



MARCH 6, 2020 | ISSUE BRIEF

Summaries of Governors' 2020 State of the State Addresses

Overview

As of March 6th, 41 governors have given a State of the State speech detailing the condition of their state. Four governors are still scheduled to give a speech, while five governors from biennium budget states are not expected to give an address this year. Most governors began their speech by touting the current strength of their state as well as accomplishments over the past year including private sector job growth, low unemployment, gains in gross domestic product (GDP), efforts to modernize state government, revenue growth, budgetary improvements, and added investments in areas like education, workforce development, and infrastructure. However, many governors noted challenges ahead, the need to continue to look forward, and to prepare for the next economic downturn. A number of governors also spoke about the importance of collaborating in a bipartisan fashion, while contrasting their ability to work together with the current political environment at the federal level.

As states entered a new decade, a common theme in this year's speeches was looking back over the last 10 years and contrasting the present economic and fiscal condition of their state with where the state stood in 2010 when states were still dealing with the ramifications of the Great Recession. Many governors also talked about the need to prepare for tomorrow including looking ahead to 2030, 2040, and beyond through efforts such as diversifying the economy, preparing for demographic shifts, building a 21st century workforce, investing in clean energy, and reforming their tax structure. Some governors mentioned that recent revenue growth and budgetary improvements have given them a

chance to make added investments to help the state prepare for the future. Other governors discussed the need to modernize state government to help move the state forward including cutting red tape, breaking through bureaucratic barriers, streamlining agencies, passing ethics reforms, simplifying the state's licensing structure, conducting regulatory reviews, and seeking out waste, fraud, and abuse.

An added area of emphasis in this year's speeches were efforts to promote rural communities and ensure that economic prosperity reaches all corners of the state. These efforts included rural jobs initiatives, broadband grants and increasing internet access, promoting rural tourism, and rural opportunity grants. Rural initiatives also centered around rural health care including expanding tele-health, increasing pharmacy access, protecting rural hospitals, increasing payments to rural clinics, and establishing rural physician scholarship programs. Another area of emphasis in this year's addresses, and one that was often linked to the need to support rural communities, were efforts to promote workforce development including addressing skills gaps, supporting vocational education, increasing apprenticeships, meeting the needs of employers, and added job training programs.

Many governors highlighted issues associated with the environment in this year's addresses. The issues were wide-ranging including developing and protecting natural resources, finding alternative uses for coal, addressing the cost of energy, combating invasive species, supporting outdoor recreation, needing to plant more trees, wildfire suppression, providing flood relief, protecting areas susceptible to flooding, and improving water quality. Additionally, governors spoke about the need to address climate change, increase the use of renewable and clean energy, and promote sustainability.

Issues associated with health and human services was another area of focus for governors. Several discussed efforts to address affordable housing and homelessness such as increasing funding for affordable housing, expanding affordable housing tax credits, revitalizing existing homes, rent assistance, reducing evictions, adding supportive housing, getting the mentally ill into treatment, working with localities, building homes on state-owned land, and eliminating veterans' homelessness. Governors also spoke about the need to support foster care and adoption, reform child welfare programs, make added investments in child services including hiring more caseworkers, and tackling sex trafficking. Additionally, governors focused on promoting family and medical leave, supporting pregnant workers, continuing efforts to fight drug abuse and the opioid crisis, increasing

suicide prevention efforts, and addressing mental health challenges including making needed reforms, increasing access, and added funding. Another area of emphasis this year was prescription drugs, including efforts to lower costs, increase price transparency, and allow for the importation of prescription drugs from Canada. As has been the case in most recent years, governors spent much of their speeches discussing healthcare including efforts to improve access, lower costs, make needed reforms, promote cost savings, adding insurance protections, partnering with the federal government on waivers, and examining Medicaid expansion.

In addition to healthcare, several other areas were once again a focus of addresses this year including K-12, higher education, public safety, and infrastructure. In the area of elementary and secondary education, several governors spoke about the need to expand early education, advance literacy efforts, increase teacher salaries, promote teacher recruitment and retention, reform charter schools, reconsider funding formulas, and increase spending on capital. Regarding higher education, governors spoke about plans to increase tuition assistance including providing free tuition to many students, covering tuition for teachers that remain in the state, granting free tuition for active duty military, implementing student loan debt relief programs, and making capital improvements. Concerning public safety, several governors discussed the need to increase public safety pay, hire more state troopers, improve prison conditions, tackle violent crime, promote rehabilitation, and address the challenges of re-entry. Finally, regarding infrastructure, governors highlighted the need to increase investments, reach agreement on current transportation funding, find long-term solutions to provide adequate funding in the future, increase transportation options including public transit, and reimagine what transportation will look like in the years ahead.

Other significant policy issues were also highlighted in governors' speeches including: support for veterans; help for small businesses; gun safety; encouraging participation in the upcoming census; protecting voting rights; redistricting reform; adding funding to protect places of worship; marijuana regulation and expansion; addressing demographic challenges associated with either a growing population or an aging population; passing vaping and e-cigarette laws; examining gaming expansion; promoting tourism and economic development; increasing state employee pay; and pension reforms.

In the area of taxation, only a few governors discussed plans for comprehensive tax reform, while most governors' proposals focused on targeted tax relief. Areas that received attention from several governors included efforts to reduce local property taxes, tax relief for veterans, retirement tax reductions, cutting the tax rate for small businesses, and lowering personal income taxes. Other recommendations included: increasing adoption tax credits; grocery tax relief; expanding early childhood tax credits; expanding affordable housing tax credits; increasing income taxes on millionaires; cutting the car tax; reducing unemployment insurance taxes; a temporary reduction in some severance taxes; support for a lodging tax; and middle class tax relief. Governors also talked about the need to modernize the tax system, make the tax code fairer, and examine tax incentives.

One area not mentioned by governors due to the timing of speeches was the coronavirus (COVID-19). Nearly all State of the State speeches were given before the recent outbreak. However, since their speeches, governors have begun to take steps to address the coronavirus and are examining the potential impact to their state. The National Governors Association (NGA) has established a [website](#) detailing states' responses.

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 2021.

If you would like additional information, please contact [Brian Sigritz](#) at 202-624-8439.

Summaries by State

[Alabama](#) Governor Kay Ivey said that the state of the state is strong and growing, adding that Alabama begins its third century with a robust economy and a renewed commitment to look for new opportunities to old challenges. In her speech the governor spoke about recent bipartisan successes, including passing Rebuild Alabama, which has led to increased spending on roads and bridges. The governor said that one of her top priorities this session is tackling problems within the criminal justice system, calling for implementing needed reforms and aiding inmates with reentry. The governor also recommended a series of education measures including an additional \$25 million to expand pre-K, \$1 billion for K-12 and higher education capital improvements, a three percent raise for all teachers, passing Amendment One creating term limits for the State Board, and continuing to work towards a goal of 500,000 employees with post-secondary credentials by 2020. Other areas of focus included: additional funding to hire 50 more state troopers; the need for everyone to

participate in the 2020 Census; increasing access to broadband; asking the legislature to support her rural health initiatives including incentivizing physicians and nurse practitioners to establish services in underserved areas; and providing funding to build three new mental health crisis centers in the state. Finally, the governor said she will be creating a working group to examine how much revenue the state could gain through gaming expansion, and then allowing voters to decide if they want to see increased gaming options.

[Alaska](#) Governor Mike Dunleavy said that the state of the state is strong while highlighting growth in the economy, criminal justice reforms, and efforts to develop natural resources over the past year. In his speech, the governor discussed his plan to put the state on a sustainable fiscal path. He said that last year's budget reductions came as a response to plummeting oil prices and demonstrated how unsustainable spending levels had become. While this year's budget proposal calls for a flat budget and is not solely focused on reductions, the governor said the state must find a sustainable long-term solution including controlling spending and deciding on the future of the permanent fund. The governor called for allowing a vote on constitutional amendments such as a spending cap, any proposed permanent fund dividend (PFD) changes, and new broad-based taxes. Additionally, the governor said he has directed his Department of Administration to identify waste, fraud, and abuse as well as ways to modernize state government. Other proposals focused on public safety, developing and protecting natural resources, the cost of energy, teacher recruitment and retention, and literacy efforts. Specifically, the governor called for: a new initiative to address sex trafficking; expanded efforts to strengthen reentry programs; resources to address homelessness; moving more public land into private hands partly through allowing individuals the choice of exchanging their PFD for a land certificate; evaluating options to deliver affordable energy based upon renewable resources; creating a working group to examine the causes behind teacher recruitment and retention issues; and creating the Alaska Reads Act to ensure students can read by the third grade.

[Arizona](#) Governor Doug Ducey called for a continued focus on lowering barriers to work, growing jobs in rural Arizona, honoring veterans, maintaining fiscal responsibility, ensuring public safety, securing Arizona's water future, and investing in key priorities like teachers and students, infrastructure, and child safety. Specific proposals included: eliminating all state income taxes on veterans' military pensions; expanding the Arizona Teachers Academy that covers college tuition for teachers that remain in the state; partnering with

universities on the New Economy Initiative to prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow; a new rural jobs initiative focused first on tourism and state parks, and second on partnering with small businesses; tripling investments in rural broadband grants; expanding access to mental health care; raises for workers in the Department of Child Safety; and widening the I-10 corridor between Phoenix and Tucson. In the area of public safety, the governor called for greater investment in educational programs to provide a second chance, shutting down a state prison, fixing locks at prisons, pay raises for correctional officers, and funding body cameras for every state trooper. Finally, the governor emphasized the current strength of the state's economy, a balanced budget, growing state revenues, the increasing size of the rainy day fund, a record high credit rating, the need to eliminate unnecessary regulations, and that he will not support new taxes.

Arkansas – April 8

California Governor Gavin Newsom said that traditionally governors begin their speeches by talking about the strength of their state. He added that by any standard measure California is not just thriving but in many instances leading the country, specifically noting remaining the fifth-largest economy in the world, 118 consecutive months of net job growth, having half of all U.S. venture capital, 3.8 percent GDP growth over five years, building a record reserve, and reducing debt. The governor also said that over the past year the state made historic progress in affordable access to primary care, investments in the wildfire program, expanded paid family leave, two free years of community college, improving safe drinking water, and an upcoming statewide school bond. However, he said, no amount of progress can camouflage the most pernicious crisis in our midst, homelessness. The governor stated that the problem has persisted for decades caused by failures in the mental health system, disinvestment in the social safety net, a widening income inequality, and the state's housing shortage. To address homelessness, the governor proposed a new framework that is focused on getting the mentally ill into treatment, providing stable funding to get stable results, tackling the underproduction of affordable housing, and doing all of it with real accountability and consequences. Specific proposals included: an executive order deploying emergency mobile housing trailers and services; making available state properties to be used by local governments for homeless solutions; establishing a strike team to break through bureaucratic barriers; working together with cities and counties; exempting shelters and homeless housing from environmental review; and pushing for new models of

homelessness housing. Additionally, he called for comprehensively addressing behavioral health needs through a \$695 million budget request to reform the Medi-Cal system to recognize that physical health and brain health are inextricably linked, better legal tools to help people access the treatment they need, reforming the Mental Health Services Act to ensure that funds are being spent at the local level, and stressing greater accountability. The governor also proposed a new California Access to Housing Fund backed by \$750 million that would provide gap funding for innovative housing models, stabilize and expand board and care homes, and provide rent subsidies and rapid rehousing; the governor said that he would work with the legislature to identify ongoing revenue for the fund. Finally, the governor discussed the need to increase housing production through reforms that eliminate red tape, increase density, and hold local governments accountable.

[Colorado](#) Governor Jared Polis began by highlighting accomplishments over the past year through working together including lowering health care costs, reducing taxes for small businesses, providing more affordable housing, increased investments in transportation, and universal free full-day kindergarten. However, he said that despite recent achievements, the state must continue to strive for greatness through helping families save money, protecting natural wonders, widening the path to prosperity, and making sure the economy works for everyone. In the area of education, the governor called for helping an additional 6,000 children attend preschool, increasing education funding, examining funding formulas, increasing concurrent enrollment programs, and implementing a debt relief program for college students. The governor noted that the rising costs of health care is one of the biggest issues the state faces and asked for an additional \$18 million investment in the reinsurance program, requiring prescription drug transparency, and providing a public option. Other areas of focus during the speech included: reforming the behavioral health system; enacting paid family leave and medical leave for more Coloradans; one-time added investments in the state park system; an added \$10 million directed to the Colorado Water Plan; helping rural areas; increasing transportation options; and achieving 100 percent renewable energy by 2040. Finally, the governor called for creating a bipartisan group to study ways to make the tax code fairer by broadening the base and lowering the rate, and placing an additional \$118 million into reserves.

[Connecticut](#) Governor Ned Lamont said that the state of the state is strong and getting stronger, while adding that there is still a long way to go. He noted that through working

together Connecticut was able to pass an honestly balanced budget that boosts the rainy day fund, protects key services, holds the line on taxes, and shows that the state can live within its means. The governor also highlighted other recent successes including: an increase in economic growth; resetting the state's relationship with the business community; advancements in workforce development; centralizing IT and personnel to provide better services and reduce costs; added investments in K-12; increased financial aid for higher education; reducing social security and pension taxes; increasing the minimum wage; and settling a long-running lawsuit with the state's hospitals. The governor said that there is still more to be done including reaching an agreement on transportation funding, redesigning the state's economic incentives, passing legislation to curb annual healthcare cost increases, and setting up a responsible sports betting platform. In addition, the governor discussed areas that Connecticut is working on with neighboring states including the regional regulation of marijuana, establishing safe and uniform tobacco and vaping laws, and becoming more energy efficient while setting a firm timeline to become carbon free.

[Delaware](#) Governor John Carney said that the state of our state is strong and getting stronger, while outlining his priorities for strengthening Delaware's economy, improving public schools, and protecting the state's quality of life. The governor discussed several education proposals including investing \$50 million to build a new school in Wilmington, expanding state-funded pre-K seats by 50 percent over the next three years, targeting resources to students that need it the most through a program called Opportunity Funding, and waiving tuition and fees at state colleges for students who age out of foster care. The governor also noted the need to invest in infrastructure while stating that over the next six years the state will invest \$4.5 billion to modernize roads, bridges, and public transit, and highlighted ongoing efforts to expand high-speed internet. Other proposals in his speech included planting 1 million trees across the state over the next decade, a pilot program to give children up to five years old one book each month free of charge, and gun reform such as banning high-capacity magazines. Also, the governor discussed fiscal improvements over the past three years including erasing a \$400 million deficit, two years of stronger revenues, building a \$200 million surplus, and having an additional \$126 million in reserves. The governor stated that in his budget proposal he will limit spending to sustainable levels, dedicate one-time revenue for one-time infrastructure projects, and propose the largest infrastructure plan in the state's history.

[Florida](#) Governor Ron DeSantis first recapped 2019 and said the state expanded educational opportunities, protected the environment and natural resources, invested in infrastructure, bolstered public safety, reduced taxes, and added to reserves. He noted that the state must remain committed to low taxes and fiscal responsibility, while also regulating reasonably. Regarding natural resources, the governor called for funding water resource projects at \$625 million for three years, passing comprehensive water quality legislation, penalizing people that release untreated wastewater, and fortifying areas most vulnerable to increased flooding. In the area of education, the governor spoke about the importance of supporting vocational education and apprenticeship programs, setting a minimum salary for teachers at \$47,500, reforming a teacher bonus program with an emphasis on Title 1 schools, and releasing a replacement plan for Common Core. Other areas discussed by the governor included: continuing to work with the federal government on a potential program to import prescription drugs from Canada; making a patient savings plan widely available throughout the state; and continuing to eliminate barriers to adoption.

[Georgia](#) Governor Brian Kemp noted economic growth in the state over the past year and said that the state of the state is strong, but also said that there is more work to be done. Moving forward in education, the governor discussed the need to reaffirm the state's commitment to schools with trusting parents to make the best decisions for their children, while supporting teachers, administration, and specialists. Specifically, he called for fully funding public education, dismantling Common Core, and a \$2,000 pay raise for all educators. The governor also highlighted the successful implementation of its health care programs Georgia Access and Georgia Pathways, while saying that this year they will work on a legislative remedy to reduce surprise billing. Regarding public safety, the governor said he will push for anti-gang legislation and legislation to protect children vulnerable to exploitation. Finally, the governor proposed adoption reforms including tripling the adoption tax credit to \$6,000, lowering the adoption age from 25 to 21, and launching the Families First Commission to help make reforms to the foster care system.

[Hawaii](#) Governor David Ige began his speech by highlighting an agreement reached earlier this year by legislative leadership, community leaders, and his administration designed to help working families. The package includes: efforts to provide a living wage through a phased-in increase of the minimum wage combined with targeted tax relief; education proposals centered on expanding affordable childcare options and partnering with private

and nonprofit groups to build more classrooms; and tackling housing costs and homelessness through building 17,000 affordable homes over the next decade on state-owned land, streamlining the permit process, and providing \$75 million for affordable housing. The governor also said that the state must also take steps to promote sustainability. He spoke about the need to develop clean energy sources to help meet the goal of being carbon negative by 2045 and permanently setting aside 10,000 acres in conservation under the State's Legacy Land program.

[Idaho](#) Governor Brad Little said that his goal reflects the need to make Idaho strong today and prepared for tomorrow, while ensuring the best possible opportunities for everyone in the state and helping people enjoy an unparalleled quality of life. He noted that over the past year Idaho has become the least-regulated state in the nation through cutting and simplifying 75-percent of all regulations, while also establishing a routine practice to conduct regulatory reviews. The governor then turned to his budget proposal and said it cuts spending, leaves a surplus, and boosts the rainy day fund. The recommended budget limits general fund spending growth to 3.75 percent, increases transparency, provides grocery tax relief, and prioritizes education. Specific education and career preparation proposals include: a historic investment in literacy; \$30 million to continue increasing teacher pay; additional training to enable teachers to identify students facing trauma and mental illness; the joint development of cybersecurity programs at public universities; added capital investments for career technical education programs; ongoing funds for Idaho Job Corps to connect students to in-demand jobs; and increased commitments to help make college more affordable through scholarships and enabling students to earn college credit while in high school. The governor also discussed the need to invest in infrastructure and called for \$100 million to maintain and improve the highway system, and utilizing existing resources to improve Idaho's broadband infrastructure. Other items discussed by the governor included: expanding tele-health and pharmacy access in rural areas; funding for 25 new medical residents to help address physician shortages; supporting community-based recovery centers; \$30 million to help physicians identify and prevent opioid abuse; implementing a full-year of Medicaid expansion without an impact on the general fund; the replacement of vehicles in the Idaho State Police fleet; additional support for reentry programs; new initiatives to protect natural resources including water management and fire suppression; added investments in IT to reduce exposure to

cyberattacks; and establishing a hotline to report waste, fraud, and abuse in state government.

[Illinois](#) Governor JB Pritzker said the state of the state is growing stronger each day while pointing to high employment levels, fast growing businesses, and an increase in the number of applications to public universities. The governor listed successes over the past year including: passing a bipartisan balanced budget; passing a bipartisan infrastructure bill; legalizing adult-use cannabis with equity-centric legislation; restoring driving privileges to more than 50,00 people; consolidating 650 local pension systems; raising the minimum wage; increasing teacher salaries; expanding vocational education; making health care more available and affordable; expanding the number of state troopers; and tax relief for small businesses. Looking forward, the governor said the state must take urgent action to restore the public's trust in government through passing real, lasting ethics reforms this session including implementing a revolving door provision for legislators, and ensuring a commitment to diversity and inclusion. In addition to ethics reforms, the governor said that the legislature should focus on bringing prosperity and opportunity to all communities in Illinois, creating a fairer criminal justice system including phasing out cash bail, adopting new clean energy legislation, and finding bipartisan solutions to reduce local property taxes.

[Indiana](#) Governor Eric Holcomb said that the state of the state has never been stronger while pointing to economic gains, being business friendly, strong infrastructure, a balanced budget, and a triple-A credit rating. During his speech, he called for using \$250 million from the surplus in the next budget to prepay the state's obligation to the teacher's retirement fund, allowing \$50 million a year to be redirected to teacher pay; the proposal is in addition to recommendations expected to be made by the Next Level Teacher Compensation Commission in the spring. The governor also announced the creation of the state's first adoption unit within the Department of Child Services, whose focus will be on assisting family case managers find permanent homes for children. Other items of note in the governor's address included: asking the legislature to pass a hands-free device driving law; directing the Department of Natural Resources to plant one million trees over the next five years; opening a facility to bring together all veterans' needs under one roof; unlimiting unfunded mandates and unnecessary paperwork for K-12; increasing education and job opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals; added penalties for retailers selling

tobacco and vaping products to underage buyers; increasing transparency for health care costs; and the need to pass legislation to require employers to provide reasonable accommodations for pregnant workers.

[Iowa](#) Governor Kim Reynolds began by discussing the historic floods that impacted the state in 2019 and said she will propose an additional \$20 million for flood relief. She then discussed improvements in the state since 2010, and the need to plan now for 2030, 2040, and beyond. The governor said that she will soon introduce the Invest in Iowa Act that will cut income taxes, create a sustainable funding source for the mental health system, reduce the burden on property taxpayers, and fund the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust. Specifically, the governor recommended: a 31 percent increase in funding for water quality and conservation; a 15 percent increase for other conservation and outdoor recreation efforts; an income tax cut of 10 percent for most and up to 25 percent for lower-income Iowans; predictable funding for mental health services through reducing property tax levies and providing funding through the state general fund; an additional \$2 million for the Renewable Fuels Infrastructure Program; and a series of measures to increase the number of doctors providing obstetrics services. The governor also detailed a series of other proposals regarding infrastructure, education, workforce development, health care, and public safety. The recommendations included: an additional \$15 million for broadband; ensuring all students have access to computer science classes; an increased emphasis on apprenticeships and work-based learning; expanding the Last Dollar Scholarship and the Employer Innovation Fund to prepare workers for the new economy; an additional \$103 million for schools; reforms to increase access to childcare including expanding Early Childhood tax credits; a continued focus on prisoner re-entry and rehabilitation; amending the Constitution to allow felons to vote after serving their sentences; and reforms to the state licensing structure.

[Kansas](#) Governor Laura Kelly said the state of the state grows stronger every day while noting achievements over the past year including job growth, properly funding schools, reinvesting in public safety, stabilizing the foster care system, increasing pay and lowering health insurance premiums for public employees, and paying off state debt. The governor then turned her attention to looking forward. First, she said it is time to align the state's education system and workforce development to help the state compete in the years ahead. Second, the governor said it is time to expand Medicaid and discussed the recent

agreement reached with legislative leaders to expand health care to 150,000 Kansans. Third, she discussed the need to invest in infrastructure including developing a comprehensive transportation plan and ensuring stable funding for the Department of Transportation. Fourth, the governor talked about the need for comprehensive criminal justice reform and said that training inmates in needed job skills can help address workforce shortages. Finally, the governor spoke about her budget proposal stating that it will be balanced, continue rebuilding efforts, continue to pay down debt, and honor her promise to cut taxes. She added that while the Council on Tax Reform continues to examine comprehensive tax reform, her recommended budget will include property tax relief and a reduction to the tax on groceries.

[Kentucky](#) Governor Andy Beshear said that the state of the commonwealth is strong, coming together, and ready to face challenges. He added that it is important not to focus on partisan squabbles, but instead on how to better the commonwealth. The governor said that Kentucky currently has an opportunity to make widespread progress, while noting actions his administration has taken over the course of the first month including: restoring voting rights to 140,000 nonviolent felons; rescinding a Medicaid waiver that would have removed health care coverage for 100,000 people; stopping \$8 billion in rushed managed care contracts; and waiving GED testing fees for anyone that cannot afford them. In addition to actions he has already taken, the governor called for: passing a law to ensure that no one loses health coverage due to a preexisting condition; fully funding pension obligations; passing a bipartisan bill to curb the cost of insulin; ending surprise medical bills; ensuring that money from opioid settlements goes towards ending the opioid epidemic; and criminal justice reform to end the state's high incarceration rate that negatively impacts the state's budget and communities. Regarding infrastructure, the governor spoke about the need to speed up the Mountain Parkway project, build the I-69 bridge, ensure that all areas have clean drinking water, and ensure that every area has high-speed internet. The governor also spoke about the need to support education through such actions as providing an across the board \$2,000 pay raise to teachers and ending historic cuts to universities and community colleges. Finally, the governor talked about the importance of creating new revenue to meet the needs of Kentucky and said he supports expanded gaming, including sports betting, to help keep revenue in the state and not leaving for neighboring states.

Louisiana – March 9

Maine Governor Janet Mills said the state of the state is strong, resilient, and ready, while noting the bipartisan progress that has been made over the past year. She then laid out her vision to improve the prosperity of Maine people including taking action to strengthen the economy, build the workforce, improve health care, and fight climate change. In her remarks, the governor discussed her plans to diversify and strengthen the economy, as well as prepare for an economic downturn, through actions such as adding \$20 million to the budget stabilization fund, proposing \$15 million to expand broadband, increasing the Maine Seed Capital Tax Credit, and passing the Maine Affordable Housing Tax Credit program. In the area of higher education, the governor called for fully funding the second year of the higher education budget, funding equipment upgrades for career and technical education, and simplifying debt relief. The governor also talked about needed actions to improve health care and the welfare of residents such as passing the Made for Maine Health Coverage Act creating a marketplace and providing help for small businesses, funding an additional 20 positions for the child welfare system, and forming an opioid overdose review panel. Finally, the governor spoke about the need to fight against climate change and highlighted the potential of offshore wind to create jobs, reduce carbon emissions, and save people money.

Maryland Governor Larry Hogan said the state of the state has never been stronger while noting that over the past five years the legislature and the administration have continued to put people's priorities ahead of partisan politics, and have worked together to achieve bipartisan, common sense solutions. He then discussed several initiatives to address the most urgent issues facing Maryland. First, the governor proposed the Retirement Tax Reduction Act of 2020, which will provide more than \$1 billion in tax relief over five years to retirees and help them be able to afford to remain in the state. Second, the governor called for building on previous investments in education by passing the Building Opportunity Act of 2020, providing \$3.9 billion in funding for school construction; the governor also called for bipartisan efforts to make sure that local school systems are held accountable for the education funds they are already receiving and to make sure that dollars are getting to the classroom. A third area in which the governor called for action was in passing a nonpartisan redistricting bill and strengthening ethics laws. Fourth, the governor highlighted recent investments in infrastructure while noting the need to continue Chesapeake Bay restoration

efforts and to advance the Howard Street Tunnel project. Finally, the governor said that the most important action the legislature needs to take is to address the violent crime in Baltimore City by passing a series of measures including increasing penalties for those that use guns to commit violent crimes, toughening penalties for those who intimidate witnesses, and increasing transparency for the judicial branch.

[Massachusetts](#) Governor Charlie Baker said the state of the commonwealth is strong while touting economic growth, strong fiscal management including budget surpluses and an increased rainy day fund, and working together with the legislature on issues addressing vaping, criminal justice reform, a Medicare Savings Plan, and installing high speed internet. However, the governor said much work remains to be done. The governor discussed his health care reform bill that seeks to create a 21st century health care system and align health care policies with the nature of illness. Regarding climate change, he said that more must be done to promote resiliency and committed to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions in Massachusetts by 2050. The governor said that the commonwealth's economic success is dependent on addressing long-standing issues in transportation and housing while discussing his \$18 billion transportation bond bill and the need to find common ground on housing policy. Another area of focus was reducing the skills gap between people looking for better work and the needs of the employers; as part of his plan to address the skills gap, the governor called for launching a \$15 million partnership with vocational schools to provide hands-on educational opportunities. Finally, he spoke about the need to ensure that every child has access to a high-quality education, while highlighting a recent agreement to spend \$1.5 billion of new state funds on education.

[Michigan](#) Governor Gretchen Whitmer said that while over the past year the state has made some good progress, including legislation targeting high auto insurance rates, redistricting efforts, and criminal justice reforms, now is the time for more action and to get to work. The governor went on to say that she will take executive actions if the legislature does not act on addressing Michigan's challenges. Regarding infrastructure, the governor said she will issue state road bonds to start fixing roads now but that the legislature still needs to come up with a real, long-term solution to fix the roads. The governor also discussed that some people are not sharing in the state's economic growth and announced initiatives to protect workers including expanding the right to overtime pay. Concerning education, she called for continued investments in early literacy, expanding pre-K, and moving towards an

equitable funding formula while also calling for passing legislation that would provide tuition-free skills training and degree programs for adults. Finally, the governor spoke about the need to do something on health care including enshrining protections for people with pre-existing conditions, creating a task force focusing on prescription drug transparency and lowering costs, extending health coverage for low-income women that have babies, and eliminating disparities in care for new moms.

Minnesota – March 23

Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves said that his mission is not just to represent Mississippi, but to reflect and serve all of Mississippi. He added that the state must continue to strive for excellence and not settle for good enough. The governor noted improvements in the education system and called for continued support of recent reform efforts, an increase in teacher pay, and increasing the number of teachers that are national board certified. The governor also added that a four-year university degree is not for everyone and discussed his plan for putting \$100 million into workforce development. The governor said that another priority is continuing to invest in infrastructure including roads, bridges, and internet access. The governor then turned his attention to healthcare and spoke about the need to protect rural hospitals, expand the rural physician scholarship program, invest in rural residency programs, expand telemedicine, grant incentives to businesses that contribute to hospitals in rural areas, and prevent big government intervention. Additionally, the governor spoke about the need to reform child protective services and continuing to promote adoption and foster care. Another area of emphasis during his speech was the need to cut red tape, improve customer service across government, and eliminate unfair regulations that keep people from getting licenses to work. Finally, the governor discussed the need to improve the corrections system including closing a notorious prison unit.

Missouri Governor Michael Parson said the state of the state is strong, and that by working together we will be ready for an even better future. The governor highlighted several successes in 2019 including workforce development, infrastructure improvements, and government reform. He said that his initiatives this legislative session will be focused on building stronger communities, improving education and workforce development, revitalizing infrastructure, and making government more accountable. The governor said that through working with local officials, solutions have been developed to combat violent

crime such as providing greater protection for victims and witnesses, providing more mental health resources and services, and strengthening laws to target violent criminals. Regarding education and workforce development, the governor discussed a series of proposals including: using a \$33.5 million preschool development grant to create a more effective early learning system; increasing opportunities for high-demand training at the high school level; certifying approximately 12,000 new high school students as work ready through the Work Keys program; greater access to virtual education for high school students; increasing Bright Flight and A+ Scholarship funding; and another \$19 million for the MoExcels Workforce Initiative. The governor also discussed the need to continue to invest in infrastructure including \$4 million in disaster recovery funds and another \$50 million for the transportation cost-share program. Finally, the governor discussed government reform and highlighted recent Medicaid cost savings, called for real tort reform, proposed license reciprocity for military spouses, and asked for the creation of a \$100 million dollar cash operating expense fund initially funded through Wayfair collections which would give the state greater financial flexibility.

Montana – No address

Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts said that he believes that 2019 will be remembered as Nebraska's finest hour as Nebraskans responded with grit, determination, resilience, and generosity to the historic flooding that impacted the state. In spite of the unprecedented flooding and other challenges, the governor said the state of the state is strong, resilient, and growing, specifically highlighting economic growth over the past year. The governor said that he has four major priorities for 2020: property tax relief, flood relief, increasing efforts to retain veterans, and workforce and business expansion. First, the governor said that he is recommending roughly \$500 million in property tax relief over the next three years to help farmers, ranchers, homeowners and businesses. Second, the governor called for \$50 million to address the state's share of flood relief projects along with another \$9.2 million to aid counties. Third, he stated his support for military retirement tax relief to help retain veterans. Fourth, the governor discussed workforce and business expansion and proposed investing \$16 million in scholarships to help connect students with in-demand careers, called for funding legislation that would refine Nebraska's business incentives, and recommended \$8 million to attract and retain corrections employees.

Nevada – No address

[New Hampshire](#) Governor Chris Sununu said that the state is stronger than ever before due to working together, challenging itself to find innovative solutions, and not subscribing to a one-size fits all approach. The governor listed a series of accomplishments over the past year including: stopping unnecessary taxes; eliminating the Merrimack tolls; legalizing sports betting; protecting the environment; making record investments in the education system, child protection programs, and mental health services; fully funding the Developmental Disability waitlist; reforms to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program; lowering health insurance costs; and ensuring health insurance protections for those with pre-existing conditions. The governor then discussed the need to ensure that the state is developing a 21st century workforce and stated his support for initiatives regarding pregnant workers fairness, bringing infants into the workplace, and paid family leave. In the area of health and human services, the governor called for allowing the importation of drugs from Canada, greater transparency in prescription drug pricing, and the creation of a working group to find solutions to improve long-term care in the state. Other areas highlighted by the governor included: providing student debt relief and direct scholarships; supporting common-sense environmental measures; continuing to take steps to address issues associated with addiction and drug abuse; and partnering with the federal Department of Veterans Affairs to direct resources towards suicide prevention for veterans.

[New Jersey](#) Governor Phil Murphy said the state of the state is stronger and fairer than ever. He began his speech by talking about a recent shooting in Jersey City and said that he would sign legislation to provide additional security aid for houses of worship and expand the definition and penalties for domestic terrorism. During his speech, the governor highlighted accomplishments over the past year including: record low unemployment and 72,000 new private sector jobs; making the first deposit into the rainy day fund in over a decade and delivering significant health savings; increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour; added investments in education at all levels; increasing funding for NJ Transit; increasing wind energy goals; strengthening gun safety laws; reforming the criminal justice system; \$20 million in state funding for Title X and family planning services; and added health care protections such as codifying ACA protections, implementing a reinsurance program, and establishing a state-based exchange. The governor then discussed additional steps that need to be taken to build an economy and state that works for everyone, and the need to continue to make smart investments for the middle class, restore fiscal responsibility, and change the culture of Trenton. Regarding making smart investments for

the middle class, the governor called for establishing an Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency in the governor's office; creating a wealth disparity task force to help close racial wealth gaps; developing a roadmap to achieve 100 percent clean energy by 2050; financing lead remediation and abatement efforts; and codifying a woman's full reproductive rights into state law. Concerning restoring fiscal responsibility, the governor discussed: ensuring tax fairness through a millionaire's tax to help ease property taxes; establishing Jobs NJ to better align the education system to meet the future needs of both employers and workers; finalizing legislation to create a new system on tax incentives; and fixing NJ Transit through a 10-year strategic plan and a five-year capital plan. Finally, the governor spoke about instituting ethics reforms to change a Trenton culture that caters to special interests.

[New Mexico](#) Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham said the state of the state is dynamic, ready for more, and on the cusp on steady and sustainable progress. She highlighted successes over the past year including private sector job growth, increased investments in public education and educator support systems, and transformations in environmental leadership, roadway infrastructure, and state government services. The governor then challenged the legislature to think past the 30-day session, and instead look to 2030 and beyond. She began by discussing education, and said that the state must pay educators more, hire more educators, increase extended learning programs, and emphasize early childhood education, specifically calling for the creation of the Early Childhood Education Fund. The governor also called for delivering tuition-free higher education through the "last-dollar" Opportunity Scholarship. In the area of senior services, the governor proposed the creation of the Kiki Saavedra Senior Dignity Fund to provide for the dignity and support senior caregivers need. Another area of focus was criminal justice, with the governor calling for using best practices, increasing penalties for repeat, violent offenders, and funding 60 new state police officers along with better pay for new recruits. Other priorities discussed by the governor included: supporting a bill that allows for the importation of prescription drugs from Canada; increasing support for economic development and workforce training programs; and creating a system to support the legalization of recreational marijuana.

[New York](#) Governor Andrew Cuomo said the state of the state is stronger than it has been in decades, however the state faces anxiety, injustice, and frustration being fanned by winds of anger and division. The governor said that this year they will continue to address the

issues causing anxiety and frustration with an agenda that fosters economic growth and social progress, proposes a nation-leading response to climate change, and keeps New Yorkers safe. The governor began his speech highlighting recent achievements accomplished through working together including free college tuition, gun safety laws, tackling climate change, increasing the minimum wage, paid family leave, increased spending on infrastructure, and cutting taxes. In regard to climate change, the governor called for increasing emergency response capacity, accelerating the transition to renewable energy, expanding the capacity for electrical vehicles, and a \$3 billion bond act to fund natural restoration and resiliency programs. Regarding taxes, the governor proposed cutting the tax rate for small businesses and reducing income taxes for the middle class. The governor also discussed the need to continue to invest in infrastructure including \$300 million for the Erie Canal, improving public transit, a second round of airport renovations, and bringing cell service to every corner of the state. Concerning economic and social justice, the governor called for a comprehensive paid sick leave law, reigning in abusive debt collectors, working with neighboring states to create a safe and fair system for legalized recreational marijuana, banning discrimination on the basis of gender, increasing wraparound health services, expanding the Empire Child Care tax credit, and additional funding to help the homeless and create affordable housing. Focusing on education, the governor proposed greater funding for poorer schools, increasing the tuition free program to families making up to \$150,000, and expanding workforce training centers. Additionally, the governor spoke about healthcare issues including the need to close the \$6 billion Medicaid gap, fighting the rising costs of prescription drugs including possibly through importation of drugs from Canada, and added laws targeting flavored e-cigarettes. Other areas of focus by the governor included: additional laws to target gun violence; modernizing the state's judiciary; additional support for veterans and law enforcement including support for suicide prevention and eliminating veteran homelessness; additional funding for the 2020 Census; and making state tax returns of officials publicly available. Finally, the governor spoke about the need to pass a domestic terrorism law, add additional funding for security at schools and places of worship, and ensuring that schools teach a lesson on the history of diversity.

North Carolina – No address

[North Dakota](#) Governor Doug Burgum said that the state of the state is strong, growing, and full of boundless opportunities. The governor added that while this address is about 2020, its also important to look ahead to legacy decisions that will ensure prosperity for North Dakotans in 2030, 2040, and beyond. The governor noted that the state in recent years has seen strong economic growth, population growth, and improved state finances including increasing the size of reserve accounts, revenues growing above projections, reducing general fund spending, increasing teacher and state employee pay, making key infrastructure investments, and not raising taxes. The governor focused much of his speech discussing his plan for the state’s Legacy Fund, including investing part of the fund’s earnings into infrastructure, property tax relief through smart growth incentives, and transformational legacy projects; the rest of the earnings would be reinvested in the Legacy Fund to grow the principal faster. The balance of the Legacy Fund could grow from its current level of \$6.8 billion to \$26 billion by 2033 under a model that was presented. Additionally, the governor said a 10-year infrastructure plan and the proposed property tax relief incentive program would be developed over the next ten months. The governor also discussed efforts to diversify the state economy including the state’s investment in unmanned aerial vehicles and the need for every person to participate in the 2020 Census. Finally, the governor talked about progress being made in the administration’s five strategic initiatives: reinventing government, transforming education, behavioral health and addiction, tribal partnerships, and the Main Street Initiative.

[Ohio](#) – March 31

[Oklahoma](#) Governor Kevin Stitt said the state of the state is growing in strength, stability, and new opportunity for generations to come. The governor said that while a decline in drilling rigs has led to less revenue growth in fiscal 2020, it is not the greatest challenge facing the state due to the state’s recent fiscal discipline including increasing the size of its reserves, and the growing diversification of the economy. Instead, he said that the greatest challenge facing the state is government bureaucracy. The governor highlighted successes over the past year in reforming state government including publishing Oklahoma’s checkbook online and legislation to reform five of the state’s largest agencies. The governor discussed the successful consolidation to date of the Pardon and Parole Board with the Department of Corrections, and called for greater consolidation and streamlining including the Department of Transportation with the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority, and the

Office of Emergency Management with Homeland Security. Next, the governor discussed needed reforms to the civil service program including granting directors greater authority to offer bonuses and promotions, and to have most of the state's workforce be unclassified in five years. The governor also discussed health care reform proposals including rolling out SoonerCare 2.0 with new flexibilities through the recently announced federal Healthy Adult Opportunity (HAO); the governor said that with HAO flexibility the state will deliver personal responsibility to new enrollees and seek to establish moderate premiums and work requirements. Other health care recommendations included beginning the process of creating one central health care agency, and supporting legislation that will create better pricing transparency for medical bills and put an end to surprise billing practices. Regarding education, the governor called for protecting current school funding; examining the funding formula; added investments for the Teacher Retirement System; raising the cap on the Oklahoma Equal Opportunity Education Scholarship to \$30 million; legislation to make it easier for teachers with an out-of-state teaching certification to teach in the state; and leveraging state funds if necessary to compensate for any temporary pause in gaming fees as the state renegotiates the Model Gaming Compact with tribes. Final reform proposals highlighted by the governor include an executive order to address excessive red tape and making additional progress on licensing reform.

Oregon – No address

Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf, in his budget address, said that after five years of tough decisions and necessary investments, Pennsylvania is back on a path to prosperity. However, he added that the state has a long way to travel and it will take determination, creativity, and courage. The governor said that his budget request is a blueprint for unleashing a wave of prosperity, making a tangible difference in millions of people's lives, and does it without any new taxes. The governor began by discussing the need to implement solutions to help address five workforce challenges including the availability of reliable transportation, the affordability of childcare, the challenges of re-entry, outdated licensure requirements, and gaps in workforce training; the governor also called for following the lead of 21 other states and increasing the minimum wage. Next the governor turned to higher education and said that his budget proposal contains a \$60 million investment to increase the size of state tuition grants as well as a new \$200 million scholarship program. Also, regarding education, the governor called for working together

to make universal full-day kindergarten a reality, an added \$435 million investment in K-12, comprehensive charter school reform, increasing teacher pay, and a \$1 billion investment in fixing toxic school buildings. Additionally, the governor said that he soon would be releasing a health care reform plan that addresses the high cost of prescription drugs, protects customers, and empowers more families to make decisions about their future. Other areas highlighted by the governor include: adding staff capacity at the Department of Environmental Protection; legislative action to address gaps in pipeline safety; ensuring communities are protected when a state facility closes; increased investments in advanced manufacturing and the arts; continuing efforts to fight the opioid epidemic; and reforming the criminal justice system including the probation process. The governor closed his speech by discussing the need for solutions to address gun violence.

[Rhode Island](#) Governor Gina Raimondo said the state of the state is strong due to hard work, working together, and putting aside the old way of doing business. She added that the state needs to stick with what is working like investing in job training and education, and guaranteeing affordable, quality health care for all Rhode Islanders. At the same time, the governor said that Rhode Island needs to embrace innovation. The governor noted progress in cutting taxes, while calling for cutting the car tax again and further cuts in unemployment insurance taxes. She also highlighted recent success in building roads quicker through RhodeWorks and asked that the same approach be used to improve the public transportation system. The governor focused much of her speech on education related issues, calling for an additional \$30 million to support every district across the state, providing more professional development and mental health training for teachers, a 50 percent increase in the number of public pre-K classrooms, a bond to build more classrooms, and making the Promise Scholarship permanent. Other proposals discussed by the governor included: increased investments in beaches; an executive order calling for 100 percent renewable energy by the end of the decade; strengthening the child welfare system; a new initiative to find and support more foster and adoptive homes; permanently banning flavored e-cigarettes; raising the minimum wage; creating a housing bond and a dedicated fund to build more housing; passing gun reforms; and putting a line item veto proposal on the ballot.

[South Carolina](#) Governor Henry McMaster said that the state of the state is strong and that South Carolina is winning, noting business growth, record low unemployment, and personal

income growth. The governor said that the state is expecting a \$1.8 billion surplus this year, and that he is calling for sending \$250 million of the surplus back to the taxpayers. Additionally, he is recommending cutting personal income taxes by \$160 million this year and \$2.6 billion over five years, as well as no longer taxing retirement pay for those who served in uniform. Concerning K-12, the governor is asking for an additional \$3,000 pay raise for teachers, providing the opportunity for every lower-income four-year-old to attend full-day kindergarten, and asking the House and Senate to come together on education reform. In the area of higher education the governor is recommending a 5 percent funding increase for each institution that does not raise tuition, a one-time investment towards repairing aging campus buildings and infrastructure, an additional \$164 million for need-based scholarships, and paying 100 percent of the college tuition for active duty members of the South Carolina Army or Air National Guard. Regarding public safety, the governor discussed the need to spend \$100 million to make prisons safer and more secure, dedicate \$60 million in new dollars for recruitment and retention, and \$5 million for hiring 100 new Highway Patrol troopers. The governor also spoke about efforts to reform state government including providing \$33 million for merit-based raises, yearly examination of state regulations, closing enrollment in the defined-benefit pension plan for new hires, and ethics reforms. Other recommendations by the governor include: focusing on workforce development including \$50 million for a state match for collaborations between technical colleges, school districts, and businesses; continued investments in infrastructure; improving the condition of National Guard armories; preventing taxpayer dollars from going towards Planned Parenthood; and considering recommendations from the South Carolina Floodwater Commission on how to address flood-related challenges.

[South Dakota](#) Governor Kristi Noem began her speech by noting the number of times that the legislature was able to work together and asked that the legislature keep in mind that it is not just looking at the short-term, but at the long-term too. She said that she remains committed to four pillars: keeping taxes low, limiting government regulation, fighting government intrusion, and keeping government open and honest. The governor then made the case for why businesses should expand in South Dakota including South Dakotans' work ethic, low taxes, a government that lives within its means, smart regulation, and outdoor opportunities. Additionally, the governor highlighted successes in 2019 including greater government transparency, expanding broadband, and helping to grow industries such as tourism, cybersecurity, agriculture, and pheasant hunting. Looking forward, the

governor said her priority with additional, on-going money will be to provide increases to K-12 schools, providers and state employees. The governor also highlighted a number of other issues including: smart regulation and simplifying licensing; funding to support multi-family, workforce housing projects; the legalization of hemp if it meets certain criteria; supporting technical institutes; support for workforce development programs; and working with the Native American community to expand employment opportunities. Finally, the governor spoke about several health-related issues including developing a suicide prevention plan, a continued focus on mental health, additional funding for drug treatment programs, and legislation to combat human trafficking.

[Tennessee](#) Governor Bill Lee said the state has a lot to be proud of over the past year including being named the best fiscally managed state, the best business climate in the country, and the best state for small business growth; the governor also noted that agencies were able to reduce spending 1.7 percent and the state received a triple-A bond rating from all three credit rating agencies. The governor's speech focused on his core priorities including education, economic and workforce development, rural Tennessee, public safety, and health care. Regarding education, the governor called for increased teacher salaries, creating a K-12 mental health trust fund, growing a school-based behavioral health liaison program, setting new standards for literacy training and instruction, launching the Governor's Teaching Fellowship, creating district-led "Grow Your Own" programs, added investments for professional development, applying for a new AP education teaching course, and establishing the Tennessee Teacher and Leader Institute. Concerning economic and workforce development, the governor recommended cutting the professional privilege tax, added grants to localities, offering enhanced incentives for companies considering locating in distressed areas, launching ApprenticeshipTN, and increased funding for higher education capital improvements. Highlights concerning rural Tennessee included increasing broadband accessibility, expanding the TN Agriculture Enhancement Program, added investments in the Rural Opportunity Fund, payment increases to rural health clinics and expanding rural access to dental care, and additional support for rural tourism. The governor's public safety initiatives involved increasing the criminal penalties associated with the theft of a firearm and with reckless endangerment of a police officer or first responder, greater help for those leaving prison including revising the occupational licensing process to encourage employment, and expanding recovery courts and community supervision. Finally, the governor discussed several health care

initiatives such as added investments in the Health Care Safety Net, creating a Children’s Behavioral Safety Net, funding the third year of the Rural Hospital Transformation Program, extending postpartum coverage for women on TennCare, and providing added dental benefits to pregnant women on TennCare.

Texas – No address

Utah Governor Gary Herbert said that this is his eleventh and final State of the State address while adding that he is full of renewed hope and optimism for Utah’s future. The governor stated that the state of the state is excellent and thriving, while noting economic gains, a thriving middle class, advancements in education, and improvements in other areas such as transportation and healthcare. However, he added that significant challenges lie ahead and that the state must proactively plan for projected population growth. Specifically, the governor called for: tax modernization to provide sustainable funding for core government services; efforts to promote affordable housing and help those experiencing homelessness; a continued focus on promoting job growth in rural communities; protecting the environment including a continued focus on ensuring clean air and good water to drink; and strengthening mental health resources. The governor also spoke about the need to reimagine transportation and called for added investments in heavy rail, light rail and bus transit as well as investments in fast electric vehicle charging stations. Finally, the governor said that education has been his number one priority throughout his time as governor and called for a continued focus on education along with additional support.

Vermont Governor Phil Scott said that despite major challenges, the state of the state is strong. He began his speech by discussing the growing polarization in the country while calling for unity and collaborative leadership to help make a difference in the life of Vermonters. The governor said that the demographic crisis and the aging of the population is his biggest concern while also noting the growing economic disparities between different regions of the state. To help address the demographic crisis, the governor called for continued support of the state program to attract remote workers, strengthening internship and apprenticeship programs, reducing hurdles for licensed professionals, and targeted tax relief. Regarding education, the governor called for increased investments in the cradle-to-career continuum, examining how to direct more current spending to the classroom, and creating a universal afterschool network. In order to help make the state more affordable

and grow the economy, the governor called for a commitment to affordable housing including a package to revitalize existing homes and build more of them in places that need them the most. The governor also spoke about climate change and called for increased access and incentives for electric vehicles as well as a greater focus on clean energy and renewable energy storage. Finally, he discussed ways to strengthen the health and safety of communities through both improvements to the mental health system including adding inpatient capacity, as well as changes to the criminal justice system such as waiving reinstatement fees for suspended drivers, better supporting inmates transitioning to the workforce, and tougher mandatory minimums for human trafficking.

[Virginia](#) Governor Ralph Northam discussed the rapid pace of change over the past ten years and said that we currently live at the greatest moment in the greatest state in the greatest country; however, he noted, that it often does not feel that way as much of the country is divided and that we need to treat each other with respect. The governor then laid out his vision of where the state should go and how it should get there. The governor stressed the need to continue to build up reserves and protect the triple-A bond rating in order to make everything else easier to do and less expensive. The governor detailed needed steps to improve the economic climate including raising the minimum wage, helping companies distinguish between contractors and employees, expanding broadband, added investments in infrastructure, and reforming transportation funding. Additionally, he discussed education proposals such as a comprehensive plan for early education, raising teacher salaries, more guidance counselors, extra funds for high-need schools, and extra aid for at-risk students. Furthermore, the governor discussed higher education and workforce development plans including a proposal to help people trying to get ahead called "Get Skilled, Get a Job, and Give Back"; increasing tuition assistance grants; making it easier for DREAMers to attend college with in-state tuition; increasing grants for veterans and the National Guard; and added funding for historically black colleges and universities. Regarding health care, the governor highlighted the recent successful expansion of Medicaid and asked the legislature to pass the healthcare equity budget, create a state-run marketplace, create a re-insurance program, and end laws that restrict women's healthcare rights. Finally, the governor spoke about the need to protect the natural environment including continuing to invest in renewable energy, creating a new Office of Offshore Wind, increasing investments in land preservation, and major new clean-water funding. Other items discussed in his address included: tripling the Virginia Housing Trust Fund to increase

affordable housing and keep people from experiencing homelessness; a new proposal to help reduce evictions; removing discriminatory language from the state's books; passing protections for LGBTQ people; making Election Day a holiday; allowing localities to decide what to do with Confederate monuments; a series of gun safety measures; and the need for criminal justice reform including reforming parole, funding for more public defenders; and decriminalizing marijuana possession.

[Washington](#) Governor Jay Inslee said the state is at its strongest when it embraces big ideas and sees them through to change people's lives, while adding that the state is at its best when people come together. The governor spoke about successes over the past year including paid family and medical leave, clean energy and efficiency measures, reforms to long-term care, and a college financial aid program that provides free tuition to many students. Additionally, he highlighted the success of the Career Connect Initiative which builds multiple education pathways and involves business, labor, community colleges, universities, K-12, philanthropy, and state and local governments. The governor then turned his attention to homelessness and affordable housing and called for a statewide response that involves prevention, rent assistance, supportive housing, and giving people the tools and resources they need to get back on their feet. He stated that his goal is to reduce by half the number of people living outdoors in the next two years, and that it should not come at the expense of building more affordable housing. The governor also spoke about the need to create a clean fuel standard to help fight climate change, adding that the standard is already in place in every other state and province on the West Coast. Finally, the governor discussed other needed tasks this year including: making sure children get early learning opportunities; addressing diversity and equity, especially in the workplace; passing gun safety measures; continued investments in K-12 including special education; protecting children from tobacco and vaping; and providing added resources for foster care children.

[West Virginia](#) Governor Jim Justice said the state of the state is strong and growing stronger every single day. He noted recent gains in personal income, job creation, the diversification of the economy, state revenue growth, and the increasing size of the rainy day fund. The governor then highlighted a series of proposals. First, the governor announced legislation to create the Medicaid Families First Reserve Fund, which would initially lock away \$150 million to ensure that there will always be necessary funds for vital services. Second, he discussed the need to reduce or eliminate the business inventory and

machinery tax. Third, the governor talked about the need to continue to increase spending on roads and to be prepared for future additional federal aid. Fourth, the governor spoke about the need to remain vigilant in tackling drug abuse and called for the creation of a narcotics intelligence unit. Fifth, he talked about health and human services proposals including funding to eliminate waiting lists for developmentally disabled services, hiring 87 people to assist with child welfare cases, committing \$1 million to create more food pantries, spending \$2 million on the Backpack Program to help address childhood hunger; added support for nursing homes; and \$3 million to buy additional vehicles to deliver senior meals. Other areas discussed by the governor include: the success of a program allowing many students to attend college for free; the need to protect the environment; his support for the coal industry and efforts to find alternative uses for coal; growth in tourism; support for the Mountain Impact Fund to encourage investment in the state; the success of the Mountaineer Challenge Academy through working with the National Guard; the importance of funding the arts; and the need to make education a centerpiece.

[Wisconsin](#) Governor Tony Evers said that although there were setbacks, the state had a lot of successes over the past year. Specifically, he mentioned: the work of the Climate Change Task Force; executive orders affirming equity and inclusion for state workers; criminal justice reform including changes to the parole system; expanding healthcare access in rural areas; voting rights; preventing human trafficking; promoting economic development; investing in transportation; and increased education spending. Also, regarding education, the governor announced that he will be signing an executive order to create a task force on student debt. The governor then discussed the challenges that dairy farmers face and announced a three-pronged plan to address the issue. First, he said he is calling a special session to take up legislation to invest in farmers, agricultural industries, and rural communities. Second, he announced the creation of the Office of Rural Prosperity to provide a one-stop shop to help people navigate state programs and resources tailored to rural communities. Third, the governor said he would create a blue-ribbon commission to help promote agriculture and rural economic prosperity. The governor also discussed the need for redistricting reform and announced that he will sign an executive order to create a nonpartisan redistricting commission to draw maps in the state. Finally, the governor highlighted other issues that will need to be addressed through working together including youth vaping, capping the cost of insulin, the dark store loophole impacting property taxes, and water quality.

[Wyoming](#) Governor Mark Gordon said that the Wyoming economy and the state is strong. He noted that the population is growing, unemployment is down, gross domestic product is increasing, and personal income is up. Regarding the budget, he said that the state's level of savings allows it some time to make thoughtful decisions about the state's future and its budget. He called for a serious conversation about ways to diversify the economy and strengthen the state. His budget proposal calls for flat ongoing spending, keeping education undiminished, spending from savings, and curbing capital construction. Additionally, he called for recalibrating the education funding model this year, strategic investments in new technology and advanced cybersecurity, and a one-time bonus to help retain state employees. Regarding energy, the governor discussed his support for the coal industry, litigation to ensure that interior states have access to coastal ports, proposed reforms to the Clean Water Act, efforts to attract the next carbon capture and sequestration facility, support for a \$25 million investment to establish the Energy Commercialization Program, changing ad-valorem tax payments to a monthly basis, and a temporary reduction in severance taxes for those most in need. In speaking about natural resources and agriculture the governor talked about efforts to ensure the accessibility of federal lands for all users, efforts to combat invasive species, an executive order to preserve unique wildlife corridors, and supporting legislation targeted at the state's aging irrigation infrastructure. The governor also spoke about the need to continue to grow the tourism industry and stated his support for a proposed lodging tax. In the area of education, the governor said that over the course of this recalibration year the state needs to strategize, evaluate, and improve the early-education, K-12, and post-secondary systems. Finally, the governor discussed health care proposals including improving access and lowering the cost of health care including prescription drugs, improving mental health care through innovative approaches, and funding to launch an in-state suicide hotline.