing more affordable, further criminal justice reform, and initiatives to help modernize medicine including expanded use of telemedicine. Finally, the governor highlighted areas of partnership between the commonwealth and localities and the sharing of best practices to help improve the delivery of services.

[Michigan's](#) new governor spoke about the challenges the state faces, steps to address them, and her priorities for the next year and beyond. She said that while there are some wonderful things happening in the state, it faces two significant challenges: failing infrastructure and the crisis in education and skills. The governor noted that the infrastructure crisis is thirty years in the making and that incremental fund shifts will not solve the problem, while highlighting the need to make significant investments in better roads, safer roads, and water quality. Regarding education, the governor stated that the state has seen a decline in childhood literacy while also seeing the slowest growth in K-12 spending of any state over the past twenty-five years. The governor then highlighted a number of education and workforce related initiatives including a goal of increasing the number of Michiganders with a college degree to sixty percent by the year 2030, launching Michigan

Reconnect to provide training to adults seeking an in-demand industry certification or associate degree, and implementing the MI Opportunity Scholarship guaranteeing two-years of debt free community college or two years of tuition assistance at a four-year college for all graduating high school seniors that qualify. Other areas highlighted by the governor included streamlining the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy; joining the U.S. Climate Alliance; expressing concerns to the federal government regarding Medicaid work requirements; and joining with other states to defend the Affordable Care Act in court. Finally, the governor said that her upcoming budget proposal will offer a real solution to rebuilding infrastructure, will give educators the tools they need, and will help make Michigan the home for opportunity, while adding that she will work to ensure that the budget is completed on time and does not contain gimmicks.

[Minnesota's](#) governor said that the state of the state is strong, while adding that the state is at a crossroads. The governor said that the state can choose which type of story to write, and whether to create a better way of life for all and lead the nation in getting things done. The governor called for bipartisanship and to not let ideology get in the way of educating children, providing basic healthcare to all citizens, giving mayors and entrepreneurs the tools to succeed, and investing in transportation including improving road safety. Throughout his speech, the governor used stories of Minnesotans from across the state to highlight policy proposals, and called on the legislature to not let petty arguments and differences stand in the way of doing what is needed to help move the state forward.

[Mississippi's](#) governor mainly focused on successes in the state over the past seven years including economic growth, educational advancements, and improvements in health care. The governor noted that while the state passed a \$100 million increase for teacher pay in 2014, he supports a second pay raise. The governor also called for the legislature to pass and fund the Mississippi Safe School Act. An area where he said more work remains to be done is in foster care and providing necessary funding to the Department of Child Protection Services. Additionally, the governor called for further criminal justice reform and efforts to reduce recidivism rates.

[Missouri's](#) governor focused on his two core priorities of workforce development and infrastructure, while also discussing changes in corrections, healthcare reform, restructuring state government, and increased savings for the future. He proposed total investment of approximately \$75 million for workforce development programs including \$22 million for a new scholarship program called Fast Track which allows residents to receive training in high demand areas, \$10 million for a new fund known as Missouri One to help businesses upgrade workers skills and \$16 million for Missouri Excels, a program for higher education to develop and expand employer-driven education. In the area of infrastructure, the governor proposed using budget savings to free up nearly \$350 million in state and federal resources to accelerate needed infrastructure projects including nearly 250 bridges; he also spoke of spending \$5 million to expand broadband and \$50 million for a transportation cost share program to assist localities. Other issues discussed included a plan to consolidate the operations at two correctional facilities, and increased funding for mental health services, autism

awareness and research, and the use of telemedicine technology. Finally, the governor spoke about focusing on outcomes and less on arguing over inputs, demanding greater efficiency and accountability, reducing the size of the state government workforce, and saving nearly \$120 million in this year's budget proposal.

[Montana's](#) governor highlighted progress in the state over the past six years and noted that the unemployment rate is at its lowest in a decade, wages have increased, red tape has been removed, record investments in education have been made, and the uninsured rate has sharply declined. The governor said that there is more work to be done in education and called for investing \$30 million over the next two years for pre-K, freezing in-state college tuition, and providing state-funded need-based financial aid for students and adult learners. Regarding healthcare, the governor asked legislators to remove the sunset on Medicaid expansion, lower insurance premiums by creating a state reinsurance program, and passing legislation requiring the disclosure of medical costs before treatment. He also emphasized the need for additional infrastructure spending and proposed a \$290 million investment. Finally, the governor called for increasing revenue the state receives from hotel guests, car rentals, investment licenses, tobacco products, and hard liquor in order to ensure that the budget remains balanced, priorities are funded, and the state has an adequate reserve of \$300 million.

[Nebraska's](#) governor said the state of the state is strong and growing and noted that over the past four years Nebraska has made progress in job training and workforce development, cutting regulatory red tape, controlling spending in order to deliver tax relief, and promoting the state both nationally and internationally. The governor said that this year's budget keeps the rate of spending growth to 3.1 percent, with much of it attributable to Medicaid expansion and state aid to public schools. He then highlighted three ways to help the state grow. First, the governor discussed economic development and workforce development and announced the creation of the Nebraska Talent Scholarships program to attract students in targeted programs, and the Developing Youth Talent Initiative to connect middle school students to opportunities in manufacturing and IT. Second, he spoke about ways to make government more efficient and customer focused including the consolidation of certain programs. Third, the governor spoke about tax relief including three separate property tax relief proposals which would provide \$51 million in direct property tax relief, establish a statutory floor of \$275 million for the Property Tax Relief Fund, and establishing a three percent cap on property taxes levied by local governments; additionally, he proposed a 50 percent tax cut for all veterans receiving military benefits. Other areas the governor discussed included examining tax incentives, fully funding state aid to K-12, fulfilling the voters' directive for Medicaid expansion, and further corrections reforms including an additional 384 high security beds.

[Nevada's](#) new governor said that his budget and priorities are centered around making sure that Nevada's economic recovery reaches every family, that schools prepare every child to reach their potential, and that the healthcare system is there for every Nevadan who needs it. The governor

noted that revenues are expected to increase 3 percent in fiscal 2020 to reach \$4.3 billion, that his budget does not contain any new taxes, and he is calling for annual savings of \$45 million to grow the rainy day fund. The governor spoke about a number of economic development and workforce issues including streamlining processes for small businesses, providing \$10 million for affordable housing, raising the minimum wage, calling for a 3 percent pay increase for state employees, and increasing funding for medical schools, scholarship programs, and career and technical education. In the area of K-12, the governor asked for a 3 percent pay increase for teachers, additional funding to reimburse teachers for school supplies, and increased funding for at-risk students, pre-school development programs, reading initiatives, and school safety programs. Regarding healthcare, he said that he will continue to support the Affordable Care Act, increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for Neonatal and Pediatric Intensive Care, reduce the waitlist for children with autism to get services, increase access to mental health services, and will expand Community Behavioral Health Centers. Finally, the governor highlighted a number of other areas including additional veterans services, increased funding for Meals on Wheels, added staff support to treat mental health and substance abuse in the Parole and Probation division, increased investment in a pilot program for education and skills training for inmates, a 50 percent renewable energy goal by 2030, and funding to ensure that all Nevadans are counted in the 2020 Census.

[New Hampshire's](#) governor, in his inaugural address, said that the state has made great progress in the past two years including establishing full-day kindergarten, enacting comprehensive child protection and welfare bills, tax relief for small businesses, creating long-term solutions for substance abuse, and keeping healthcare for 50,000 low-income residents while instilling the dignity of work. However, the governor said the state must build on the progress by working together, pushing limits, and thinking outside the box. Regarding the budget, the governor stressed the importance of not raising taxes, living within our means, not using the budget for policy-driven battles, and ensuring that surplus funds are spent wisely. The governor said that one of the immediate challenges is retaining and growing a thriving workforce through investing in education at all levels, expanding workforce training, and work requirements for able-bodied individuals. Looking forward, the governor called for examining the reasons behind the state's high rate for pediatric cancer, continuing to tackle the opioid crisis, reforming the foster care system, implementing a new 10-year mental health plan, expanding education choices, the creation of career academies, and investing in renewable energy projects for low-income families and communities.

[New Jersey's](#) governor reiterated his call for an overhaul of the state's tax incentives programs stating that tax incentives must be just one tool in the toolbox and that education, infrastructure, and workforce development are the primary tools for building a stronger and fairer economy. He called for a program that caps the amount of tax incentives that is given out, has clear eligibility and oversight, has flexibility, and works to achieve broader goals of the state. The governor also reflected on accomplishments over the past year including increased pre-K and K-12 funding, enabling 13,000 students to qualify for free community college, enacting a tax on incomes over \$5



million, expanding the earned income tax credit, creating a child and dependent care tax credit, establishing an individual health insurance mandate, restoring Planned Parenthood funding, signing into law an equal pay law, expanding paid sick leave, clean energy efforts, and strengthening gun safety laws. Moving forward, the governor called for fixing NJ Transit, dedicating increased resources to fighting the opioid epidemic, encouraging companies to invest in communities and Opportunity Zones, establishing a \$15 minimum wage, legalizing adult use marijuana, rebuilding the water infrastructure network, a series of voting reform measures, and allowing all residents regardless of status to obtain a driver's license.

[New Mexico's](#) new governor focused her speech on necessary investments in public education, public safety, health care, and economic development. The governor also called for a renewed spirit of congeniality and collaboration. Regarding education, the governor called for an increase of \$500 million for K-12, including 6 percent across-the-board pay raises for educators, \$5 million for a fund for school supplies, and \$60 million in new pre-K classroom slots. She also proposed a 200 percent increase in the Indian Education Fund as well as an additional \$55 million for bilingual and multicultural programs. Additionally, the governor emphasized the need for school safety measures and common-sense gun reform. Other areas of emphasis included a series of measures to tackle opioid addiction, reducing reporting requirements for the health care industry, and a renewed emphasis on child well-being through the Children's Cabinet. Finally, the governor called for raising the minimum wage, equal pay for women, 4 percent pay raises for state employees, an expansion of the Working Families Tax Credit, additional investments for small businesses, reforming film incentives, strengthened efforts for veterans, greater collaboration with tribes, additional investments in infrastructure, and clean and renewable energy goals.

[New York's](#) governor said that the state has made much progress over the past eight years but that we must continue and advance. Some successes he highlighted included raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, paid family leave, free college tuition programs, advancing individuals rights, efforts in gun control and climate change, and investments in infrastructure. The governor said that the agenda for the next year should be a true justice agenda including social justice, racial justice, and economic justice. The governor stated his continued opposition to limiting the state and local tax deduction, called for maintaining the millionaire's tax, and making permanent a two percent cap on local property taxes. Regarding health care, he called for passing legislation protecting those with pre-existing conditions, codifying the health exchange, ensuring continued access to prescription drug coverage, and enacting the Reproductive Health Act and Contraception Fair Act. Other areas of emphasis included continuing to lead on gun safety, added investments in infrastructure, reforming the New York City subway system, reexamining the distribution of aid to local school districts, and protecting immigrants including passing the Dream Act. The governor also discussed the need to increase the use of renewables including making the state's electricity carbon free by 2040, making it easier to vote including automatic voter registration, having Election Day be a state holiday, enacting campaign finance reform, passing legislation to protect public

employees, and added investments in affordable housing. Finally, the governor spoke about the need to ensure that the justice agenda means justice for all through passing the Child Victims Act, approving legislation to prevent discrimination against the LGBTQ community, legalizing marijuana, and replacing the cash bail system.

[North Carolina's](#) governor said that the state of the state is determined, and that the resilience shown in responding to Hurricane Florence demonstrated that it is also time to come together to respond to other challenges. Specifically, he discussed the need to come together to create opportunities in cities and rural communities, as well as coming together to provide health care for hundreds of thousands of working people with no insurance. In discussing the impact of Hurricane Florence, the governor talked about the need to help the state recover stronger and smarter than ever including a focus on resiliency and helping the state address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The governor also discussed the need to increase education opportunities and prepare workers for the jobs of both today and tomorrow. He stated that his budget will put schools and teachers first, while calling for expanding Teaching Fellows scholarships, investing more in early childhood education, and significantly increasing school construction spending. Another area of focus was in building an economy that works for everyone including banning workforce discrimination, increased training options for workers in the skills employers need, and providing tuition free community college for high-demand jobs to help meet the state's goal of an increased number of residents with a post-secondary degree or credential. Additionally, he spoke about the need to increase investments in infrastructure, provide additional support for rural communities, and expand broadband access. Finally, the governor spoke about ways to make the state healthier including the safe storage of coal ash, opposing offshore drilling, and expanding Medicaid to 500,000 working North Carolinians who need help affording health insurance.

[North Dakota's](#) governor said that the state of the state is that we stand at the cusp of a new era in North Dakota's history, and that by harnessing the courage to dare greatly we will cultivate a prosperous future for generations to come. The governor highlighted several areas of progress over the past two years including K-12 advancements, greater collaboration with tribes, and drug recovery programs. He noted the need to spend more on IT projects and called for centralizing cybersecurity. An area of emphasis was solving workforce challenges with the governor calling for dedicating \$30 million in Legacy Fund earnings to career academies, \$40 million in Legacy Fund earnings to the North Dakota Higher Education Challenge Fund, and reforming the state's occupational licensing approach. The governor also proposed granting occupational licensing reciprocity to military spouses and a 100 percent state income tax exemption on military retirement pay. Regarding the budget and state finances, the governor talked about the need to increase accountability and transparency, restore structural balance, increase the size of the Budget Stabilization Fund, and infuse \$265 million to the pension fund to help address an unfunded liability. Other priorities included increasing funds for recovery services, investing more in home and community-based services, increasing the K-12 funding formula to help raise teacher salaries,

and providing greater professional development opportunities for teachers. Finally, the governor called for investing more in infrastructure improvements, school construction, and the construction of the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum.

[Ohio's](#) new governor said that if the state is to move forward, we must govern together. He added that now is the time to invest in Ohio including investing in children, workers, roads and bridges, infrastructure, Lake Erie, state parks, and other natural wonders. The governor noted that the state's gas tax has not been raised since 2005 and that the Department of Transportation currently faces nearly \$4 billion in debt; in response, he recommended spending an additional \$1.2 billion a year to maintain roads and bridges and to do a modest amount of new work. The governor discussed a number of health and human services initiatives including creating a new public health fund that that will leverage resources to increase public health awareness and prevention strategies, expanding the treatment capacity for children and adults struggling with mental illness and addiction, increasing drug treatment options, expanding the number of home visits for at-risk moms, increasing the state's investment in children's services, recruiting more foster and adoptive parents, and strengthening the caregiver network. Other proposals highlighted by the governor included increasing the number of drug task forces, added investments in early childhood education, a focus on bringing jobs and job training to communities and people that have been left behind, increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities, helping businesses through enhanced opportunity zones, guaranteed tuition that will not increase at public universities, and increased investments in career-tech centers and community colleges. Finally, the governor spoke about the need to invest more in state parks, preserves, and natural areas while calling for the creation of a new H2-Ohio Fund to invest in targeted solutions to ensure safe and clean water.

[Oklahoma's](#) new governor said that his vision is to make the state top ten in the nation and that it will require three steps: bringing people together from across the state with various backgrounds and skills; setting measurable goals and putting metrics in place so everyone can be part of one team with one vision; and holding ourselves responsible for delivering results and reimagining possibilities. The governor stated that residents want three things: accountability, transparency, and results and said that his budget will continue to prioritize funding for performance audits and will place a special emphasis on the digital transformation of state agencies. Regarding education, he stated that his administration will move the needle in outcomes and called for increasing teacher pay by \$1,200, funding a bonus recruitment program, and for reexamining the school funding formula. In the area of corrections, the governor called for steps to break the cycle of incarceration for non-violent offenders, more funding for addiction services programs, licensing reform for felons, and examining ways to improve working conditions and compensation for correctional officers. The governor also noted that his budget contains additional funding for training doctors and the Children's Health Insurance Program, while stating his opposition to Medicaid expansion due to fears that the current federal match will not remain in place in the future. Another area of emphasis was additional funding for the Quick Action Closing Fund to help attract new businesses. Finally,

the governor called for a more transparent budget process while setting a goal of \$1 billion in savings by the end of fiscal 2020 in recognition of the state's volatile revenue streams.

[Oregon's](#) governor, in her inaugural address, focused on fundamentals such as health care, housing, protecting the environment, defending democracy, and investing in children. She noted that while the state is growing faster than anytime in recent history, many families are struggling with the cost of housing, health care, child care, and higher education. In order to defend democracy, the governor called for campaign finance reform, paid postage on ballots, and expanding the automatic voter registration system. Next the governor addressed the affordability crisis in health care and housing and said that her budget includes a plan to stabilize funding for the Oregon Health Plan, makes a \$400 million investment in housing, and calls for a \$20 million bonding package to speed up construction of permanent housing for the chronically homeless. Her budget also includes ways to ensure that taxpayer dollars are being spent wisely including adding internal auditors, eliminating backlogs and reducing wait times in areas such as child care licensing and food safety inspections, and modernizing the way the state delivers services and purchases goods. Additionally, the governor called for meeting carbon emission goals, passing a clean energy jobs bill, funding K-12 schools at a level that ensures districts aren't forced to make cuts, and stabilizing PERS rates for schools.

[Pennsylvania's](#) governor, in his budget address, spoke about the state being on a comeback and on a path to a more functional government, a more prosperous economy, and a brighter future for Pennsylvania's children. He noted that his budget proposal asks for no new taxes, while prioritizing investments in schools, having real choices in health care, battling the opioid epidemic, and supporting farmers and agricultural producers. However, the governor said the most significant element of his budget proposal is an investment in infrastructure and a comprehensive plan for preparing the state to compete and win in the rapidly changing economy. The package of policies and investments is entitled the Statewide Workforce, Education and Accountability Program, and will call on contributions from the business community, labor unions, educators, research institutions, students, parents, and adult workers. One element of the plan is the creation of Keystone Economic Development and Workforce Command Center which will include an Employer Fund, a public-private partnership to help businesses address the skills gap. The governor also spoke about a number of education initiatives to help the state's workforce including expanding a program to help single mothers complete college, increasing funding for education at all levels, lowering the compulsory age of attendance to 6, increasing the minimum dropout age to 18, examining moving to universal full-day kindergarten, providing teachers with workplace experiences to better understand the needs of businesses, increasing minimum teacher salaries to \$45,000, and creating a new grant program for students who graduate with an associate's degree or other credentials and remain in the state. The governor also called for \$10 million in funding for a program to help fill more advanced manufacturing positions, funding to help veterans get the training they need, and fixing the criminal justice system including improving reentry programs.

[Rhode Island's](#) governor spoke about progress in the state over the past four years including lower unemployment, cutting the deficit in half, reducing red tape, cutting taxes, growth in clean energy, and educational investments, while stressing the need to keep the progress going. The governor then outlined a series of proposals. First, she called for putting the line-item veto on the November ballot and use it to help eliminate waste. The governor also spoke about expanding job training initiatives and technical training in high schools. She once again asked the legislature to pass the Rhode Island Manufacturing Initiative to help small manufacturers buy new equipment and hire more people. The governor said that tackling the opioids and overdose crisis remains a top priority and that her budget will continue to fund what's working, while also creating a new job training program for people in recovery and proposing legislation to make health insurance companies cover addiction and mental health treatment. Finally, the governor spoke about the need to fix schools and called for working with towns and cities to invest \$1 billion over the next five years to help improve public schools.

[South Carolina's](#) governor said the state of the state is strong and getting stronger and touted recent economic improvements including an accelerating agricultural base, a thriving tourism industry, and becoming a high-tech manufacturing hub. He noted that in order to keep the progress going the state must keep taxes low, reduce burdensome regulations, and invest heavily in infrastructure. The governor stated that he has proposed a \$2.2 billion tax cut across all income tax brackets and is also calling for returning \$200 million of the budget surplus to taxpayers in the form of a one-time rebate check. Additionally, he called for a full retirement income exemption for the military and first responders. The governor highlighted a number of education related proposals including creating a \$100 million Rural School Economic Development Closing Fund, a 5 percent pay raise for teachers, the need to reexamine the education funding formula, ensuring that each public school has a full-time law enforcement officer and access to a mental health counselor, increasing funds for workforce training and development, and increasing higher education spending by 6 percent in return for institutions freezing in-state tuition and fees. In the area of law enforcement, the governor said that his budget proposal provides more than \$33 million for pay raises and hiring new officers, and an additional \$40 million for the Department of Corrections to upgrade facilities. Finally, the governor spoke about the need to continue to do more to fight the opioid crisis, steps to prevent flooding, protecting the coast from offshore drilling, and expanded authority for the State Ethics Commission.

[South Dakota's](#) new governor said that she is committed to maintaining the fiscal integrity of the state. She said she will work hard to maintain its triple A credit rating, will not spend money the state does not have, will not needlessly grow the government, and will not raise taxes. The governor then discussed a number of proposals including expanding rural broadband, extending pheasant habitat, encouraging economic development and preparing for the future, improving education and developing the state's workforce, battling methamphetamine, promoting foster care and adoption, growing agriculture, and making government more transparent. Specifics of her proposals include committing state resources to close the broadband gap, building new modular multi-housing units at



a state prison to expand housing options for workers, creating programs to expand work experience in high school, expanding prevention and treatment programs for drug abuse, transferring agriculture development representatives from the Department of Agriculture to the Office of Economic Development, and encouraging passage of a Reporter Shield Law.

[Tennessee's](#) new governor said that the state of the state is hopeful, prosperous, and strong. He noted that the state has been blessed with a growing economy, improving schools, and abundant natural resources. At the same time, the governor said that the state's prosperity should not be taken for granted and that new accomplishments will be required for the state to reach its full potential. The governor highlighted a number of education proposals including: the creation of the Governor's Investment in Vocational Education (GIVE) Act; a Future Workforce Initiative to increase STEM training in schools; continued outcome-focused funding for higher education; increased financial aid; added resources to help prepare disadvantaged students for college; a 2.5 percent raise for teachers; expansion of the Rural Principle Network; added funding for low-performing schools; increased spending for school safety; doubling the amount of public charter school funding; the need for Education Savings Accounts; and, reexamining school curriculum. Regarding the criminal justice system, the governor called for swift punishment for violent crime, while at the same time getting better at helping those who will re-enter society. Specifically, he proposed community supervision for low-risk offenders, an expansion of education and re-entry counseling programs in prisons, increased penalties on dangerous drugs, added investments in correctional officer pay and training opportunities, creating a task force to address the growing fiscal and social costs of incarceration, and launching a Volunteer Mentorship Initiative. Concerning healthcare, he called for a Healthcare Modernization Task Force, providing additional funding to the healthcare safety net, increased price transparency, combatting Medicaid fraud, making telemedicine more accessible, additional funding for physicians who work in rural communities, and additional spending for behavioral and mental health. Finally, the governor called for the creation of the Governor's Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives to help protect taxpayer dollars and engage under-utilized citizens, and said that his budget proposal is fiscally conservative, does not take on any long-term debt, and increases the size of the state's rainy day fund.

[Texas'](#) governor began his speech by highlighting progress in the state including leading the nation in job growth, having the fastest growing economy in the country, rising wages, low unemployment, more students graduating from high school and college, a safer state, and reforming the foster care and child protective system. He then said that the state now has the opportunity to tackle some challenges that have plagued Texas for more than a generation. The governor declared six emergency items (enabling the legislature to address the issues more quickly): school finance, teacher pay raises, school safety, mental health, property tax reform, and disaster response. Specifically, the governor called for ensuring teachers across the state can earn higher salaries, having every student reading at grade level by the end of third grade, collaborating on statewide mental health needs, limiting the ability of taxing authorities to raise taxes, allowing taxpayers the

ability to fire their tax appraiser, and making Texas more resilient to future disasters. The governor also spoke about the need to keep people safe from crime and called for the creation of two new anti-gang centers and creating six regional human trafficking squads. Finally, the governor talked about the need to support veterans including funding the Texas Veterans Commission.

[Utah's](#) governor said that the state of the state is strong, resilient, and the outlook is very bright, while also adding that Utah is the healthiest and most diverse economy in the nation today. He spoke about growth being one of the greatest challenges the state faces, and that it makes it difficult to provide the best schools, maintain affordable housing, and prevent congestion on the roads. The governor also advised new legislators to learn everything they can about the budget and discussed the need to invest the state's current \$1 billion surplus wisely. He called for assuming that the surplus is not the new normal and investing it in efforts that pay future dividends, while also giving taxpayers a \$225 million tax cut. The governor proposed broadening the sales tax base so that everyone pays their fair share, while also lowering the rate so that everyone pays less; specifically, he said that by broadening the base the state can lower the sales tax rate from 4.85 percent to 1.75 percent. The governor then highlighted education proposals including additional ongoing investment in K-12 and higher education, funding a 4 percent increase in the Weighted Pupil Unit, investing \$30 million into school counseling and mental health services, spending \$100 million to upgrade facilities, endowing \$50 million of one-time money for a scholarship fund for disadvantaged students, and expanding computer science options to every middle school student. Finally, the governor spoke about the need to protect air quality and outlined several proposals including reducing by 25 percent per capita emissions by 2026, increasing state employee use of transit and accountable telework, and increasing the number of electric vehicle charging stations.

[Vermont's](#) governor, in his second inaugural address, said that our focus must remain on those we're working for and what we're working towards including an affordable Vermont, opportunity and economic growth, great schools in every corner of the state, and policies that benefit all Vermonters. The governor focused much of his speech on the state's challenging demographics outlook and said that the stagnant population is a threat to every service that is delivered, every program that is administered, and every investment we hope to make. The governor then highlighted ways the state can strengthen its current assets and attract more working families. First, he discussed protecting the health of citizens and the environment while calling for health insurance reforms to increase affordability, a voluntary paid family leave plan, and a long-term funding source for water quality initiatives. Second, the governor called for continued education reforms and ensuring that all students have equal opportunities no matter what school they attend. Third, he highlighted ways to ensure that businesses can be competitive including reforms to help grow downtowns while continuing to protect the environment, and expanding broadband. Finally, the governor proposed ways to leverage the state's assets and attract new families including growing the housing supply, the continuation of a program to offer incentives to remote workers who move to the state, and a labor force expansion package.

[Virginia's](#) governor said that the state of the commonwealth is as strong as ever and highlighted successes over the past year including a growing economy, shoring up reserves, preserving the triple A credit rating, expanding Medicaid to 400,000 Virginians, raising the felony larceny threshold, securing a dedicated source for Metro, boosting educator pay, retooling workforce development efforts, creating a parental leave program for state employees, and regulatory reform. He then spoke about a number of workforce development and education related initiatives including a teacher pay raise, funding more school counselor positions, working with the college system to reframe programming to make sure students get the skills they need, greater tuition assistance, and grants to encourage more computer science degrees. The governor also spoke about several other proposals such as achieving universal broadband access, expanded overdose prevention efforts, further efforts to ensure that everyone has access to health care, training for school resource officers, temporarily removing firearms from dangerous individuals, a dedicated funding source for I-81, addressing climate change, decriminalizing marijuana, and ending the suspension of licenses if fines are not paid. Finally, the governor talked about the need to enact tax reform to respond to federal tax changes, and proposed making the Earned Income Tax Credit refundable and targeted tax relief to the middle class.

[Washington's](#) governor spoke of recent accomplishments in the state and said that the state now has two choices: to either rest on its laurels, or to rise up and write one of the worthiest chapters of our time that tells future generations who we are. In his address, the governor focused on addressing climate change, transforming the state's behavioral health care system, protecting the orca population, and continuing important investments in education. Regarding climate change, he called for passing legislation to transition to 100 percent clean electricity, transforming buildings with cost-saving efficiencies, and modernizing and electrifying the transportation systems. Concerning mental health, the governor proposed partnering with the University of Washington to create a teaching hospital to treat mental health patients and train behavioral health care providers. The governor also spoke about the need to save the orca population to help balance the ecosystem and maintain the quality of life for all Washingtonians. In the area of education, the governor called for continued investments, expanding preschool with a new birth to three program, expanding options for students getting ready to graduate high school including through apprenticeships and paid internships, and implementing a new statewide free college program. Finally, the governor proposed using more than \$400 million to help address homelessness and the lack of affordable housing.

[West Virginia's](#) governor highlighted fiscal improvements in the state over the past two years including the shift from shortfalls to surpluses. He said that education remains the centerpiece and called for improving math scores, revisiting the state aid formula, making the Promise scholarship available for vocational education, and expanding the Communities in Schools program statewide. Other areas of focus included increasing tourism spending due to its multiplier effect, upgrading the state parks, developing the state's lakes, and continued infrastructure improvements including directing more funding to fixing secondary roads. The governor also talked about the need to

address the drug problem and help employers find qualified workers, while highlighting a new initiative called Jim's Dream which would include increased funding for both prevention and treatment, allow individuals to have a misdemeanor expunged from their record, and purchase needed equipment for job training centers. Finally, the governor called for continuing to streamline government, the elimination of the business inventory machinery tax, and allowing individuals the option of exempting social security from the state income tax.

[Wisconsin's](#) new governor said that the state of the state is that we've got work to do, and we're ready for bipartisan solutions. He stated that fixing the economy remains a top priority, but that there is more to the economy than counting job creation and the unemployment rate including ensuring that workers can make enough to keep their family out of poverty, kids don't go to school hungry, and protecting natural resources for future generations. The governor said that his budget proposal will begin with education and that he will work to ensure adequate funding, provide a \$600 million increase in special education funding, and a substantial increase in mental health programs. He also called for expanding Medicaid as well as withdrawing from a federal lawsuit challenging the Affordable Care Act. Regarding infrastructure, he said will announce a taskforce to help find a bipartisan solution to transportation funding and will take steps to ensure clean drinking water in the state. The governor concluded by highlighting his tax reform bill that includes a ten percent tax cut for individuals making up to \$100,000 and families making up to \$150,000, and is paid for by capping a corporate tax credit.

[Wyoming's](#) new governor said that the state of the state is strong, and that it is strong because of our people, our resources, and our Wyoming work ethic. The governor began by discussing the need to assure a reliable and stable fiscal future including better defining the purpose of the Rainy Day Fund Account. The governor also called for a more efficient government, while stating his support for state employee pay raises. Regarding health, the governor called for finding a state-led solution to bring down healthcare costs while stressing the need to improve access to healthcare and substance abuse treatments. In the area of education and economic development the governor said that he will launch a multi-year initiative to improve student safety and health, supports Wyoming Works which provides opportunities for high school students and adults to continue technical education, proposed a new trust that would offer scholarships for career and technical education with private sector support, and called for further funding for scholarships at the University of Wyoming. He also said he will begin a comprehensive review of all economic development programs and wants to improve broadband access. In speaking about energy and natural resources, he said that he will continue to seek innovative solutions to support coal, address climate change, and grow the economy while also calling for innovation in agriculture and having the Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust be self-sufficient. Finally, the governor spoke about the need to support local communities including providing funding to local governments and enhancing the services of the State Loan and Investment Board.