

STATELINE MIDWEST



MIDWEST

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LAWS REFLECT INTEREST IN, CONCERNS ABOUT FUTURE OF MIDWEST FARMLAND

Much of the region’s land is devoted to agricultural production, but development has caused acreage losses in some states; a rise in solar projects poses future land-use questions

by Tim Anderson (tanderson@csg.org)

Rep. Kendell Culp grows corn and soybeans and raises beef cattle in a part of Indiana with some of the most productive agricultural land in the entire state.

But some of that same land also has appeal as a site for other uses, particularly renewable energy projects such as solar farms that are growing in number.

“It is an issue on a lot of people’s minds right now,” Culp says about what he hears from constituents about the actual and potential loss of prime farmland.

He heard it as a longtime county commissioner, and again when he did his first-ever survey as a newly elected state legislator in the fall.

His response was the introduction

of two bills this year — both of which became law — that will have the state taking an in-depth look at trends in farmland loss and land use, as well as policy ideas to keep this land in agricultural production.

“Measuring the acres lost is important,” Culp says, “but just as important is what it’s being lost to.”

Those are the two goals of HB 1557, a new law that directs the Indiana Department of Agriculture to detail losses of farmland between 2010 and 2022. The second enacted measure, HB 1132, creates a state-level land use task force, a group of legislators and others who will look at growth patterns in Indiana’s rural, urban and suburban areas.

Loss of farmland will be one focus of this task force. Another will be the extent of food insecurity in different parts of Indiana.

“There is the perception that the less farmland, the less food,” Culp says. “I don’t think that’s necessarily been the reality because farmers always have been able to use new technologies to maximize production.

“But I do think that the issue of food insecurity and lost farmland is something we need to be more

conscious of, especially if more acres start getting taken out of production at drastic rates.

“It’s also a really great responsibility we have [to the world]. People in other countries think more than we do about where their food comes from, and they know they rely on the U.S., specifically the states of the Midwest.”



Indiana Rep. Kendell Culp

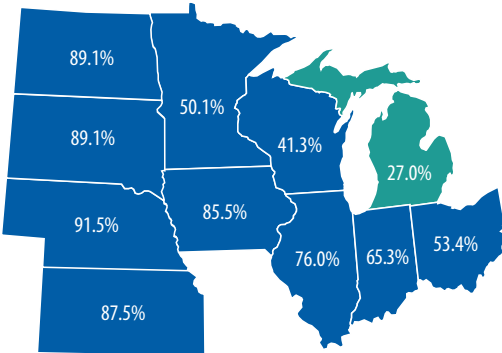
FUTURE PRESSURES AND NEEDS

“No Farms No Food” is the message of the American Farmland Trust, an advocacy group founded more than 40 years ago to save the nation’s farms and ranches from development.

The group’s Midwest director, Kristopher Reynolds, says it’s a message that doesn’t always resonate in this region because of the clear abundance of ranchland and farmland: Drive through much of America’s Heartland, and it’s most of what you see.

However, many states in this region have lost some of this land

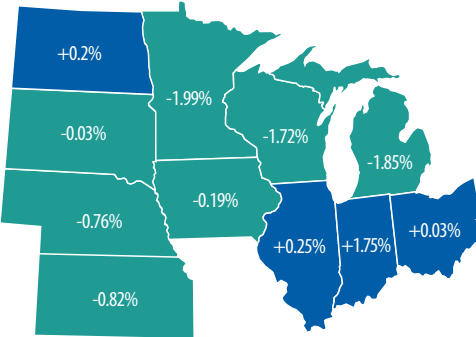
% OF STATE’S TOTAL LAND AREA THAT IS IN FARMS, AS OF LAST U.S. CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE (2017)*



- Higher than % of total U.S. land area in farms: 39.8%
- Lower than % of total U.S. land area in farms: 39.8%

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service

NET GAIN OR LOSS OF FARMLAND, AS MEASURED OVER LAST TWO U.S. CENSUSES OF AGRICULTURE: 2012 VS. 2017*



- Gained farmland
- Lost farmland

* The U.S. lost a total of 14.3 million acres of farmland during this period. Minnesota had the highest acreage loss in the Midwest (-518,856 acres). Indiana had the region’s largest increase in farmland (+249,600 acres).

Sources: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, and Farmland Information Center

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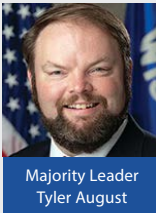
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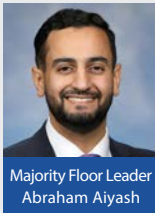
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Majority Leader Tyler August



Majority Floor Leader Abraham Aiyash

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RATES OF ‘FOOD INSECURE’ HOUSEHOLDS VARY IN MIDWEST; STATE POLICY IS ONE OF MANY FACTORS

Over the course of the past year, did you have enough food, at all times, for an active, healthy life?

For people in most U.S. households, the answer is “yes.” Close to 90 percent of households were “food secure” in 2021. But that leaves more than 9 million U.S. children and more than 24 million adults living in a household with some degree of “food insecurity,” including some households reporting “low” or “very low” levels of food security.

In support of the yearlong Midwestern Legislative Conference Chair’s Initiative of Michigan Sen. Roger Victory on “Food Security: Feeding the Future,” a series of articles on this topic is appearing in *Stateline Midwest* in 2023. Here, we share regional and U.S. data on food insecurity, as well as on the nation’s leading hunger-fighting program: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP.

IMPACT OF STATE- AND HOUSEHOLD-LEVEL CHARACTERISTICS ON FOOD INSECURITY

Nationwide, the rate of food-insecure households is 10.4 percent (when averaging the years 2019, 2020 and 2021). Four Midwestern states — Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota — have a “statistically significant” lower rate than the national average. Every other state in the region is close to the national average, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s “Household Food Security in the United States in 2021” (see top map).

Authors of the USDA report cite several contributors to the state-by-state variations. On the policy side, state laws and programs affect access to unemployment insurance, nutrition assistance and the earned income tax credit. In turn, access to these as well as other safety-net and/or anti-poverty programs influences rates of food insecurity.

Differences in state-level economic characteristics play a role as well. For example, lower average wages lead to higher rates of food insecurity, as do higher housing costs and unemployment rates.

At the household level, families with children have higher-than-average rates of food insecurity (12.5 percent in 2021). This is especially true of households with children headed by a female with no spouse. Nearly 1 in 4 of these households report being food insecure, compared to 7.4 percent of married-couple households.

A ‘MEAL GAP’ IN MIDWEST’S RURAL AREAS, AND AMONG SEVERAL MINORITY GROUPS

According to the hunger-relief organization Feeding America, which tracks county-level data for its “Map the Meal Gap” study, 89 percent of the U.S. counties with the highest rates of food insecurity are rural.

This kind of rural-urban gap is seen in the data for the 11-state Midwest, where most counties with elevated rates of food insecurity (11.9 percent or more of the population) are rural. Michigan, for instance, has 42 such counties, and nearly all of them are concentrated in the state’s northern region and Upper Peninsula. Many of Ohio’s 46 counties with higher-than-average food-insecurity rates are in the southeast part of the state.

In South Dakota’s Oglala Lakota County, 26.3 percent of the residents report being “food insecure,” one of the nation’s highest rates. This county has a mostly Native American population. In four other Midwestern states (Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and Wisconsin), the counties with the highest rates of food insecurity also have high numbers of Native Americans.

According to Feeding America, of the 34 million people in the United States experiencing food insecurity, 8.2 percent are Native American, a group that makes up less than 3 percent of the U.S. population.

The USDA study found higher rates of food insecurity among Black and Hispanic households, 19.8

percent and 16.2 percent, respectively. That compares to 7.0 percent of White households.

RATES OF SNAP PARTICIPATION IN MIDWEST

Every month, around 40 million Americans receive financial help with food purchases via the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. It is the nation’s largest hunger-fighting program, providing benefits via an electronic benefits transfer card that is only redeemable for food purchases. In fiscal year 2022, the average monthly benefit, per household, was \$438.99.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the percentage of state residents in the Midwest participating in SNAP in FY 2022 ranged from a high of 16 percent in Illinois to a low of 6 percent in North Dakota (see bar chart). Nationwide, the center says, more than 65 percent of SNAP participants are in families with children; 36 percent are in families with members who are older adults or disabled; and 41 percent are in working families.

RECENT STATE-LEVEL CHANGES TO SNAP

This year, state legislatures in the Midwest considered many measures related to SNAP, a reflection of the central role that states play in program administration and policy decisions. For example:

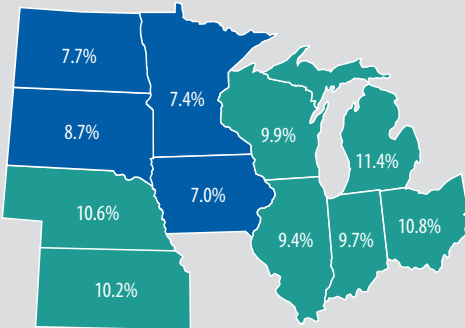
- In Iowa, households no longer qualify for SNAP if they have assets that exceed \$15,000, excluding the value of a home, a car and up to \$10,000 of the value of a second car. The new law (SF 494) also establishes a statutory income limit on SNAP eligibility, at 160 percent of the federal poverty level. Additionally, the measure includes new requirements for program administrators and SNAP applicants in areas such as eligibility verification and identity authentication.
- Last year, Kansas (HB 2448) established new statutory language regarding work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents between the ages of 18 and 49. To receive SNAP benefits, these individuals must be employed 30 hours a week or be enrolled in an employment or training program. This year, with the successful override of a gubernatorial veto, legislators passed HB 2094, which makes 50- to 59-year-olds subject to this same requirement.
- Indiana’s recently enacted SB 334 simplifies the application process for elderly and disabled residents seeking SNAP benefits. The new law also lengthens to 36 months the certification period for these individuals, reducing the frequency in which they need to recertify eligibility.
- Two years ago, Nebraska temporarily raised its SNAP income threshold from 130 percent to 165 percent. This expansion was set to sunset in 2023. Nebraska legislators, though, voted to keep the higher threshold with this year’s passage of LB 227.

The actions in Nebraska are possible because of a provision in federal policy that allows states to offer broad-based categorical eligibility: make households “categorically eligible” for SNAP if they receive benefits from other means-tested, low-income assistance programs.

States use this policy to raise income eligibility thresholds and remove asset limits, thus making more households eligible for federally funded SNAP benefits. Without state implementation of broad-based categorical eligibility, SNAP participation is limited to households with gross income at or below 130 percent of the federal poverty level and, as of FY 2022, households with liquid assets below \$2,500 (\$3,750 for the elderly and disabled).

Every Midwestern state except Kansas and South Dakota uses broad-based categorical eligibility for SNAP. One result is varying income thresholds across states (see bottom map).

% OF FOOD-INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS



- Statistically different and lower than three-year U.S. average of 10.4%
- Not statistically different than three-year U.S. average of 10.4%

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

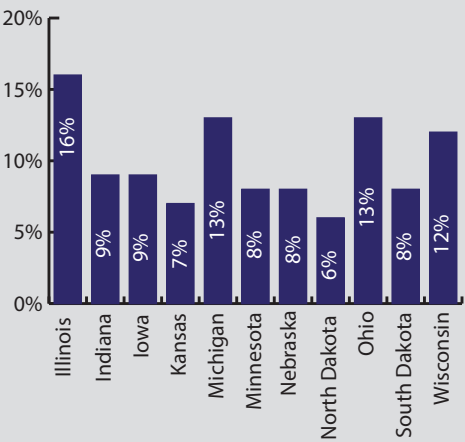
FOOD INSECURITY IN THE MIDWEST (2021)

| State | # of counties with elevated rates of food insecurity* | County with highest rate of food insecurity |
|--------------|---|---|
| Illinois | 17 | Alexander (14.7%) |
| Indiana | 25 | Scott (15.2%) |
| Iowa | 1 | Appanoose (12.4%) |
| Kansas | 13 | Crawford (13.6%) |
| Michigan | 42 | Clare (18.3%) |
| Minnesota | 1 | Mahnomen (13.0%) |
| Nebraska | 8 | Thurston (14.9%) |
| North Dakota | 3 | Sioux (17.9%) |
| Ohio | 46 | Scioto (18.5%) |
| South Dakota | 12 | Oglala Lakota (26.3%) |
| Wisconsin | 1 | Menominee (15.8%) |

* “Elevated” means 11.9 percent or more of the population is food insecure.

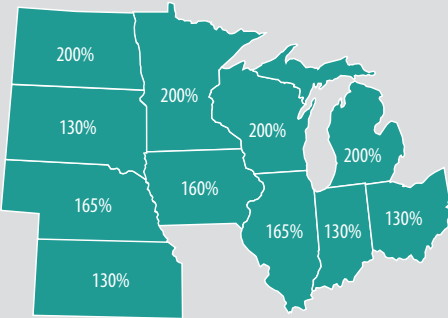
Source: Feeding America

ESTIMATED % OF POPULATION HELPED BY SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP), FY 2022



Source: Center on Budget Policy and Priorities

STATE INCOME THRESHOLDS FOR PARTICIPATING IN SNAP (AS OF JANUARY 2023)



* Variations in income thresholds are due to states using their authority under federal law to adopt broad-based categorical eligibility (see article for details). That same authority allows states to eliminate asset limits on SNAP eligibility. Illinois, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio and Wisconsin have no limits on assets for some or all SNAP participants. Asset limits vary in the other Midwestern states.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

WISCONSIN MAY EXPAND PROGRAM THAT REWARDS CONSERVATION, FARMLAND PRESERVATION

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to population changes, sprawl and development in recent decades.

Looking ahead, it's not just residential, commercial or industrial development in new areas that could replace farmland. The American Farmland Trust notes in a 2022 national study that "tens of millions of additional acres of rural land will be used for energy production and transmission in the coming decades."

Add to that increases in global population and the likelihood of more-frequent extreme weather events such as droughts and flooding, and keeping "nationally significant" agricultural land in production becomes important for "long-term food security and environmental health," the authors note in that same report.

No region has a higher concentration of that "nationally significant" land than the Midwest.

For states, Reynolds says, these trends point to the need for new policies that stop low-density sprawl, that incentivize or help farmers to keep prime agricultural land in production, and that limit the loss of this land to the continuing rise in energy projects.

"As an organization, we support

renewable energy, but we also recognize that it can come at a cost to farmers and to farmland," Reynolds says.

"What we've tried to do is identify areas [for renewable projects] that are maybe less productive in terms of agriculture — brownfield sites, for instance — or look for ways where you can still have agriculture production and solar development at the same site."

'ONCE IT'S OUT ...'

The pinch on agricultural land is being felt in Wisconsin as well.

According to Sen. Patrick Testin, his state has lost nearly 1 million acres over the last two decades, and he worries about future declines due to pressures not just from other types of development or uses, but to some longstanding demographic and economic trends.

"Like in many states, the average age of our farmer is increasing, and that next generation hasn't necessarily been there to take up the mantle," Testin says. "And we've seen some of our smaller operations go out of existence."

One policy lever used by Wisconsin since 1977 is the state's Farmland Preservation Program. Under the program, local governments have the authority to develop farmland preservation plans and zoning districts, as well as to petition the state for approval of Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEA).

With these AEA designations and zoning districts in place, local farmers then have the opportunity to access state income tax credits by entering into a farmland preservation agreement. Under this agreement, a farmer agrees to keep the land in agricultural use for 15 years and meet the state's soil and water conservation standards.

The tax credit is \$5 per acre for land in an AEA; \$7.50 for land in a certified farmland preservation zoning district; and \$10 for land in an AEA and a farmland preservation zoning district. According to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, as of July 2021, a total of 1,061 preservation agreements had been signed covering

close to 233,000 acres.

Many more acres of land are eligible but not enrolled in the program.

Testin says this lack of participation points to two problems with the current program: the length of the agreement is too long (individuals don't want to be wedded to 15 years), and the tax credits are too small.

He and other legislators introduced bills this year (SB 134 and AB 133) to address both those concerns. The term of the agreement would be reduced from 15 years to 10, and the per-acre tax breaks would be increased and automatically rise in the future with inflationary changes.

"What we're trying to do with this bill is encourage more people to participate, first of all, and then encourage more farmers to put more acreage into it," says Wisconsin Rep. Katrina Shankland, another sponsor of the bill.

She views increased participation as a win-win-win for the state: Reward farmers for being good stewards of the land, advance the state's conservation goals, and help preserve Wisconsin's agricultural heritage.

"Once it's out of [agricultural] production, it's rarely, if ever, farmed again," Shankland says.

'BEST OPPORTUNITY FOR STATES'

Reynolds suggests that states in the Midwest develop and invest in new Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement programs; as of January 2022, only Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin had any farmland acreage protected via a PACE program, according to the American Farmland Trust's Farmland Information Center.

Under a PACE program, landowners are compensated for keeping their land for agricultural use; the compensation amount is based on the property's fair market value.

"It's probably the best opportunity for states to protect more farmland because they're able to leverage federal dollars," Reynolds says.

| ACRES OF FARMLAND PROJECTED TO BE UNDER SOLAR INSTALLATIONS OR CONVERTED TO DEVELOPMENT BY 2040 | | |
|---|----------------|--|
| State | Acres to solar | Acres to urban and highly developed uses or low-density residential uses |
| Illinois | 82,400 | 363,400 |
| Indiana | 23,300 | 451,100 |
| Iowa | 22,600 | 183,400 |
| Kansas | 36,600 | 196,900 |
| Michigan | 93,900 | 483,800 |
| Minnesota | 29,700 | 369,500 |
| Nebraska | 16,000 | 103,800 |
| North Dakota | 4,900 | 198,500 |
| Ohio | 32,600 | 518,500 |
| South Dakota | 800 | 156,900 |
| Wisconsin | 54,300 | 515,200 |

Source: American Farmland Trust

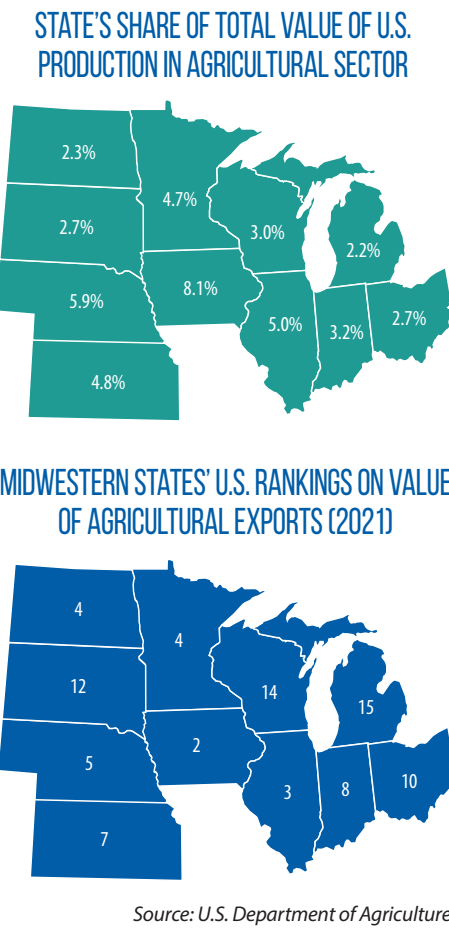
That money comes from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. The Inflation Reduction Act, signed into law in 2022, authorized an additional \$1.4 billion for this program over the next five years.

Accessing those funds, though, requires a 50 percent match. States can fill that void, and tap into newly available federal dollars, by creating a PACE program.


"We're not making any more farmland, so we need to protect what we have — not just for production purposes, but from what we're seeing with some of the climate projections and how it's going to be more difficult to grow food in some other places," Reynolds says.

"There's also the issue of farmland changing hands at a rapid pace over the next 15 years. We want to make sure that the next generation still has access to farmland in the future."


Michigan Sen. Roger Victory has chosen "Food Security: Feeding the Future" as the focus of his Midwestern Legislative Conference Chair's Initiative for 2023.




EXAMPLES OF POLICY STRATEGIES USED BY STATES TO PRESERVE FARMLAND, ENCOURAGE CONTINUED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION




INVEST IN PURCHASE OF AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT (PACE) PROGRAMS THAT COMPENSATE OWNERS OF AGRICULTURAL LAND TO KEEP THE LAND IN PRODUCTION AND PREVENT DEVELOPMENT FOR OTHER USES




ESTABLISH AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS IN STATE STATUTE THAT ALLOW LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO IDENTIFY AREAS WHERE COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE WILL BE PROTECTED AND ENROLLED FARMERS WILL GET TAX BENEFITS OF SOME KIND




REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF MONEY THAT AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS MUST PAY IN LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES THROUGH THE USE OF A DIFFERENTIAL ASSESSMENT SYSTEM



PROVIDE TAX CREDITS TO PRODUCERS WHO LEASE THEIR LAND OR EQUIPMENT TO BEGINNING FARMERS; ESTABLISH LOW-INTEREST LOAN PROGRAMS FOR BEGINNING FARMERS



CREATE 'RIGHT TO FARM' LAWS THAT PROVIDE LEGAL PROTECTIONS TO AGRICULTURE PRODUCERS AND PROTECT THEM FROM LOCAL ANTI-NUISANCE ORDINANCES



Source: American Farmland Trust

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Green choice? Community solar attracting attention in Midwestern states as a path to boost competition, meet renewable energy goals

by Jon Davis (jdavis@cs.org)

As renewable energy’s market share grows and large wind and solar facilities proliferate, many states are allowing a smaller-scale alternative: “community solar.”

The U.S. Department of Energy defines community solar as “any solar project or purchasing program, within a geographic area, in which the benefits of a solar project flow to multiple customers such as individuals, businesses, nonprofits and other groups.”

Community solar projects can be owned and operated by a for-profit company or nonprofit community organization, or have utilities “sponsor” them.

Customers within the service area of the utility in which the project is located “subscribe” to a percentage of its electrical output and receive an electric bill credit for their share.

One goal for community solar is to place renewable energy projects on land or spaces that would otherwise go undeveloped or unused, says Matt Hargarten, vice president of campaigns for the Coalition for Community Solar Access.

“There’s a lot of land near urban areas where there isn’t a lot of incentives for developers to go there,” he says. “A lot of them are built on warehouse rooftops — think Amazon [warehouses] — a lot of states encourage that.”

At the start of this year, 22 states, including Illinois and Minnesota, had enacted laws enabling community solar by specifying that such projects are not utilities, and authorizing “virtual metering” so subscribers can benefit from the community solar production.

Such laws are necessary because most states consider any entity that generates and sells electricity to be a utility subject to state regulation, Hargarten says.

“I don’t know of any state where you can do third-party community solar without [an enabling] law in place,” he says.

LAWS IN PLACE, CHANGING IN ILLINOIS AND MINNESOTA

In Illinois, the Future Energy Jobs Act from 2016 (SB 2814) created the Solar for All program, under which the Illinois Power Agency or utilities bought renewable energy credits from qualifying community solar projects in low-income areas.

The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (SB 2408 of 2021) expanded the program by including community solar among myriad renewable energy initiatives intended to help collectively meet the state’s goal of 100 percent clean energy by 2050. This newer law:

- allows individual community solar

projects to generate up to 5 MW of power, up from 2;

- boosts annual funding for community solar, aiming to raise its statewide generating capacity from 213 MW to 1,500 MW;
- shifts the project selection process from a lottery to one based on a project’s score on siting and other criteria; and

- increases annual Illinois Solar for All funding from \$10 million to \$50 million, allowing for the annual purchase of 3.8 million renewable energy credits through 2030.

Those credits are divided among varying types of renewable energy projects, with 27.5 percent designated for community, rooftop and residential solar — the third-highest share after wind energy and utility-scale solar.

Minnesota, which was the first Midwestern state to enact community solar legislation (HF 729 of 2013), recently updated its law.

The 2013 law required the state’s largest electric utility, Xcel, to establish a community solar “garden” program option for its customers, with generation capacity of up to 1 MW. Xcel is required to buy electricity from those gardens under a formula that was modified in 2016 to become an annual recalculation of the value of solar energy.

Under HF 2310, signed into law in May, this existing program will be joined by a new community solar garden initiative starting in 2024. It will be run by the Minnesota Department of Commerce and is targeted for residential subscribers.

As of next year, new gardens must have at least 25 subscribers per megawatt, at least half of whom must be from low- or middle-income households. That emphasis on reaching less-affluent residents makes Minnesota’s new program a “modernized best of class” for state-based, community-solar laws, Hargarten says.

HF 2310 also lets community solar gardens generate up to 5 MW and eliminates a requirement that subscribers live in the county or adjacent county where a garden is located.

‘STAND ON THEIR OWN’

Community solar can be attractive to legislators for different reasons.

“For me, it’s about competition; it’s about the monopoly the power companies have and it’s about the high power rates in southeast Wisconsin,” says state Sen. Duey Stroebel, author of this year’s SB 226, which would authorize community

solar and grant rule-making authority to the Public Service Commission.

“It’s a way to push back against high power rates.”

While Stroebel says the green-energy angle is incidental for him, it’s front-and-center for Michigan Sen. Jeff Irwin, the main sponsor of this year’s SB 153, which also would establish a community solar program. (A companion bill, SB 152, would require the Michigan Public Service Commission to draft operating rules within one year of passage.)

“I’m a big believer in clean energy and, as solar becomes more efficient and more affordable, it becomes a better energy option,” Irwin says.

The Wisconsin and Michigan bills (neither of which had passed as of early June) would authorize projects of up to 5 MW and require them to have at least three subscribers.

The Wisconsin measure would allow community solar facilities to be up to 35 acres, but only in communities that approve them by a two-thirds vote of the host jurisdiction’s governing body.

Projects would be subject to local zoning and property taxation. (Under current Wisconsin law, people who generate electricity for others are exempt from property taxation but are subject to a tax based on gross revenues).

Subscribers would have to be in the service territory of the investor-owned utility whose transmission lines the project would use.

Ultimately, Stroebel says, projects would “have to stand on their own.”

“They have to make economic sense,” he says. If they can sell subscriptions, then they’ll be successful. If they can’t, they won’t.”

Irwin’s bill would require that at least 30 percent of a project’s output be reserved for low-income households or organizations that provide services, assistance or housing to low-income individuals (including tribal governments or tribally designated housing authorities).

According to Irwin, community solar is needed in Michigan because most residents can’t afford to install solar panels, roofs aren’t well-aligned for the panels, or tree cover makes rooftop solar impractical. Subscribing to a community solar project, then, becomes the best option.

And since local governments are afforded strong siting control, Irwin adds, community solar also is a way for utilities to avoid or overcome local resistance to large, industrial-scale operations.

Illinois Sen. Laura Ellman and Indiana Rep. Ethan Manning serve as co-chairs of the Midwestern Legislative Conference Energy & Environment Committee. Ohio Rep. Sharon Ray is the vice chair. Jon Davis is CSG Midwest’s staff liaison to the committee.

STATUS OF COMMUNITY SOLAR PROJECTS IN U.S. STATES (AS OF DECEMBER 2022)

| State | First project online | # of completed projects | Operating capacity |
|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Illinois | First quarter of 2019 | 93 | 181 MW |
| Minnesota | First quarter of 2017 | 462 | 863 MW |
| Colorado* | 2013 | 102 | 130 MW |
| Maryland** | N/A | N/A | 82 MW |
| Massachusetts | Last quarter of 2014 | 472 | 796 MW |
| New Jersey | First quarter of 2021 | 21 | 45 MW |
| New York | Last quarter of 2016 | 782 | 1,274 MW |

*Colorado data is from December 2021.

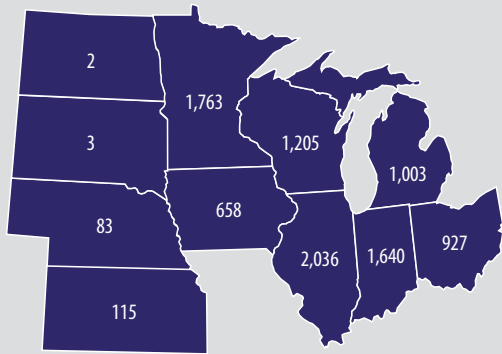
**Data for Maryland’s seven-year pilot program is not yet fully available; it was established in 2017, with a statewide operating capacity cap of about 418 MW.

Source: Institute for Local Self-Reliance

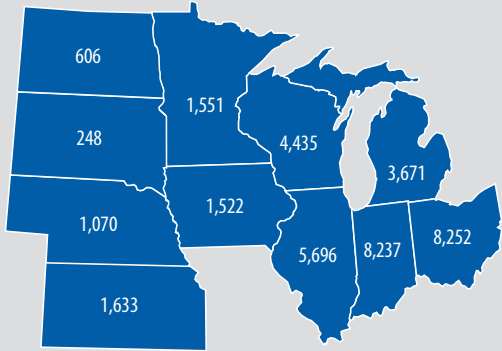


SOLAR ENERGY PRODUCTION IN MIDWEST: INSTALLED MEGAWATT CAPACITY, AS OF JANUARY 2023, AND ESTIMATED POTENTIAL MEGAWATT CAPACITY BY 2027*

Installed capacity (MW)



Potential capacity (MW)



*One megawatt (MW) equals one million kilowatts.

Source: Solar Energies Industry Association

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Indiana's new career scholarship accounts will provide high school students with up to \$5,000 to pursue work-based learning, credentials

by Derek Cantù (dcantu@cs.org)

Flexible academic tracks. Early exposure to the workforce. Financial support for students pursuing work-based learning opportunities. Transitional learning programs that extend beyond secondary education.

Rep. Bob Behning has seen how those education models work in other countries (the Swiss vocational model, for instance).

Among his goals with the recently signed HB 1002: Use lessons learned from those systems to reinvent the high school experience for students in his home state of Indiana, in a way that makes learning more impactful and gets them career-ready.

"A lot of kids see little value, and are finding less and less relevancy, in high school," says Behning, a chief sponsor of the legislation.

"A bill like HB 1002 changes the paradigm. It provides the academics [that students] need, but embeds it in a work-based learning experience."

NEW CAREER SCHOLARSHIP ACCOUNTS FOR STUDENTS

Central to Indiana's reinvention plan is the creation of new career scholarship accounts, or CSAs.

With the new law in place, participating students will be allotted up to \$5,000 each for the costs associated with career education — for example, enrollment in a youth apprenticeship program, career coaching services, community college coursework, certification examinations, and transportation to and from job-training locations.

A total of \$15 million will go to CSAs over the next two fiscal years.

Students who choose an apprenticeship track will be paid by their employer. The amount of time a student spends off campus in a CSA-funded program will vary.

"If you look at what we would consider a traditional youth apprenticeship, you're probably looking at starting in your junior year where you may spend one to two days [a week] at an employer," Behning explains.

"By the time you're a senior, you could spend two to three [days], and by the time you're the equivalent of what would be a freshman in college,

it could be up to three to four days."

To accommodate these students' unique school schedules, the state Board of Education will establish a new path for a high school diploma that aligns with a work-based learning model.

Another key component of HB 1002: ensuring that younger K-12 students are aware of and prepared for the new training opportunities.

By the end of this year, state education leaders will develop new standards for a "career awareness course" that introduces students to the CSA program. The course also will show students which industry sectors are in high demand, identify the education and workforce training prerequisites needed to enter various fields, and offer individualized career-plan counseling.

Schools will be required to offer this career awareness course to ninth-graders by 2030.

GOAL: MORE STUDENTS EARN A WORKFORCE CREDENTIAL

In order to qualify as a CSA program, the work-based experience must culminate in a student earning a credential — for example, an associate degree or an industry-recognized certificate.

For each student who successfully earns a credential, a \$500 grant will be awarded to his or her school as well as the CSA-participating entity (a business or career-and-technical education center, for example).

"Today, the credential really is your currency in the labor market," says Jason Bearce, vice president of education and workforce development for the Indiana Chamber of Commerce and a proponent of HB 1002.

"Employers do a lot of training. A fair amount of it doesn't result in any kind of recognized certificate or industry credential that would be recognized outside of that place of business. We think that's a missed opportunity [for workers]."

Bearce also says an increase in credential attainment can have broader, positive economic effects.

"At one time, competing for a business expansion or relocation was primarily about, What's the tax incentive package? What's the regulatory environment? What's the cost of doing business?" Bearce says.

Today, though, site selection often hinges on this question: "Who has a critical mass of highly skilled human capital?"

A highly credentialed workforce helps make the case.

CONCERNS ABOUT POTENTIAL FOR 'NEW PATRONAGE'

How will the state locate and secure work-based learning and training opportunities for potentially thousands of students?

HB 1002 outlines a role for "intermediaries."

"[They are] the facilitator that brings the employer and the student together," Behning explains.

"It can be a not-for-profit, it could be a for-profit, but it would be the group that's in the middle that's [an] aggregator of potential opportunities for kids."

The state's new budget includes \$5 million for "intermediary capacity building" over the next fiscal year.

"We are giving some seed money to intermediaries," Behning says. "Long term, the goal would be that they would be funded as a fee to employers for embedding an apprentice in your business."

Opponents of HB 1002, such as Rep. Ed DeLaney, believe the administrative burden of operating the CSA program and funding of intermediaries will be exceedingly expensive.

And since qualified CSA programs must include a credential component, DeLaney says this new strategy will undercut the value of existing career-and-technical courses being offered in schools and could lead to decreases in school funding.

Additionally, although participating CSA employers must undergo a rigorous process to demonstrate the high value of their on-the-job training or apprenticeship offering, DeLaney is concerned the new law could lead to an unequal playing field that favors partisan alliances.

"I think it will benefit those businesses that are most adept at getting government grants," DeLaney says. "To some extent, this does run the risk of being what I call the 'new patronage.'"

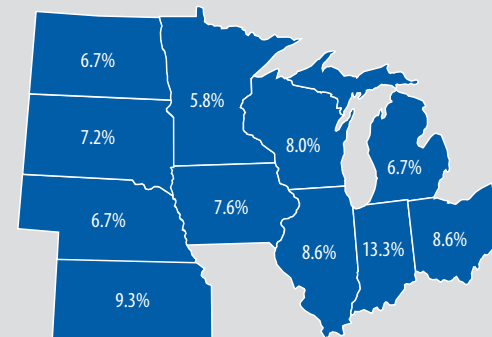
During legislative debate over the measure, opponents and even some proponents of HB 1002 said a better plan of action would have been to begin

the CSA program as a smaller, more targeted pilot initiative, or to phase in the new model with a small cohort of established intermediaries and employer partners.

Behning, who believes the need for comprehensive work-based learning for students is too imperative to wait for a pilot study, anticipates "a fairly slow uptake [to the CSA program] just because it's a new concept rolling out."

Ohio Sen. Hearcel Craig and Wisconsin Rep. Joel Kitchens serve as co-chairs of the Midwestern Legislative Conference Education & Workforce Committee. Minnesota Sen. Heather Gustafson is the vice chair. Derek Cantù serves as CSG Midwest staff liaison to the committee.

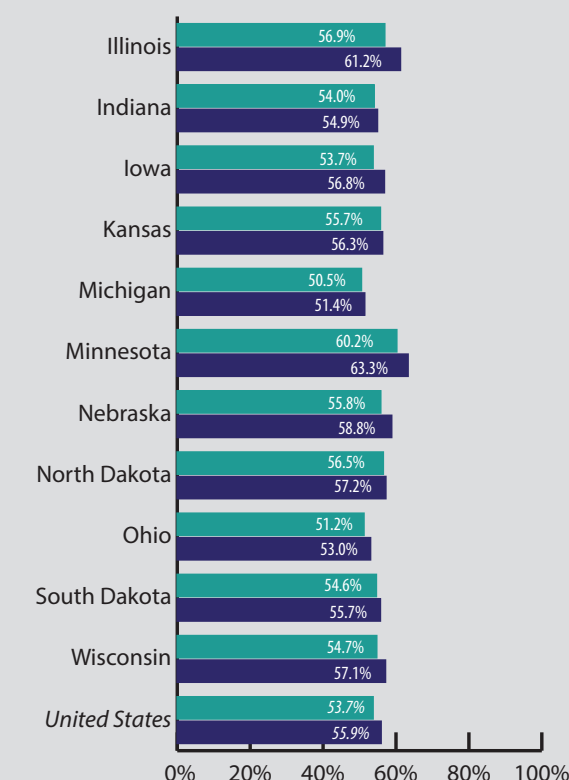
% OF 25- TO- 64-YEAR-OLDS WHO DO NOT HAVE A POSTSECONDARY DEGREE, BUT WHO HAVE EARNED A CERTIFICATE OR INDUSTRY-RECOGNIZED CREDENTIALS BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL (2021)*



* The U.S. rate is 8.0%.

Source: Lumina Foundation

% OF TOTAL WORKING-AGE POPULATION WITH A COLLEGE DEGREE OR OTHER CREDENTIALS BEYOND A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA (2021)



25- to 64-year-olds

25- to 34-year-olds

Source: Lumina Foundation

HOW TO PREPARE FUTURE SKILLED WORKERS: IDEAS FROM INDIANA GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE CABINET RELATED TO STATE'S SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY SYSTEMS

- ✓ ACCOMMODATE WORK-BASED LEARNING WITH CHANGES IN DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS
- ✓ INCREASE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACCESS TO 'CREDENTIALS OF VALUE'
- ✓ PROVIDE FINANCIAL INCENTIVES TO STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS FOR COMPLETION OF THESE CREDENTIALS
- ✓ INCREASE ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY STEM CURRICULUM AND OPPORTUNITIES; STRENGTHEN STEM EDUCATOR PIPELINE
- ✓ AWARD STUDENTS WHO COMPLETE 'FIRST YEAR' IN COLLEGE WHILE IN HIGH SCHOOL (VIA COMPLETION OF DUAL CREDIT COURSES OR CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS) WITH A 'SECOND YEAR' COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP
- ✓ ENSURE AVAILABILITY OF STACKABLE CREDENTIAL ATTAINMENT SYSTEM THAT ALLOWS POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS TO EARN SHORT-TERM CERTIFICATIONS WHILE PURSUING A POSTSECONDARY DEGREE



MIDWEST-CANADA RELATIONS

A binational push on critical-minerals production, supply chains seeks to address national risks — and holds potential regional opportunities

by Mitch Arvidson (marvidson@csg.org)

She lives in and represents a part of North Dakota’s coal country. In the future, Rep. Anna Novak hopes her district also becomes known as a place where rare-earth elements and critical minerals are extracted and processed, and made into products essential for today’s economy.

It’s the reason she sponsored this year’s HB 1511, a measure signed into law earlier this year to attract companies able to use the state’s abundant supply of lignite coal as a “feedstock” to extract some of those metallic elements and minerals.

“What’s really exciting about this for me is that the products have to be processed on site. You can’t ship it somewhere else. ... I have a feeling that not only will the elements be processed on site, but we will be able to produce things like lithium batteries and so forth right here in my district,” Novak says.

Under North Dakota law, companies pay a severance tax on each ton of the coal that is mined.

But HB 1511 exempts companies from this tax for the first million tons of coal used as a “feedstock” for mineral extraction. It also includes a sales tax exemption related to facility construction or expansion.

“We have a tremendous business-friendly environment in North Dakota, our coal mines are already permitted, and we have the Energy and Environmental Research Center,” Novak says.

That center, housed at the University of North Dakota, recently secured a \$8 million federal grant to conduct research on extracting rare earth elements from the state’s lignite coal and developing technologies related to recovery and manufacturing.

The center also is competing to be the home of an eventual \$124 million commercial demonstration facility. The goal of this project, funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, would be to produce up to 1,000 tons of rare-earth elements annually — a significant amount considering the United States currently imports between 5,000 and 10,000 tons per year.

It all points to a potential economic opportunity for North Dakota, in an area of national importance.

“A critical mineral has both outsized economic and national security implications,” says Chris Berry, the president of House Mountain Partners and an expert on supply chains for battery metals.

“A critical mineral has both outsized economic and national security implications.”

Chris Berry, president, House Mountain Partners

A CANADA-U.S. PARTNERSHIP

Mineral resources, such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, and rare-earth elements are essential components of batteries, electric motors, and many other advanced technologies.

They are crucial to making everyday products, electrifying transportation systems, and meeting climate-related goals and obligations for the United States and Canada.

In both countries, there is growing concern about a heavy reliance on imports of these minerals, both as raw materials and refined, as well as on a global supply chain often controlled by China. For example, Berry estimates that China owns or controls 75 to 80 percent of the entire supply chain of rare-earth elements, 80 percent of cobalt-refining capacity, and 65 to 70 percent of lithium refining.

So, what is to be done? The good news is that the United States and Canada do not lack for a supply of critical minerals in the ground.

According to the nonpartisan Wilson Center, the United States has 750,000 metric tons of lithium reserves and Canada has 530,000. Additionally, the U.S. has 53,000 metric tons of cobalt reserves and Canada has 22,000.

However, there currently is a lack of capacity to mine, extract or process these reserves. And while a permitting process is needed to ensure safe and responsible extraction, it can be time-consuming; at a site, the time it takes to go from initial greenfield status to mine development can be as long as 15 years.

To build up domestic production and North American supply chains of these minerals and metals, Berry says, policymakers need to place “a full-scale focus on permitting timelines ... harmonizing permitting requirements on the state, provincial or federal level across borders.”

The two countries have committed to working more closely together, through agreements such as the Canada-U.S. Joint Action Plan on Critical Minerals Collaboration.

Under this plan, the nations have agreed to share information and data, diversify supply chains, promote trade and investment opportunities, and collaborate on research and development.

“Canada is an important supplier of 13 of the 35 minerals that the U.S. has identified as critical to economic and national security,” Canadian officials said in announcing the joint action plan in 2019.

(The U.S. list has since grown from 35 to 50.) “We have the potential to become a reliable source of [others].”

FEDERAL, STATE INVESTMENTS

New federal laws, programs and investments also are in place to increase domestic production.

On the U.S. side of the border, the Inflation Reduction Act is providing a tax credit equal to 10 percent of the costs related to the production of critical minerals. This tax credit can be applied twice if the company mines and then refines the minerals.

Efforts are ongoing, too, to locate critical minerals. The Earth Mapping Resources Initiative (a collaboration between the U.S. Geological Survey and state geological surveys, funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021) is identifying potential sites around the country.

Federal funds are supporting other types of research, too.

The work on lignite-coal extraction at the North Dakota research center is one example; another is the U.S. Department of Energy’s support of the Illinois Basin Carbon Ore, Rare Earth and Critical Minerals project. It is exploring the potential extraction of critical minerals from the Illinois Basin’s coal resources.

At the state level, North Dakota has the new tax credit for critical-mineral extraction, while a budget bill passed by the Michigan House in May (HB 4249) would allocate \$15 million for new public-private research hubs that advance the processes for recycling and reusing critical minerals.

Additionally, Michigan Technological University and the only operating nickel mine in the United States, Eagle Mine, have received an \$8.1 million federal grant to develop technologies and processes to supply critical minerals for electric-vehicle batteries.

Private industry in the Midwest also is jumping at the opportunity to develop the region’s critical minerals and battery technology industries.

Talon Metals in Minnesota has an agreement with Tesla to provide at least 75,000 metric tons of nickel concentrate over six years from its proposed mine in Tamarack. And in Ontario, Magna International Inc. will invest \$470 million to build a new electric vehicle battery factory in Brampton.

Manitoba Minister Kelvin Goertzen and Michigan Rep. Amos O’Neal serve as co-chairs of the Midwestern Legislative Conference Midwest-Canada Relations Committee. Ontario MPP Ernie Hardeman and North Dakota Rep. David Monson are the vice chairs. Mitch Arvidson serves as CSG Midwest staff liaison to the committee.

U.S. RELIANCE ON IMPORTS FOR ITS SUPPLY OF MANY OF THE 50 ‘CRITICAL MINERALS’ IDENTIFIED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

| | |
|-----|--|
| 24% | % OF CRITICAL MINERALS FOR WHICH THE U.S. IS 100% NET IMPORT-RELIANT |
| 62% | % OF CRITICAL MINERALS FOR WHICH THE U.S. IS AT LEAST 50% NET IMPORT-RELIANT |
| 60% | % OF CRITICAL MINERALS FOR WHICH CHINA IS THE LEADING PRODUCER NATION |



Source for data: U.S. Geological Survey

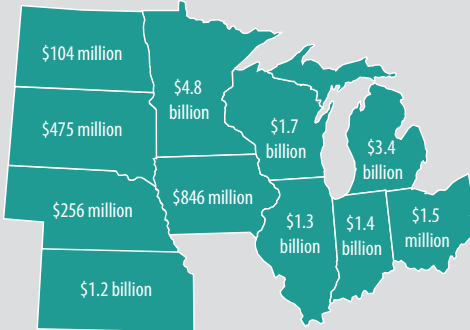
CRITICAL-MINERALS MINES AND PROCESSING FACILITIES IN FOUR CANADIAN PROVINCES*

| Province | # of mines and/or processing facilities | Types of critical minerals being mined or processed |
|--------------|---|---|
| Alberta | 6 processing facilities | Magnesium oxide, nickel, cobalt, copper sulfide and ammonium sulfate |
| Manitoba | 6 mines, 2 processing facilities | Copper, zinc, gold, silver, nickel, cobalt, platinum group metals, cesium and lithium |
| Ontario | 12 mines, 7 processing facilities | Uranium, nickel, copper, cobalt, platinum group metals, gold, selenium, tellurium, liquid sulfur dioxide, sulfuric acid, vanadium, and molybdenum |
| Saskatchewan | 16 mines | Uranium, potash and salt |

* These provinces are members (Saskatchewan) or affiliate members (Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario) of The Council of State Governments’ Midwestern Legislative Conference.

Source: Government of Canada

VALUE OF NONFUEL MINERALS COMMODITY PRODUCTION IN MIDWEST, 2022*



* Totals are partial in some states because some values are withheld to avoid disclosing a company’s proprietary data. Minnesota (fifth) and Michigan (ninth) rank among the top 10 U.S. states for the value of their nonfuel minerals commodity production. They are the only two states in the region with iron ore production.

Source: U.S. Geological Survey



LEGISLATORS AND VOTERS ARE OVERHAULING STATE POLICIES ON CASH BAIL IN MULTIPLE STATES

Initiated by legislators and approved by voters, new constitutional amendments in **Ohio** and **Wisconsin** are reshaping policies on bail so that risks to public safety can or must be considered by judges. In a third Midwestern state, **Indiana**, lawmakers took a first step this year toward making a related constitutional change.

Wisconsin voters approved AJR 1 in April.

In part, the change expands the list of factors for judges to consider when setting bail amounts for individuals accused of a violent crime. New constitutional language on “totality of the circumstances” includes whether the individual was previously convicted of a violent crime, the need to protect the community from serious harm, and prevention of witness intimidation. It will allow for higher bail amounts, so long as they are not “excessive,” for people accused of a violent crime.

What is a “violent crime”? A long list of specific offenses is included in a new statutory definition of this term (SB 75, signed into law by Gov. Tony Evers in April). For any person accused of one of these violent crimes, judges can apply the “totality of circumstances” standard for decisions on bail amounts.

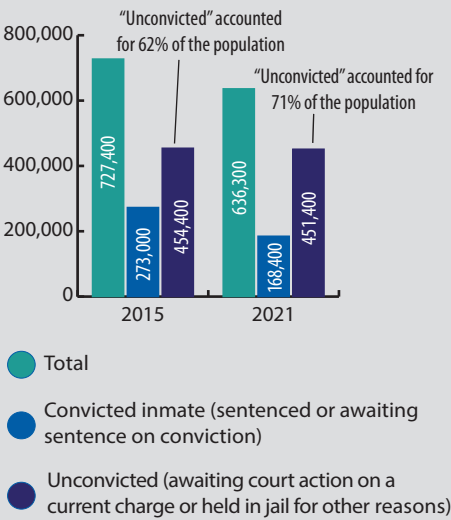
Ohio’s HR 2, approved by voters in November, requires the courts to consider public safety when determining the amount of bail. Among the factors that must be weighed: the seriousness of the offense and the accused’s criminal record.

These two constitutional amendments passed by wide margins: more than two-thirds voter approval in Wisconsin and more than three-fourths in Ohio.

Indiana’s SJR 1 would add circumstances under which a person can be denied bail; namely, if the state proves by clear and convincing evidence that “no release conditions will reasonably protect the safety of any other person or the community.” Currently, the only nonbailable offenses in Indiana are murder and treason. Before being sent to voters for approval, SJR 1 would first need to be passed again by the Indiana General Assembly, by members in office after the next general election.

In a fourth Midwestern state, **Illinois**, legislation (the latest version being HB 1095 of 2022) to end the system of cash bail has been signed into law, but had not yet taken effect as of June due to legal challenges. (The case has reached the state Supreme Court.) Supporters say the change will mean pre-trial detention is based on community risk rather than the financial means of the accused.

U.S. JAIL POPULATION: 2015 AND 2021*



Source: U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics

MINNESOTA GIVES CONSUMERS ‘RIGHT TO REPAIR’ DIGITAL ELECTRONIC PRODUCTS WITH FIRST-IN-MIDWEST LAW

Minnesota has a new “right to repair” law that not only is the first of its kind in the Midwest, but has been hailed by national advocates as the most comprehensive measure in the nation. Included as a provision in one of the Minnesota Legislature’s omnibus budget bills (SF 2744), the Digital Fair Repair Act aims to ensure that consumers can fix myriad digital electronic products without having to go through the original equipment manufacturer.

The new law covers almost all electronic products, including appliances, HVAC equipment and enterprise computing systems. Cars, medical devices, farm and construction equipment, video game consoles and home energy storage systems are exempt.

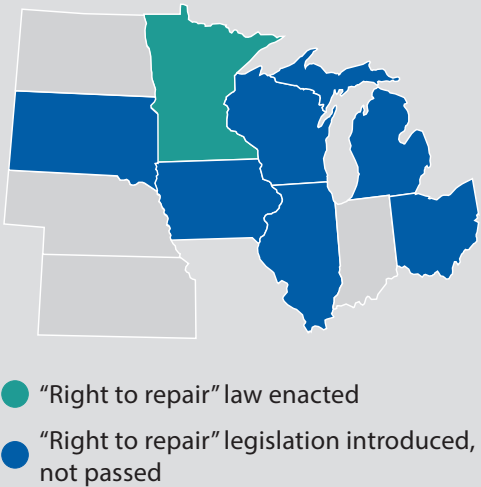
In opposing such bills, manufacturers have argued that broadening access could pose dangers to equipment and would-be repairers, as well as compromise device safety and/or security.

Over the past few years, right-to-repair legislation has been considered in state capitols across the country, but Minnesota became only the fourth U.S. state to enact such a measure, following Colorado, Massachusetts and New York. As of June, bills had been introduced this year in at least five other Midwestern states: **Illinois** (HB 3593), **Iowa** (HB 587), **Michigan** (HB 4562), **Ohio** (SB 273) and **South Dakota** (SB 194), according to the Public Interest Research Group.

State measures vary on what products are covered and what is exempted. For example, this year, Colorado became the first state to cover farm equipment in its right-to-repair law.

Led by Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul and **Indiana** Attorney General Todd Rokita, 27 state attorneys general co-signed a letter in March calling on the U.S. Congress to pass a trio of federal right-to-repair bills that would cover automobiles, agriculture equipment and digital electronic equipment. Attorneys general Dana Nessel of Michigan, Keith Ellison of Minnesota, Marty Jackley of South Dakota and Josh Kaul of **Wisconsin** also signed the letter.

STATUS OF ‘RIGHT TO REPAIR’ LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS IN MIDWEST (AS OF JUNE 2023)



Source: Public Interest Research Group

NORTH DAKOTA IS FIRST U.S. STATE TO REQUIRE CYBERSECURITY INSTRUCTION IN K-12 SCHOOLS

Once fully implemented, **North Dakota**’s HB 1398 will have K-12 schools across the state and at all grade levels providing instruction in computer science and cybersecurity. The new law makes North Dakota the first state in the nation to require cybersecurity education. By exposing students to this subject area throughout their K-12 careers, the state hopes to help young people:

- learn from an early age how to be safe online and a good digital citizen;
- gain the digital skills and knowledge needed to thrive in many sectors of the current and future workforce; and
- position graduates to take advantage of growing opportunities in fields related to cybersecurity and information technology.

By July 2024, elementary and middle schools must show how they will integrate academic standards on computer science and cybersecurity into coursework. This requirement also applies to high schools, which must provide students with the opportunity to take a stand-alone class in at least one of these subject areas. To graduate, students will need to have taken a stand-alone course or completed the school’s integration plan for cybersecurity and computer science education.



NEW INDIANA, NEBRASKA LAWS INVEST IN MODEL TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

New laws in **Indiana** and **Nebraska** enacted this year will shift more behavioral health services in those two states to a newer model of comprehensive and coordinated care offered by certified community behavioral health (CCBH) clinics.

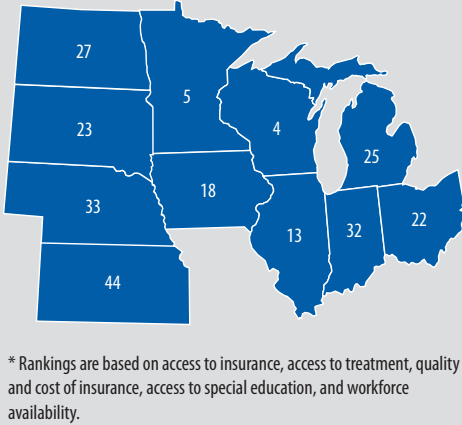
According to guidelines from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Agency, CCBH clinics are required to serve anyone who requests care for mental health or substance use, regardless of their ability to pay, place of residence or age — including developmentally appropriate care for children and youth. They also must offer 24/7 crisis care, meet standards for the range of services they provide, and get people into care quickly. This model developed after 2014, when the federal Protecting Access to Medicare Act was enacted.

Under SB 1 and the state’s new two-year budget (HB 1001), Indiana will spend \$100 million to build CCBH clinics, fund the state’s 988 hotline and establish and fund the Indiana Behavioral Health Commission. Another bill, HB 1006, allows law enforcement agencies to divert people with behavioral health challenges from jail into treatment.

Nebraska’s new, unanimously approved Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic Act (LB 276) directs the state’s Department of Health and Human Services to develop a prospective payment system that shifts Medicaid recipients from a fee-for-service basis to one in which providers will be reimbursed based on the anticipated cost of providing required services on either a daily or monthly basis. It also gives the department until July 2026 to amend Nebraska’s Medicaid plan to accommodate these changes, and allocates \$4.5 million in annual general fund appropriations for the new program.

More than 500 certified community behavioral health clinics were operating across the country as of March, including in every Midwestern state except **North Dakota** and **South Dakota**.

MIDWESTERN STATES’ RANKINGS ON ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE (2022)*



* Rankings are based on access to insurance, access to treatment, quality and cost of insurance, access to special education, and workforce availability.

Source: Mental Health America



PROFILE: WISCONSIN ASSEMBLY MAJORITY LEADER TYLER AUGUST

‘Get people to buy in, have them take ownership’: Wisconsin native shares lessons learned from his 13 years as a legislator and longtime caucus leader

by Jon Davis (jdavis@csg.org)

Most parents aren’t quite sure of the career path that their child will take, let alone one just a few years removed from kindergarten. But in the case of a young Tyler August, his mother and father may have had a pretty good inkling. “When I was 8 years old, my mom would find me watching the 6 a.m. news in the basement,” August says. “I don’t think that’s what a whole lot of 8-year-olds were doing at the time.” It was an early sign of what would become August’s deep interest in politics and commitment to public service — as well as his ascension to one of Wisconsin’s top leadership positions.

He served as an intern for a state Senate campaign while in college, got involved early on in party politics, and soon came to Wisconsin’s state Capitol as a staff person for his home-district representative. And when then-Rep. Tom Lothian decided to leave office, he didn’t have to look far for a suitable replacement. Lothian asked August, his chief of staff, to run. “I thought about it and talked to a lot of folks and decided to do it,” August says, “and the rest is history.” That first race, in 2010, was historically close. August initially appeared to lose by a few votes in the Republican primary, but a subsequent recount gave him a razor-thin win: 23.97 percent to 23.93 percent. August hasn’t faced races nearly as close since then, and he’s spent nearly his entire 13-year legislative career in leadership. After winning a second term, August was chosen speaker pro tem, holding that post until this current session, for which his caucus unanimously chose him to be Assembly majority leader. Here are excerpts from a recent CSG Midwest interview with Rep. August.

Q How would you describe your leadership style?
A I’ve always thought that the best way to lead a group of people, whether it’s in politics or otherwise, is to lead by inclusion. Have people bring their ideas to the table and let them know that they’re part of the team and part of the decision-making process, versus just coming out of a leadership meeting and saying, “This is what we’re going to do and everybody has to fall in line.” That’s what I try to do: get people to buy into what we’re doing, and have them take some ownership of it along the way.

BIO-SKETCH: WISCONSIN REP. TYLER AUGUST

- ✓ unanimously chosen in late 2022 as majority leader by Assembly Republican colleagues
- ✓ previously served five terms as speaker pro tempore
- ✓ first elected to Wisconsin Assembly in 2010
- ✓ once worked as chief of staff for former Wisconsin state Rep. Tom Lothian
- ✓ is a lifelong, seventh-generation resident of Wisconsin’s Walworth County; resides in town of Lake Geneva



“The best way to lead a group of people, whether it’s in politics or otherwise, is to lead by inclusion.”

Q Who have been your role models in terms of legislative or political leadership?

A Here in Wisconsin, certainly [former state Rep. and Gov.] Tommy Thompson has been a great mentor of mine ever since I first ran. He was excellent at leading the state and bringing people together. When I was younger, Reince Priebus became and still is a good friend of mine. With [Rep.] Tom Lothian, who did this job at the opposite end of his professional life than I did, I was able to learn a lot of things about even something as simple as patience and not thinking that every single hill is worth dying over. While my leadership style still has to be mine, I’ve built it on watching what worked for many other people and trying to incorporate that into how I operate.

Q How has leadership changed for you in shifting from being speaker pro tem for so many years to now being majority leader?

A Some of the lessons learned while I was pro tem, as far as working with the minority party, carry over quite a bit. My role certainly has changed; my priority is now to lead the Republicans. But there is still the opportunity to work across the aisle on certain issues, on running the floor, and negotiating the debate time on bills while they’re on the floor. Things like that. I think being able to have the respect I earned over nine-and-a-half years of being the pro tem, from the minority, has made conversations easier than they might have otherwise been if I had just come into the majority leader’s job cold.

Also, having been in leadership meetings as pro tem, I was already part of the process within our caucus and behind the scenes when bills were moving. The experience of being in that room is part of why my caucus was confident in my ability to step up and do this new role. Not only had I helped us have success outside of the building in campaign season, I helped us have success in the building when it comes to legislative matters as well.

Q What are some of the adjustments you’ve had to make since the shift in partisan control from a Republican to Democratic governor?

A That’s a big shift when you have members of a caucus that had so much success in the eight years under [former Republican Gov.] Scott Walker. Now it’s much more difficult, and a resetting of expectations is just the biggest difference. We have very different views of what’s best for the state than the [current] governor does, so managing expectations of what we can actually get done has become a big part of this job.

Q Republicans control both chambers, and in the Assembly, you have a sizable majority (63 of 99 members). What are the challenges in keeping a caucus of that size working together?

A It’s always any leader’s job, of any caucus regardless of the state or party, to try and make sure that everyone understands what’s going on and everyone buys into what’s going

on. If there’s an issue that needs to be addressed, you need to mediate it. You need to be saying, “I know this is important to you, let’s see if we can get this done.” We’re fortunate to have a great caucus of people who generally — especially on the big items of the day — are moving in one direction. We haven’t seen the fracturing within our caucus anywhere near the extent that you see in other states.

Q What do you look back on as some of your biggest legislative accomplishment(s)?

A It’s an interesting question. Because I’ve been in leadership for so long, and got there so quickly, I haven’t authored a lot of bills on my own. Being a part of Act 10 [a measure on collective bargaining for public workers] six weeks into my first term will always be toward the top, if not the top, of the list because we fundamentally changed the way that government operates. One of the bills I did author [AB 143 of 2015] regulated and allowed companies like Uber and Lyft to operate in Wisconsin. That became a model bill for other states, which is pretty cool. That doesn’t happen very often. And I authored the constitutional amendment to change the way the chief justice of the Supreme Court is selected [Editor’s note: Approved by voters in 2015, the measure switched the appointment from one based on seniority to selection by the justices every two years]. The other accomplishment I’m humbled by, and very proud of, is the fact that I was unanimously elected majority leader out of 64 people. That meant a lot. It is something that I’ll remember for a long, long time.

PROFILE: MICHIGAN HOUSE MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER ABRAHAM AIYASH



His family is testament to what he calls ‘the American promise’; keeping it alive for future generations is part of what drives his work as a lawmaker and leader

by Tim Anderson (tanderson@csg.org)

Abraham Aiyash's parents came to Michigan from Yemen in the 1970s, his dad becoming a union auto worker and his mother a homemaker who never had the chance to go to school or learn to read and write.

A generation later, their son holds one of the top leadership posts in his home state of Michigan. And he's broken down some political barriers along the way.

First Arab American to serve as majority floor leader in a U.S. state legislature.

Highest-ranking Muslim American in a state legislature.

Youngest House majority floor leader in Michigan history.

"It can sit heavy on you," Aiyash says. "It's one of those things where as I walk into this chamber and my office every day [in the Capitol], I'm reminded of all the people who have served in this position, and every single one of them didn't look like me.

"To see what happened to my family, over just one generation, is such a testament to the American promise. Look at my mother. She never got a chance to go to school, but she was able to cast a ballot for her son."

How can he carry that promise forward?

It is a question that drives Aiyash as a legislator, as well as why he relishes the position he is in, even while admitting to the frustrations of gridlock, partisan strife and a process that he jokes often moves slow like honey, but "without the sweet."

"You have these moments, these glimmers of hope [while serving in the Legislature], where you really see how this institution can be a mechanism to take people's pain away, to build a stronger and safer society, and to help make a society that is more connected," Aiyash says.

"We can have so much of a direct impact in a way that is so meaningful."

'STUFF THAT KEEPS YOU GOING'

He sees the promise and impact of legislating in all kinds of ways.

New state dollars have repaired many of the once-crumbling alleys in his hometown of Hamtramck where kids play and gather.

A new law has removed barriers in his community and across Michigan for individuals wanting to become professionally licensed barbers (on-the-job apprenticeship hours can now take the place of formal coursework).

And on visits to local schools, students pepper Aiyash with questions about politics ("Do you know Biden? Do you



BIO-SKETCH: MICHIGAN REP. ABRAHAM AIYASH

- ✓ chosen House majority floor leader in late 2022, becoming the youngest person in Michigan history to hold the position and the first Arab American to hold it in any U.S. state legislature
- ✓ first elected to the Michigan House in 2020; previously served as legislative staff
- ✓ has led community efforts in areas such as environmental justice and workers' rights, as well as served in leadership for the advocacy group Michigan United
- ✓ is the son of Yemeni immigrants who now represents the community where he was raised — Hamtramck and Detroit
- ✓ is a 2022 graduate of CSG Midwest's BILLD leadership program

"This institution can be a mechanism to take people's pain away, to build a stronger and safer society, and to help make a society that is more connected."

know Trump?" they ask) and how a local kid like himself became a legislator.

"I love that tactile sense of politics," Aiyash says. "It's the stuff that really keeps you going in this work."

The work changed considerably for Aiyash in 2023, the start of his second term in the Michigan House. His House Democratic Caucus has a partisan majority in the House for the first time in more than a decade, and Democrats also control the Senate and governor's office.

Aiyash, meanwhile, was chosen by caucus peers in late 2022 to serve as House majority leader.

In a recent interview with CSG Midwest, he reflected on his views on leadership and ways to build relationships among members, inside and outside of one's own party caucus. Here are excerpts.

Q What have you learned in terms of effective legislative leadership, either what you've observed or tried to implement in leading a 56-member caucus?

A I think it's important not to start with the assumption that you start with 56 votes. You have to work it from zero, and try to go up to 56 by working with members.

So you need to have patience with the process, and you have to appreciate the different passions of all the members of your caucus.

There are going to be disagreements. And it's important for me and all the folks here to remember that when we disagree with an idea, that doesn't

mean we're disowning or disavowing the individual who had the idea.

Q Can the same go with members from across the aisle, especially during this era of high partisan discord?

A I like to hope so. ... Ask any of my Republican colleagues, and they'll tell you that I'm a fierce debater.

Part of it is learning the story of the man or the woman you're debating or working with on legislation. Figure out ways of understanding each other, bringing people together.

It's such a lost art today because of all the money that proliferates our politics and [heightens] the desire to take power. It creates a very intense tribalism. That is not healthy for our society. It's not sustainable for our democracy. So I try to resist those temptations. ...

It's a matter of, do I think they care about their community and are fighting just as hard as me? Yes. You just happen to have a different viewpoint, and I try to remind myself of that.

Sometimes I'm going to bang my head against the wall with some of the stuff they're pushing for, but that stuff comes from a place of real conviction.

Q What are some examples of how you've seen those kinds of relationships of trust or respect be built?

A I have a colleague, on the other side of the aisle, who is a meat

smoker. He's been very conscientious, very gracious, in making me meat specific to the religious-restrictive diet that I have as a Muslim. That is a really meaningful gesture to me, of someone being respectful of my faith.

Also, my counterpart (Minority Floor Leader Bryan Posthumus) and I make it a point to get together once a week. We don't discuss anything related to the chamber or what's happening on the floor. We just talk — sharing travel tips and travel hacks, how to maximize points on your credit card. I've given him all the tricks I've learned.

Q That said, you and the House Democratic Caucus have had an historic opportunity this year to advance a legislative agenda. What are some of the accomplishments you would point to so far as most meaningful to you?

A New worker protections, like repealing our state's so-called "right-to-work" law and reinstating the prevailing wage.

As the son of an auto worker, I can't tell how valuable unions were to my family. I don't have my teeth today were it not for the [United Auto Workers'] negotiated health care plan. So those two legislative victories were very important.

And we also reinstated a working family's tax credit and repealed a pension tax on our seniors. Those are transformational things for people.

QUÉBEC CITY IS SERVING AS HOST OF THIS YEAR'S MEETING OF GREAT LAKES LEGISLATORS — SEPT. 8 AND 9

Are you interested in advancing state and provincial policies to protect the Great Lakes and the communities that rely on them?

If so, make plans now to come to Québec City on Sept. 8 and 9 for the Annual Meeting of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus. CSG Midwest provides staff support to the binational, bipartisan caucus.

The meeting reflects the overall goal of the caucus: help legislators learn, collaborate and lead in areas such as controlling the spread of invasive species, protecting drinking water, managing nutrient pollution, and improving coastal resiliency.

For meeting details, contact Jessica Lienhardt, Great Lakes program director for CSG Midwest, at jlienhardt@csg.org or visit greatlakeslegislators.org.

A limited number of meeting-related travel scholarships are available to caucus members. Becoming a member is free and open to all legislators representing Great Lakes states and provinces. A membership form is available at greatlakeslegislators.org.

The caucus is led by an Executive Committee of legislators from across the Great Lakes basin. Wisconsin Sen. André Jacque serves as caucus chair and Illinois Sen. Laura Fine as vice chair.



IOWA IS FIRST STATE TO JOIN CSG-LED INTERSTATE COMPACT ON DENTISTRY

With the signing in April of HF 656, Iowa became the first U.S. state to enact the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact, which allows licensed dentists and dental hygienists to practice in any other member state. Its goals include reducing barriers to multi-state practice and ensuring license portability.

The compact is the result of a partnership between The Council of State Governments, the American Dental Association, the American Dental Hygienist Association and the U.S. Department of Defense. The compact becomes active once enacted by seven states. In the Midwest, as of June, compact legislation also had been introduced in Kansas, Minnesota and Ohio.

Through its National Center for Interstate Compacts, CSG offers a mix of technical assistance, administrative supports, and education and development services related to legally binding interstate agreements. States use compacts to promote cooperation, protect their sovereignty, and provide solutions to complex policy problems.

In the area of occupational licensure, CSG has been partnering with the U.S. Department of Defense to develop new interstate compacts.



BIPARTISAN GROUP OF LEGISLATORS IN PLACE TO GUIDE INTERSTATE, BINATIONAL COMMITTEES OF CSG'S MIDWESTERN LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

Legislators representing states and provinces from across the Midwest will lead six binational policy committees through 2024. The bipartisan, diverse group of co-chairs and vice chairs was chosen by Michigan Sen. Roger Victory, this year's chair of the Midwestern Legislative Conference.

All legislators from 11 Midwestern states and four Canadian provinces are members or affiliate members of the MLC. The Midwestern Office of The Council of State Governments provides staff support to the MLC.

The MLC's interstate, binational committees provide a forum for the exchange of information, ideas and strategies related to key policy issues

in the Midwest and its state and provincial governments. The legislative officers (see pictures below) guide the work of the committees throughout the year and help plan sessions of the MLC Annual Meeting. Legislators from across the Midwest serve on these committees, typically via an appointment made by the appointing authority of a legislative chamber. At-large appointments also are made. The committees' various meetings, products and services also are open and available to all legislators from the Midwest. For more information on how to get involved, please contact CSG Midwest director Laura Tomaka at ltomaka@csg.org.

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>MLC Midwest-Canada Relations Committee</p> <div><div><p>CO-CHAIR Minister Kelvin Goertzen MANITOBA</p></div><div><p>CO-CHAIR Representative Amos O'Neal MICHIGAN</p></div><div><p>CO-VICE CHAIR MPP Ernie Hardeman ONTARIO</p></div><div><p>CO-VICE CHAIR Representative David Monson NORTH DAKOTA</p></div></div> | <p>MLC Energy & Environment Committee</p> <div><div><p>CO-CHAIR Senator Laura Ellman ILLINOIS</p></div><div><p>CO-CHAIR Representative Ethan Manning INDIANA</p></div><div><p>VICE CHAIR Representative Sharon Ray OHIO</p></div></div> |
| <p>MLC Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee</p> <div><div><p>CO-CHAIR MLA Steven Bonk SASKATCHEWAN</p></div><div><p>CO-CHAIR Senator Marci Francisco KANSAS</p></div><div><p>VICE CHAIR Representative Paul Thomas NORTH DAKOTA</p></div></div> | <p>MLC Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee</p> <div><div><p>CO-CHAIR Senator John Cavanaugh NEBRASKA</p></div><div><p>CO-CHAIR Senator Jesse James WISCONSIN</p></div><div><p>VICE CHAIR Senator Michele Reynolds OHIO</p></div></div> |
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READY TO LEAD REGION ON CLIMATE RESILIENCY



A bipartisan, binational and dedicated group of Great Lakes legislators is ready to lead their communities, states, provinces and the region on the issue of climate resiliency.

In April, the 2023 class of Birkholz Fellows met for a workshop where they took a deep dive into the issue and began to set policy priorities for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus. CSG Midwest provides staff support for the caucus.

Work continues through the caucus's Task Force on Climate Resiliency, with Illinois Sen. Laura Ellman serving as chair and Ontario MPP Jennifer French as vice chair. Joining them as Birkholz Fellows were Indiana Rep. Maureen Bauer; Michigan Sen. Joe Bellino; Minnesota Sen. Karin Housley; Ohio Rep. Daniel Troy; Ontario MPPs Ric Bresee and Jennifer French; Québec MNA Joëlle Boutin; and Wisconsin Sen. Kelda Roys and Rep. Deb Andraca.

The Birkholz Institute is named in honor of former Michigan Sen. Patricia Birkholz, who led efforts to found the caucus and strengthen the role of legislators in Great Lakes policy.

The Council of State Governments was founded in 1933 as a national, nonpartisan organization to assist and advance state government. The headquarters office, in Lexington, Ky., is responsible for a variety of national programs and services, including research, reference publications, innovations transfer, suggested state legislation and interstate consulting services. The Midwestern Office supports several groups of state officials, including the Midwestern Legislative Conference, an association of all legislators representing 11 states (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin) and the Canadian province of Saskatchewan. The provinces of Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario are MLC affiliate members.

AWARDING OF FELLOWSHIPS CAPS HIGHLY COMPETITIVE APPLICATION PROCESS IN 2023

A bipartisan group of legislators from the Midwest has been selected to take part in a one-of-a-kind leadership program. The Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development is designed for legislators from this region in their first four years of service. Photos of the state and provincial legislators selected to take part in the 2023 institute can be found below. The program will be held Aug. 18-22 in Madison, Wis.

This marks the 28th year in which the Midwestern Legislative Conference has offered leadership training to its members: legislators from 11 member states, one member Canadian province (Saskatchewan) and three Canadian affiliate provinces.

The Midwestern Office of The Council of State Governments provides staff support to the MLC and its various products and services, including BILLD.

This year, close to 80 lawmakers applied for a fellowship.

Selections were made in May by the BILLD Steering Committee, a bipartisan group of legislators from 11 Midwestern states (see sidebar article for details about the selection process).

SUCCESS OF GRADUATES

BILLD now counts nearly 1,000 current or former state and provincial legislators as graduates. Many BILLD Fellows have gone on to serve as leaders



in their legislatures and state executive branches; others are now members of the U.S. Congress. This year, three BILLD Fellows are serving as house speaker or senate president in a legislative chamber of the Midwest. Another nine are majority or minority caucus leaders; two are majority caucus floor leaders; and four are house or senate presidents pro tempore.

WHAT BILLD OFFERS FELLOWS

BILLD's highly interactive curriculum includes a series of leadership training courses and professional development workshops in areas such as conflict resolution, negotiation, consensus building, public speaking and time management. The program also includes expert-led policy seminars as well as sessions led by the region's legislative leaders.

Along with advancing leadership and policymaking skills among the region's newer legislators, BILLD provides the opportunity for networking and relationship building across partisan, state and international lines.

Overview of the BILLD selection process

- ✓ Legislators from the 11-state Midwest, in their first four years of legislative service, are eligible to apply for a BILLD fellowship
- ✓ The competitive application process is overseen by the BILLD Steering Committee, a bipartisan group of legislators from the Midwest
- ✓ The BILLD Steering Committee is led by a four-officer team: Illinois Rep. Anna Moeller and Iowa Sen. Amy Sinclair, co-chairs; and Michigan Rep. Ann Bollin and Kansas Rep. Jared Ousley, co-vice chairs
- ✓ The Steering Committee meets every spring to select the year's BILLD Fellows
- ✓ Interested in applying for a 2024 Fellowship? Please contact CSG Midwest director Laura Tomaka at ltomaka@csg.org or call 630.925.1922



Members of the BILLD Steering Committee work on making selections for this year's class of Fellow. They met in May in Madison, Wis.

INTRODUCING THIS YEAR'S LEGISLATORS CHOSEN AS 2023 BILLD FELLOWS

ILLINOIS



Representative Laura Faver Dias



Senator Erica Harriss



Senator Adriane Johnson

INDIANA



Senator Andrea Hunley



Representative Kyle Pierce



Representative Elizabeth Rowray

IOWA



Senator Jesse Green



Senator Izaah Knox



Representative Barb Kniff McCulla

KANSAS



Representative Avery Anderson



Representative William Clifford



Representative Jo Ella Hoye

MICHIGAN



Representative Alabas Farhat



Representative Donovan McKinney



Representative Julie Rogers

MINNESOTA



Representative Amanda Hemmingsen-Jaeger



Representative Spencer Igo



Representative Bjorn Olson

NEBRASKA



Senator John Fredrickson



Senator Jana Hughes



Senator R. Brad von Gillern

NORTH DAKOTA



Senator Sean Cleary



Representative Claire Cory



Representative Jayme Davis

OHIO



Representative Sean P. Brennan



Senator Michele Reynolds



Representative Josh Williams

SASKATCHEWAN



MLA Ryan Domotor



MLA Daryl Harrison



MLA Nathaniel Teed

SOUTH DAKOTA



Senator Sydney Davis



Representative Mellissa Heermann



Senator Liz Larson

WISCONSIN



Representative Karen Ruth Hurd



Senator Brad Pfaff



Representative Donna M. Rozar

CANADIAN AFFILIATE PROVINCES*



Ontario MPP Mike Harris

* Members of the legislative assemblies of Alberta and Manitoba also participate in BILLD; individuals had not yet been confirmed as of early June.

BILLD Steering Committee Officers | Co-Chairs: Illinois Rep. Anna Moeller and Iowa Sen. Amy Sinclair | Co-Vice Chairs: Michigan Rep. Ann Bollin and Kansas Rep. Jarrod Ousley Through the Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development, or BILLD, CSG Midwest provides annual training on leadership and professional development for newer state and provincial legislators from this region. This page provides information related to the BILLD program, leadership development and legislative leadership. CSG's Midwestern Legislative Conference BILLD Steering Committee — a bipartisan group of state and provincial legislators from the Midwest — oversees the program, including the annual selection of BILLD Fellows.

STATELINE MIDWEST

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS | MIDWESTERN OFFICE

CSG EVENTS

Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting

July 9-12, 2023 | Detroit, Michigan

Contact: Jenny Chidlow ~ jchidlow@csg.org
630.925.1922 | csgmidwest.org



CSG Henry Toll Fellowship Program

August 16-20, 2023 | Lexington, Ky

Contact: leadershipdevelopment@csg.org
800.800.1910 | csg.org



Henry Toll Fellowship
THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development

August 18-22, 2023 | Madison, Wisconsin

Contact: Laura Tomaka ~ ltomaka@csg.org
630.925.1922 | csgmidwest.org



BILLD

Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus Annual Meeting

September 8-9, 2023 | Québec City, Québec

Contact: Jessica Lienhardt ~ jlienhardt@csg.org
630.925.1922 | greatlakeslegislators.org



**GREAT LAKES
GLLC
ST. LAWRENCE**
LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS

Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission Annual Meeting

September 18-20, 2023 | Normal, Illinois

Contact: Laura Kliewer ~ lkliewer@csg.org
630.925.1922 | miprc.org



**Midwest Interstate
Passenger Rail
Commission**

CSG National Conference

December 6-9, 2023 | Raleigh, North Carolina

Contact: membership@csg.org
859.244.8000 | web.csg.org



**The Council
of State
Governments**

STATELINE MIDWEST

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