

STATELINE MIDWEST



MIDWEST

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‘TRULY UNIFYING ISSUE’: HOW STATES CAN HELP ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY

Progress has been made in recent years, and new state laws and investments point to promise in building new partnerships with farmers, food banks, schools and grocers

by Tim Anderson (tanderson@csg.org)

Out in the fields of western Michigan, before he became a state lawmaker, “Farmer Rog” was doing a job that ultimately would help shape his legislative agenda. Agricultural products — “off-grade,” but edible and healthy — were regularly being delivered every week to Roger Victory’s produce facility. “What was our job? Was it to recondition [that product], to get it into the food system?” Victory said. “No, it was just to be disposed of — semi-loads of product with \$10,000, \$20,000 of potential market value. And it wasn’t just one semi. It was two semis, three semis a week.”

Across the Midwest, lots of food is being produced by farmers like Victory, yet there are households without enough to eat. “Couldn’t there be a better way?” Victory thought as he composted that “excess product” in his fields. Finding answers has been a legislative priority of his ever since coming to Lansing. Victory told that story in July to fellow legislators, as part of his introduction of a session at the Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting built around his MLC Chair’s Initiative: “Food Security: Feeding the Future.”

“This is a truly unifying issue,” Victory



said. “We all have constituents who struggle every day to put food on their tables and to feed their families.” And his home state points to the possibility of some “win-wins.” Michigan is providing more dollars to a grant program for food banks to purchase excess food from agriculture producers in order to better meet the emergency food needs of households. New investments are being made to build stronger local food systems and supply chains. And state funding is going to a Double Bucks program that opens new markets for farmers’ locally grown foods while helping individuals who receive food-assistance benefits. (See page 3 for details on these and other state actions to improve food security.)

“There’s enough of us now who believe that we can solve this problem; I don’t think we want to just manage it anymore,” Phil Knight, executive director of the Food Bank Council of Michigan, said about food insecurity, singling out some of the policy advances in that state during a panel discussion at the MLC session.

FORMULA FOR SUCCESS: STRONG ECONOMY PLUS EXPANDING REACH OF SNAP

Rates of food insecurity are regularly measured by the federal government, and are based on responses from U.S. households to a series of survey questions. “It’s become the leading indicator of well-being for vulnerable households in America; I really think it has surpassed the poverty rate,” said Craig Gundersen, a Baylor University professor and leading researcher on food insecurity. Those surveys show that progress has been made in recent years: Rates of food insecurity among U.S. households fell 40 percent between 2014 and 2021, Gundersen said. He identified two factors behind the positive trend. Strong economic growth “raised up” more households, while enrollment in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — which provides food assistance to low-income people — also rose. And not only did SNAP reach more households in need, policy changes increased the level of benefits. Though recognizing that SNAP has its critics, Gundersen praised the program and its structure. He said it reaches those most in need, gives them dignity and autonomy when making food purchases, can be used at virtually all food retail outfits, and does not discourage work among recipients.



Michigan Sen. Roger Victory, chair of The Council of State Governments’ Midwestern Legislative Conference, presides over this summer’s MLC Annual Meeting. This edition of Stateline Midwest features articles on many of the meeting’s sessions, including a cover story on a session built around Sen. Victory’s Chair’s Initiative for 2023: “Food Security: Feeding the Future.” (photo: Patrick Yockey)

NUMBERS ON FOOD INSECURITY	
33.8 MILLION	# OF PEOPLE IN U.S. LIVING IN FOOD-INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS IN 2021
-3.8	PERCENTAGE-POINT DECLINE IN FOOD-INSECURE U.S. HOUSEHOLDS BETWEEN 2014 AND 2021 (14.0% VS. 10.2%)
14.8	PERCENTAGE-POINT GAP IN FOOD-INSECURITY RATES BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE HOUSEHOLDS IN MIDWEST (RATE HIGHER FOR BLACK HOUSEHOLDS)
17.0	PERCENTAGE-POINT GAP IN U.S. FOOD-INSECURITY RATES BASED ON DISABILITY STATUS (7 PERCENT FOR NON-DISABLED VS. 24 PERCENT FOR DISABLED)
8.2%	% OF TOTAL FOOD-INSECURE PEOPLE IN THE U.S. WHO ARE NATIVE AMERICAN (A GROUP THAT MAKES UP LESS THAN 3 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL U.S. POPULATION)

Sources: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Feeding America, and MLC Annual Meeting presentation by Professor Craig Gundersen

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- For 28th year, CSG Midwest provides leadership training to region’s newer legislators

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“Every discussion about food insecurity ... has to involve SNAP,” Gundersen said about the nation’s largest hunger-fighting program.

Among his policy ideas for legislators: Streamline the SNAP recertification process so that households in need of assistance don’t lose benefits.

“There is [too much] churn where people are off the program and back on the next month because they missed a notification or there’s some sort of glitch,” he said. “Let’s make recertification a lot more streamlined.”

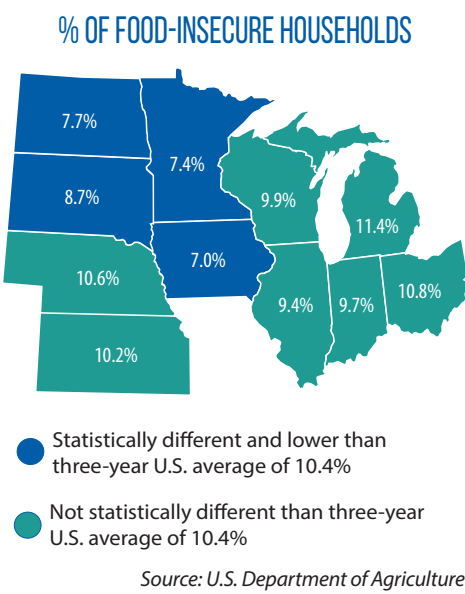
One recent example from the Midwest: This year, Indiana simplified SNAP certification and lengthened renewable periods for its disabled and older residents (SB 334).

DISABILITY: ‘LEADING PREDICTOR OF FOOD INSECURITY’

Gundersen also pointed out some not-so-good news about trends in food insecurity. He said rates remain high among certain groups, particularly African Americans, Native Americans and people with disabilities. Those disparities remain even when controlling for income.

“The gap between Whites and Blacks in the Midwest is astounding compared to other parts of the country,” Gundersen said. (It’s nearly 15 percentage points.)

Nationwide, 93 percent of households with non-disabled adults are “food secure.” The rate falls to 76 percent



for households with disabled adults between the ages of 18 and 64. “The leading predictor of food insecurity in the United States today is disability status, especially mental health,” Gundersen said.

Addressing food security goes hand in hand with addressing the nation’s mental health crisis, he said. And for individuals who have difficulty traveling due to a disability, states can help by making SNAP certification simpler and by investing in programs that enable the home delivery of meals.

Knight said some Michigan food banks are partnering with private businesses such as DoorDash, and through another pilot initiative, food pantries are opening inside of health clinics.

THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF BEING FOOD-INSECURE

The session panelists also pointed to various studies showing that health outcomes and costs, as well as the academic success of young people, are tied to food security.

“One of the great predictors of graduation rates is third-grade reading levels, right?” Knight said. “But if they’re not well fed, they will never be well read.”

University of Toronto professor Valerie Tarasuk, a pioneer of research on food insecurity in Canada, said the correlation with health also is clear.

“[It] takes a huge toll on health and on health care budgets,” she said. “An adult in Canada who is in a severely food-insecure household, in the course of a 12-month period, burns up more than double the health care dollars of somebody else who’s food secure.”

Canada does not have a food-based assistance program such as SNAP. It instead relies on cash transfers to provide low-income households with the financial resources they need.

According to Tarasuk, those transfers have not kept pace with recent spikes in the price of food, housing and other necessities. As a result, food-insecurity rates in that country are on the rise.

It’s a reminder, too, that income levels and a social safety net are not the only determinants of food insecurity; prices of goods, especially food, play a role as well.

According to Gundersen, giving farmers “the freedom to operate” helps keep food prices low and contributes to food

security. Tarasuk urged legislators to look at broader economic metrics — for example, the wages being paid to workers.

“We can see very clearly from Canadian data that even a small increase in the minimum wage reduces the rate of food insecurity,” she said.

Another session panelist, Michigan State University Professor M. Jahi Johnson-Chappell, wrote a book detailing how a community in Brazil dramatically reduced hunger. He shared his global insights during the discussion.

The first step, Chappell said, was having political leaders recognize food as a “right of citizenship.”

That didn’t mean directly providing every person with a meal, he said, but instead creating conditions to ensure access to it (just as right such as free speech doesn’t guarantee access to a newspaper, but creates an environment where it is available to citizens).

Once the “right to food with dignity” was recognized and taken seriously, Chappell said, a series of interventions followed. Central to the effort were new partnerships with local farmers.

“We saw decreases in infant mortality and infant malnutrition of 50 to 70 percent, a decrease in diabetes of about 30 percent, and it was one of the few Brazilian cities that saw increases in fruit and vegetable consumption,” he said.

“Food Security: Feeding the Future” is the Midwestern Legislative Conference Chair’s Initiative of Michigan Sen. Roger Victory.

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FEEDING THE FUTURE: RECENT LAWS & INVESTMENTS IN MIDWEST TO IMPROVE FOOD SECURITY

EXPANDING THE REACH OF THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)

Funded at the federal level, SNAP is the nation's largest hunger-fighting program, with benefits provided to eligible low-income households to purchase food via an electronic benefits card. States run the program and are given some flexibility on SNAP-related policies and administration.

- This year, with the passage of SB 35, **MICHIGAN** removed limits on the amount of assets that households can have and still be eligible for SNAP. **ILLINOIS**, **MINNESOTA**, **NORTH DAKOTA**, **OHIO** and **WISCONSIN** also don't have asset tests for some or all SNAP applicants, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Under SB 334, signed into law in April 2023, **INDIANA** is simplifying the SNAP application and recertification process for two groups of Hoosiers: disabled residents and those who are older (60 and over).
- **NEBRASKA** legislators approved an extension this year (LB 227) of a law that increased the state's SNAP gross-income threshold from 130 percent to 165 percent of the federal poverty level. According to the USDA, as of early 2023, income thresholds in the Midwest were as high as 200 percent in **MICHIGAN**, **MINNESOTA**, **NORTH DAKOTA** and **WISCONSIN**. Under federal law, the threshold is 130 percent, but states can expand SNAP eligibility (using an option known as "broad-based categorical eligibility").
- SNAP also includes federal dollars for nutrition incentive programs, and state-level appropriations in states such as **MICHIGAN** and **MINNESOTA** have allowed for the expansion of initiatives that provide dollar-for-dollar matches of purchases by SNAP recipients of locally grown foods (Double Up Bucks in Michigan and Market Bucks in Minnesota).



PARTNERING WITH FARMERS AND HELPING STOCK THE SHELVES OF FOOD PANTRIES

- **MICHIGAN** was the first U.S. state to fund a program that buys excess food products from local farmers in order to stock the shelves of local food pantries. With this year's budget (HB 4437), the Legislature boosted annual funding for the long-running Michigan Agricultural Surplus System, from \$2 million to \$12 million.
- A new **ILLINOIS** law (HB 2879 of 2023) makes permanent the Farm to Food Bank program, a pilot initiative launched in 2021 to create a centralized donation program for use by local farmers and food banks. HB 2879 also includes grants for capital improvements needed to store and transport fresh food to underserved communities.
- **OHIO**'s HB 45, signed into law in early 2023, establishes a \$25 million program to purchase, transport, store and distribute food from the state's agricultural producers to local food banks.
- **IOWA**'s Farm to Food Donation Tax Credit is for farmers who donate their agricultural products to food banks and food pantries. Available since 2014, the credit is equal to the lesser of \$5,000 or 15 percent of the value of the commodities.
- In early 2023, **MINNESOTA** legislators approved an emergency appropriation of \$5 million to support local food shelves (HF 213), which help individuals experiencing hunger. Later in the year, lawmakers increased the amount of state dollars going to the Minnesota Food Shelf Program and also established a \$7 million grant program to expand the capacity of food shelves. **INDIANA** is among the other states making a direct appropriation to help local food banks — \$2 million this year.



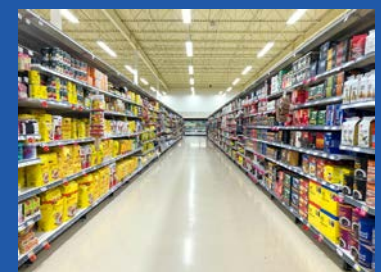
INVESTING IN SCHOOL-BASED INITIATIVES THAT FEED K-12 AND POSTSECONDARY STUDENTS

- **MINNESOTA** is now providing universal free school meals to K-12 students. A fiscal estimate of HF 5 (signed into law in March 2023) placed the two-year cost of this new program at more than \$400 million. A 2023 **ILLINOIS** law (HB 2471, signed in August) also establishes a Healthy School Meals for All Program. Implementation is "subject to appropriation."
- Those two states also are tackling hunger among college students. **MINNESOTA**'s postsecondary schools can get state dollars to become a "hunger free campus" by taking steps to reduce food insecurity — for example, disseminating information to students about SNAP and other programs, providing them with emergency assistance, opening an on-campus food pantry, and establishing hunger task forces. **ILLINOIS** created its own hunger-free campus grant program this year (HB 2528).



DELIVERING FOOD OPTIONS FOR RURAL AND OTHER UNDERSERVED AREAS

- A new \$1 million grant program in **NORTH DAKOTA** has two goals: the "preservation of rural grocery stores" and "increasing the availability of food access in the state." Legislators created the pilot initiative with this year's passage of SB 2273. Potential recipients of new state grants include community-based cooperatives that help improve the viability of rural stores by improving efficiencies in food purchases and distribution.
- **ILLINOIS**' new \$20 million Grocery Initiative (SB 850) will provide wraparound supports to local governments and independent grocers opening stores in areas of the state designated as "food deserts." Those supports include technical assistance; feasibility studies and marketing; help with operational costs; and access to capital funding for the acquisition of land, facilities or equipment. Additionally, last year's HB 2382 established the Illinois Health Food Access program, which provides support to stores, farmers' markets and other small retailers operating in underserved areas.



PARTNERING WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO BUILD A MORE RESILIENT FOOD INFRASTRUCTURE

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of robust local and regional food infrastructure systems that support local farmers and ensure food security. One result has been congressional support of new federal-state partnerships. For example:

- The Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure (RFSI) program aims to improve supply chains for specialty crops, dairy, grains, aquaculture and other products (meat and poultry are excluded; other grant programs support these sectors). The **SOUTH DAKOTA** Department of Agriculture announced it would use \$3.3 million in RFSI funds for "middle of the supply chain activities" — expanding processing and storage capacity, for example, and modernizing equipment and facilities.
- The USDA's Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program provides money for states to purchase home-grown foods from producers. Those foods are then used to address food insecurity in underserved communities.



AT MLC ANNUAL MEETING, POLICY COMMITTEES FOSTER INTERSTATE, BINATIONAL COLLABORATION AND INFORMATION SHARING AMONG MIDWEST’S LEGISLATORS

Each Issue Brief in this edition of *Stateline Midwest* focuses on a session held by the Midwestern Legislative Conference policy committees when they met in July in Detroit. They convene every year as part of the MLC Annual Meeting and help develop the business program for this four-day event — the only one of its kind designed by and for state and provincial legislators from the Midwest.

The MLC counts all legislators from 11 states and the province of Saskatchewan as members; Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario are affiliate members. The six nonpartisan, binational policy committees of the MLC are composed of legislators from these jurisdictions. Each committee has two co-chairs along with one or two vice chairs. CSG Midwest provides staff support to these committees, which provide a forum for legislators to work together, share information and exchange ideas on issues of importance to this region. The six MLC committees are:

- Agriculture and Rural Affairs
- Criminal Justice and Public Safety
- Education and Workforce Development
- Energy and Environment
- Health and Human Services
- Midwest-Canada Relations

CSG Midwest also provides staff support to the MLC Fiscal Leaders Forum. For more information, and to view presentations from the July meetings and sessions, visit csgmidwest.org.



The three officers of the MLC Energy and Environment Committee preside over the group’s July 2023 meeting and sessions. They are Illinois Sen. Laura Ellman and Indiana Rep. Ethan Manning, co-chairs; and Ohio Rep. Sharon Ray, vice chair. All six MLC policy committees met in July in conjunction with the MLC Annual Meeting. (photo: Patrick Yockey)

MIDWEST-CANADA RELATIONS

A relationship worth working on: Region’s legislators can deepen cross-border economic, personal ties

What do a former Midwestern governor, a former chair of the U.S. House Agriculture Committee, a farmer-turned-member of the Canadian Parliament (MP), and a social worker-turned-MP have in common?

They all believe deeply in the importance of the U.S.-Canada relationship. During a July session at the Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting, all four shared stories and insights on the role of state and provincial legislators in strengthening cross-border ties. Canadian MPs Randy Hoback (Saskatchewan) and Brian Masse (Ontario) were joined on the panel by former Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder and former U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson (Minnesota).

The session took place in downtown Detroit, just a few miles from the busiest crossing along the U.S.-Canada border. On a single day, \$2.6 billion in trade occurs between the two countries, Hoback noted, a system of open commerce that allows U.S. and Canadian businesses to make products together and opens markets for the Midwest’s agriculture producers, manufacturers and others.

During his time as governor, Snyder said, one of the more striking aspects of the relationship was how it defied party lines on issues such as trade and the Great Lakes. He worked equally well with Canada’s Liberal and Conservative leaders during an important juncture: negotiations over a new international crossing in the Detroit-Windsor area. Masse thanked Snyder for his support of the Gordie Howe International Bridge, which is expected to open for traffic by 2025 and is the result of a deal reached in 2012 by Snyder and then-Prime Minister of Canada Stephen Harper. Canada is paying for the design, construction and operation of the six-lane, 1.6-mile bridge. In return, Canada will have sole authority to charge tolls.

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The bridge is expected to make crossing times shorter and more reliable, an important development in helping maintain and expand this region’s cross-border supply chains. But there are potential challenges ahead for the relationship as well. Hoback, for instance, highlighted the upcoming six-year mandated review of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement in 2026; it’s a review that could pose risks (and rewards) to the two countries’ economic relationship, he said. Masse noted, too, that there is ongoing pressure for governments on both sides of the border to compete against each other for jobs and businesses. One recent example: competition for a new battery plant that ultimately landed in Windsor. “The auto industry pressured local, state and federal governments for incentives,” he said. “I don’t want to compete for auto jobs versus Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and other states. I want to compete for auto jobs [with] Europe and Asia and have us work harder together with regional policies in North America.” Despite the strength and longevity

CROSS-BORDER VIEWS	
87%	% OF AMERICANS WHO HAVE A VERY OR MOSTLY FAVORABLE OPINION OF CANADA
50%	% OF CANADIANS WHO HAVE A VERY OR SOMEWHAT FAVORABLE OPINION OF THE U.S.
Sources for data: Gallup News Service (top) and Environics Institute For Survey Research (bottom)	

of the U.S.-Canada relationship, the panel and audience lamented the lack of knowledge that citizens of both countries, especially young people, have about the other country. People living along the border, particularly political leaders, have the chance to change that, the panel said. Participate in binational events such as the MLC Annual Meeting, talk to someone you don’t know from the other country, and share best practices, Hoback said. Or even steal an idea or two. Early in the discussion, Snyder talked

the Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers. For those living near the border, MP Masse suggested hiring employees from both countries. (Some of his parliamentary interns are from Michigan.) Hoback encouraged families to explore study-abroad opportunities in Canada or the United States. All of the panelists, too, recalled the days of easier border crossings and argued that an enhanced identification or driver’s license should be enough to cross the border — no passport required. Finally, to build better cross-border relations, Peterson urged legislators to listen. He explained that the most successful people he knows are those who actively listen to and understand others. Organized by the MLC Midwest-Canada Relations Committee, the panel discussion was moderated by Christopher Sands, director of the Canada Institute at the Wilson Center.

Article written by Mitch Arvidson, who serves as CSG Midwest staff liaison to the Midwestern Legislative Conference Midwest-Canada Relations Committee. He can be reached at marvidson@csg.org.



At a July session led by the MLC Midwest-Canada Relations Committee, a panel of political leaders from both sides of the border explore the relationship between Canada and the United States — its value, new opportunities and challenges, and the role of state and provincial legislators. Pictured (from left to right) are Christopher Sands of the Wilson Center’s Canada Institute; Canadian MP Randy Hoback; former Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder; Canadian MP Brian Masse; and former U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson of Minnesota. (photo: Patrick Yockey)

AGRICULTURE & RURAL AFFAIRS

As farmland comes under threat from development, ‘agrivoltaics’ is emerging as a potential option

The excitement in the roomful of legislators was palpable when they got a glimpse into a future in which solar energy and crop production may be able to coexist on the same piece of agricultural land.

Presenter Charles Gould had shown them a picture of vertical bifacial solar arrays, an “upright” system that allows for solar production “between the rows” of working farmland.

It’s a potential solution to an issue of concern for the Midwestern region: how to address the increased demand for solar power, which requires substantial amounts of land, while preserving farmland for food production.

With help from Gould and Kris Reynolds of the American Farmland Trust, state and provincial legislators explored this issue in July during a session at the Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting. The session was presented jointly by two MLC committees: Agriculture and Rural Affairs and Energy and Environment.

In the Midwest, farmland seems abundant. In actuality, it is a limited national resource.

According to Reynolds, between 2001 and 2016, 11 million acres of U.S. farmland were converted to other uses, predominantly low-density housing due to population growth and urban sprawl.

Some farmland, however, also is and will be used to produce renewable energy. (Many crops already are turned into energy products; most notably, 30 percent of all corn produced in the U.S. is used for ethanol.)

According to U.S. Department of Agriculture projections, ground-based solar could require about 0.5 percent of the land in the contiguous United States by 2050; that is about one-third of the size of Ohio.

But when this prediction was made, little did researchers know that engineers at various renewable energy companies were looking to reduce solar’s land footprint.

When situated in an east/west configuration, vertical bifacial solar arrays can collect 27 percent more energy than traditional south-facing, slanted arrays,

Gould said.

That’s because energy production peaks twice a day for vertical arrays as

they capture solar energy in the morning and evening.

Peak production times neatly correlate with peak energy demands, Gould said. Though more expensive than traditional solar arrays, vertical bifacial solar arrays collect less dust and snow, thereby increasing energy output, he added.

Gould, a bioenergy educator at Michigan State University Extension, suggested that for farmers who don’t want their fields divided with solar energy systems, these systems could be used as pasture perimeters.

Legislators are likely to hear more about these kinds of emerging products and technologies as they explore policies around “agrivoltaics” — the dual use of land for raising crops for food, fiber or fuel and for generating electricity.

This year, for instance, Colorado legislators passed a bill (SB 23-092) establishing new agrivoltaics-based property tax exemptions as well as a grant program to study the use of solar and farm production on the same land.

Gould and Reynolds each offered their own policy ideas. Among them:

- Consider incentives for dual-use solar and agricultural production.
- Prioritize solar production on

buildings or land not suitable for agriculture. However, don’t limit production to non-agricultural areas: Many farmers welcome the stability of revenue from solar production.

- Design laws and regulations in a way that allow for changes in technology and flexibility in system design.
- Ensure under-served communities are fully represented in decision-making.
- Map your state’s agricultural land and plan for agriculture, not just around it.
- Safeguard your state’s most productive land and invest in purchase of agricultural conservation easements (PACE), which keep this land from being taken out of production for other uses.

Article written by Becky Lies, who serves as CSG Midwest staff liaison to the Midwestern Legislative Conference Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee. She can be reached at blies@csrg.org.



At the MLC Annual Meeting, M. Charles Gould of the Michigan State University Extension discusses the dual use of land for solar and agricultural production. (photo: Patrick Yockey)

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

New MLC committee hears how changes in climate, shift to renewables will impact the electrical grid

The Midwest’s transmission grid is rapidly evolving to handle the dramatic shifts toward renewable energy for power generation and customer usage patterns wrought by climate change, but this transition is still measured in years.

That was the message from Bob Kuzman, director of state regulatory affairs for the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO).

Kuzman, a former Indiana legislator, provided lawmakers with an introduction to the regional electrical grid at the Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting in July. He was the featured presenter at the first meeting of the MLC’s new Energy and Environment Committee.

MISO operates 72,000 miles of transmission lines, including in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Manitoba, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota and parts of South Dakota.

“We’re like an insurance policy; we spread the risk,” Kuzman said. “If someone’s having a bad day in Indiana, we can move electricity from as far away as Manitoba or Nebraska.”

MISO is neither a utility operator nor a power generator. Its main jobs, he said, are planning for future transmission needs as well as buying electricity at the wholesale and retail levels to deliver power where it’s needed for 42 million end users.

While taking no position on the fuel sources used, MISO does care about how new generating capacity is connected to the grid, and how dependable the power will be as usage patterns shift.

Big shifts in both of these areas pose potential challenges for MISO and state energy leaders.

According to Kuzman, renewable energy generation projects are “growing massively.” As of September 2022, of the 1,723 proposed projects in the MISO “queue” (not all of which will be built), 96 percent were either planned renewable or storage operations: 54 percent solar, 17 percent a hybrid mix, 16 percent storage and 9 percent wind. Only 3 percent were gas or other fuels; coal-

generated projects haven’t been in the queue since 2011.

“This does pose new risks to the reliability of the grid,” he said, “because there are days when the wind doesn’t blow, there are days when the sun doesn’t shine.”

Part of MISO’s new planning regimen, he added, includes how to fill in daily morning and evening gaps in electrical generation as solar and wind power get going or wind down. Battery storage technology is improving, but isn’t yet at the point where MISO can rely on it to cover those gaps, he said.

Further complicating matters are the effects of changes in the climate. MISO used to plan for a “worst day,” or highest demand on the system, twice per year; now, Kuzman said, it needs to make sure power is delivered across the region on a “worst day” in every season and in every month.

He said “shoulder” months such as April or October — neither too hot nor too cold, when gas or coal plants could be taken offline for maintenance or to switch fuel sources — don’t really exist anymore.

With more 70- and 80-degree days in October, and even November, more

electricity is being used in those months, and temperatures are staying hotter deeper into nighttime hours, thus extending daily peak morning and evening demand hours — all of which increase demand on the grid.

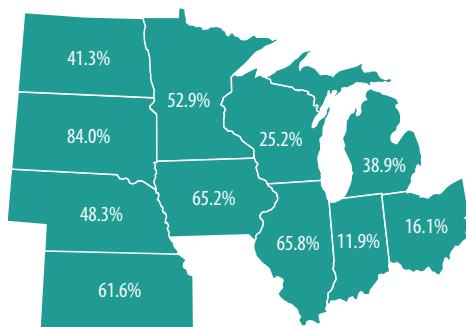
Asked about nuclear power as another non-hydrocarbon source of electricity, Kuzman said MISO doesn’t expect to see proposals for large-scale nuclear plants due to costs. Small modular reactors are a potential option, but no one knows when they’ll be ready. When, and if, they are, MISO will plan for them, too.

“MISO is resource neutral. We just want to keep the lights on,” Kuzman said.

Article written by Jon Davis, who serves as CSG Midwest staff liaison to the Midwestern Legislative Conference Energy and Environment Committee. He can be reached at jdavis@csrg.org.



% OF STATE'S TOTAL ELECTRICITY GENERATION THAT CAME FROM WIND, SOLAR, NUCLEAR OR HYDRO IN 2022



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

In Michigan, a public-private partnership takes a sector-specific approach to building a skilled workforce

In many economic sectors and parts of the country, the United States does not have enough workers to fill open positions (see map for Midwest). One strategy being pursued in Michigan to build talent pipelines in high-demand areas: a unique public-private partnership known as Sector Strategies Employer-Led Collaboratives, a brainchild of the state’s Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO). “[We] leverage the power of multiple employers within an industry coming together to say, ‘This is what I need in a person. These are the skills. These are the competencies. This is the education, the credentials that I need them to have,’” Deb Lyzenga, an LEO division administrator, said during a July session of the Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting. “Then we start bringing in our educators, our workforce system, our labor partners.” Michigan now has more than 60 formally identified employer-led collaboratives, in sectors such as energy, health care, mobility, infrastructure, agriculture, manufacturing, information technology and hospitality. The state provides grants and technical assistance. Working together, business leaders



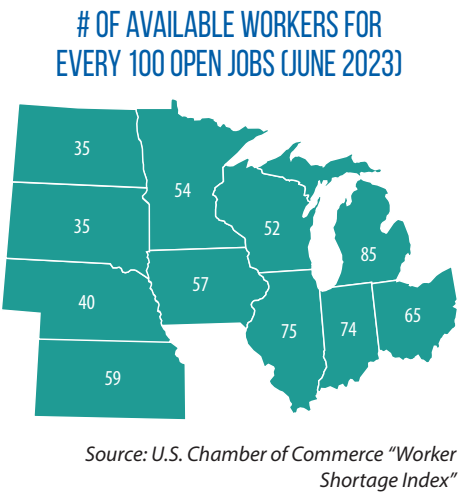
Michele Economou Ureste, Deborah Majeski and Deb Lyzenga share their insights with legislators on the Michigan Sector Strategies Employer-Led Collaborative (photo: Patrick Yockey)

from the same economic sector identify common in-demand, unfilled positions; pinpoint barriers to hiring; evaluate recruitment strategies; and establish agreed-upon outcome metrics to track the collaborative’s progress. They also develop employee training plans that can be implemented throughout the sector and in educational institutions. Once a collaborative has met, articulated its goals and executed a plan, the department helps evaluate progress. “We go back to the employers and we say, ‘How did that work? Did you hire the people that you wanted to? Are they up to speed in their job as fast as you expected them to be? Tell us what the gaps are,’” Lyzenga said. “As a workforce system, it’s systemic change. We’re starting to talk the same language.” Earlier this year, the state awarded \$4.6 million in grants to develop new collaboratives and maintain existing ones. During the session, organized by the MLC Education and Workforce Development Committee, lawmakers heard from individuals directly involved with the employer-led collaboratives. Deborah Majeski, manager of DTE Energy’s Center of Excellence Workforce Development, has been part of an energy-focused collaborative since 2016. “We have well over 5,000 different job roles that we offer,” Majeski explained. “Michigan’s energy [sector] accounts for more than 116,000 energy-related careers, with the demand [projected to grow by] 7.5 percent between 2020 and 2030.” From this collaborative, myriad training programs have been

integrated into secondary and postsecondary schools; for example, a college-credit-awarding program known as the Energy Industry Fundamentals Course will be offered this fall at six Michigan high schools and seven community colleges. It prepares students to enter 15 job roles in the energy sector — roles that are available to individuals of varying educational attainment levels. At Henry Ford College, 40-foot telephone poles have been built on campus for prospective electrical line workers as part of the Power and Trade Pathways Program, through which students can pursue an associate degree or certificates in various energy-related skilled trades. A newer collaborative is focused on electrical vehicle manufacturing. The initial focus of this “EV Jobs Academy” has been to collect workforce data and share results with industry leaders. “Our labor-market intelligence really informs our regional training strategies, [our] curriculum development,” Michele Economou Ureste, executive director of the Workforce Intelligence Network for Southeast Michigan, said. Once top occupation sectors and related skills are identified, she added, the EV Jobs Academy will work with Michigan colleges and universities to develop new learning and training opportunities on a shared online platform.

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At the same time, it is collaborating with other industry groups to secure grants from the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and to develop new apprenticeship opportunities for prospective workers in the EV manufacturing field.

Article written by Derek Cantù, who serves as CSG Midwest staff liaison to the Midwestern Legislative Conference Education and Workforce Development Committee. He can be reached at dcantu@csg.org.

FISCAL AFFAIRS

States are well-positioned to handle an economic downturn, but long-term budget challenges remain

Shelby Kerns jokes that when she worked in the Idaho state budget office in the not-so-distant past, she “probably would have sold my soul” for year-over-year revenue growth of 5 percent. Collectively, states got a lot more than that in fiscal years 2021 and 2022: inflation-adjusted increases of 12.7 percent and 7.6 percent, respectively. Several factors led to this unparalleled period in state finances — most notably, large amounts of federal dollars going directly to states as well as into the overall economy, and a temporary shift in consumer spending toward taxable goods and away from nontaxable services. “We have some pain on the horizon rolling off these one-time [federal] funds, and eventually we will have an economic downturn,” Kerns, now executive director of the National Association of State Budget Officers, said in July to the region’s fiscal leaders at the Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting. But Kerns said states are better prepared than ever before to handle the pain. At one time, the goal of budget leaders was to have the size of state rainy day

funds be equal to 5 percent of general fund spending. Estimates for FY 2023 among the 50 states showed rainy day funds on pace to be at 13.2 percent; that compares to 4.4 percent in FY 2009. More than in years past, too, state leaders are recognizing the cyclical nature of state budget conditions, Kerns said, as evidenced by a change in the kind of tax-cutting measures being proposed by governors: In FY 2024, they called for more than \$13 billion in tax cuts, but more than half of that amount only would have only a one-time, rather than recurring, impact on revenue. “That’s a really important point and shows how strategic you all are being,” Kerns said. In a separate presentation during the same session, Justin Theal of The Pew Charitable Trusts discussed the value of incorporating long-term fiscal strategies. For example, by conducting budget “stress tests,” legislators learn how prepared their state is for a moderate or severe recession — and how large rainy day funds should be. Likewise, fiscal leaders can get a better picture of potential structural deficits

on the horizon by requiring budget projections to go beyond the next year or two, but instead as much as 10 years into the future. Over the longer term, Theal said, states face three major fiscal challenges, all of which are best addressed when revenue is growing and surpluses are high. One is the need for more funding to respond to natural disasters. Most states have accounts for this purpose, he said, but little money is in many of them. Second, about 30 percent of states’ future pension obligations are unfunded, though these numbers can vary widely from state to state. For example, Wisconsin’s and South Dakota’s systems are fully funded, whereas Illinois’ system is less than 50 percent funded. Indiana is among the states where a portion of budget reserves is now automatically directed toward paying down pension obligations, Theal said, while the Illinois, Kansas and Michigan legislatures recently authorized supplemental payments (above what is required by statute) to state or local pension systems. A third long-term challenge is

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infrastructure, Theal said, with states facing unfunded liabilities of at least \$1 trillion in deferred infrastructure maintenance.

Article written by Tim Anderson, director of communications for CSG Midwest. He can be reached at tanderson@csg.org.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & PUBLIC SAFETY

Blueprints for reform: North Dakota, Indiana and Michigan are reimagining their juvenile justice systems

For many young people, the manner in which they interact with the juvenile justice system is not working.

Increased trauma. Lower levels of educational attainment. High recidivism rates. A rise in behavioral health issues.

“Justice system involvement has a host of negative outcomes for young people, particularly [those who] are low-risk and committing low-level offenses,” Nina Salomon said in July at a session led by the Midwestern Legislative Conference Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee.

With help from Salomon and her colleagues at the CSG Justice Center, states such as North Dakota, Indiana and Michigan are exploring promising new

strategies to turn around their systems, as well as the lives of young people.

During the July session, a panel of policy leaders from those three states shared some of the advances being made.

Lisa Bjergaard, director of the North Dakota Division of Juvenile Services, spoke about the impact of HB 1035, a landmark law from 2021 that rewrote the state’s juvenile justice code.

“One of the most significant changes ... was to broaden counsel for all youths that are facing court [action],” said Bjergaard, referring to a provision that young people automatically be provided legal representation (rather than access to counsel

being based on their parents’ or guardians’ ability to pay).

Also under the new law, more low-risk youths are getting connected to social services and diverted from formal involvement with the juvenile justice system. Additionally, risk and needs assessment tools must be used in making diversion and placement decisions.

With HB 1035 in place, Bjergaard said, various state agencies and groups are forming new partnerships to advance its goals, as well as to streamline or strengthen related services, funding and staffing.

Last year, Indiana legislators passed HB 1359, a byproduct of work done by the

state’s Commission on Improving the Status of Children.

“Data became the real elephant in the room that we needed to discuss ... because we weren’t collecting it with integrity or fidelity,” said Rep. Wendy Rep. McNamara, author of HB 1359.

With new data-collection requirements in place, state leaders can better understand what happens to young people as they move through the system, as well as identify the services and resources that are improving outcomes.

Indiana also is broadening behavioral health services, redesigning how it screens for risks and needs among young people in the system, expanding the use of diversion and transitional services, and developing standards for juvenile probation.

Some of those same structural changes may be coming to Michigan as well, under a bipartisan, 20-bill package now under consideration.

It is the result of Michigan’s Task Force on Juvenile Justice Reform — a group of legislators, judges, executive branch leaders and other stakeholders that produced a statewide blueprint for reform.

Michigan Rep. Sarah Lightner, who has been involved with reform groups for several years, said part of this new legislative package aims to improve young people’s representation in judicial proceedings, regardless of their financial standing — for example, better

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oversight of the county-based indigent defense system, as well as an expansion of appellate services for juveniles.

Michigan Sen. Sylvia Santana added that if the package becomes law, the placement of young people in residential placement centers will be reduced while community-based services will be expanded and better funded. Those and other goals would be met by:

- expanding diversion opportunities for youths who are not a public safety risk,
- creating a statewide juvenile public defense system and best-practices standards,
- strengthening standards and quality assurance for local probation practices and statewide residential programs,
- measuring system performance, outcomes and equity, and
- establishing an advisory board for impacted youths and their families.

Article written by Amanda Seidel, who serves as CSG Midwest staff liaison to the Midwestern Legislative Conference Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. She can be reached at aseidel@csq.org.



Michigan Sen. Sylvia Santana and Rep. Sarah Lightner discuss a bipartisan, 20-bill legislative package to improve the outcomes of young people involved in the state’s juvenile justice system. (photo: Patrick Yockey)

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

By making most of new resources, states can build better pathways to recovery from substance abuse

Amid the despair of broken and lost lives due to a rise in the prevalence of substance use disorder (SUD), there is at least one glimmer of hope.

States have more tools to address SUD. More money is flowing to states through two federal grant programs. The National Opioids Settlement is providing new dollars. And revamped federal rules on Medicaid offer new options to meet the needs of higher-risk populations, including incarcerated individuals returning to their communities.

Making the most of these new funding and policy opportunities was the focus of a July session at the Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting.

Organized by the MLC Health and Human Services Committee, the session provided legislators with a set of evidence-based principles to guide future decision-making.

“Maximizing how the state is spending Medicaid dollars for opioid use disorder ... is really critical because it’s such a big payer,” said Andrew Whitacre, an officer with The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Among nonelderly adults with opioid

use disorder, nearly 40 percent rely on Medicaid for their health insurance.

A first step for legislators is to make sure their state’s Medicaid program is covering all evidence-based services allowed under federal law. But he said a second step is equally important: evaluate and, when necessary, boost reimbursement rates for services such as care coordination and medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder (the “gold standard” for treatment, he said).

“There are a number of states that do cover all those [SUD] services, but the pay is so low that no providers will participate in the network,” Whitacre noted.

Other obstacles stand in the way of access to effective treatment. Among them: the lack of an information technology infrastructure that would enable providers to establish proper billing systems, coordinate with other providers and evaluate practices.

Non-Medicaid, flexible federal funds can be used to build up this infrastructure, Whitacre said, as well as address other areas not covered by the public insurance program. That includes harm reduction strategies

such as the distribution of overdose-reversal drugs and fentanyl test strips, as well as funding for syringe service programs.

Opioid-settlement dollars can help in these non-Medicaid areas as well, and Whitacre said it’s critical for states to have guardrails in place to make sure these dollars fund new programs and services. Without such safeguards, the new money may simply be used to supplant current funding streams for existing initiatives.

New federal Medicaid waivers are another way of expanding access to care, John O’Brien, a former senior advisor for the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, said during the session.

For instance, some states are taking advantage of a new opportunity to provide treatment services, via Medicaid, to individuals in the 90 days before they leave prison or jail and to continue that care upon re-entry. (An estimated

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65 to 90 percent of individuals in jails and prisons have a substance abuse disorder.)

Likewise, a handful of states are seeking waivers to pay for “contingency management” — providing incentives to individuals on the path to recovery (payments for a negative urine sample, for example). This treatment method has proven to be effective, O’Brien said.

Article written by Tim Anderson, who serves as CSG Midwest staff liaison to the Midwestern Legislative Conference Health & Human Services Committee. He can be reached at tanderson@csq.org.

SELECT SESSIONS FROM MLC MEETING

REID WILSON: POLICY BREAKTHROUGHS ARE CONTINUING IN STATES AMID A DEEP NATIONAL PARTISAN DIVIDE

Between 2015 and 2021, the amount of spending by lobbyists in state capitals jumped from \$1.75 billion to \$2.21 billion. And it’s little wonder, Reid Wilson said during a keynote session in July that kicked off the Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting: A lot is getting done and tried in those capitals.

He pointed to several new policy innovations and trends, often being pursued with bipartisan support.

They range from new investments in mental health (988 lifelines and more counselors in schools) and infrastructure (rebates for electric vehicles, road and bridge repairs, and broadband grants), to the pursuit of new laws that shore up election systems and address concerns about the impacts of social media and artificial intelligence.

“What happens in Des Moines or Madison today will happen in 25 other states next year, and then become federal policy in a few years,” said Wilson, who is one of the nation’s most respected political journalists as well as the founder and editor of *Pluribus News*, which covers state-level policy across the country.

The job of elected officials is more complicated than ever before, Wilson said, because of the general mood of the country and a deep partisan divide. “The American malaise right now is very bad, and it’s been happening for a long time. Americans are not in the mind to give the president the benefit of the doubt, no matter which party he’s from,” he said. “This speaks to something really deep and fundamental right now.”

In 1999, he said, Democratic and Republican voters agreed on four of the five “top” issues facing the country. In 2023, they agree on none. “We’re just about two countries living side by side,” Wilson added. Despite these challenges, a *Pluribus* survey of state legislators conducted earlier this year showed most of them were satisfied with their jobs; many, too, felt the 2023 session in their states was more productive than the year prior. At the same time, many legislators report that partisan division is on the rise in their respective state capitals.

“I hope you fight against this in your states, but I have the increasing sense that which infects D.C. is creeping into the states,” Wilson said. Responding to audience questions, Wilson said some of the causes of this creep include the state of constant campaigning, as well as in both the rise of partisan “infotainment” news channels and in declining news coverage of state legislatures.

— Article written by Jon Davis (jdavis@csg.org), assistant editor and policy analyst for CSG Midwest



Pluribus News founder and editor-in-chief Reid Wilson

HEALTH LEADER SHOWS HOW ‘PLACE’ DETERMINES VARYING HEALTH OUTCOMES — AND WHY STATES SHOULD CARE

Why would a health insurer pay for new bedding and curtains, as well as the removal of carpets, for some select households in Michigan? Because “place matters” when it comes to health — both in terms of costs and outcomes.

People in those households had asthma, Shannon Wilson explained during a July presentation at the Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting, and they were part of a larger community that accounted for an outsized portion of Priority Health’s asthma-related costs. By removing and replacing those items, while also connecting individuals in those households to health professionals and an asthma management plan, the health insurer thought it could reduce costs while improving lives.

The investment paid off.

“We saw about a 40 percent reduction in inpatient admissions, a 60 percent reduction in the length of time that someone stayed in the hospital, and almost a 40 percent reduction in [emergency department] visits,” said Wilson, vice president of population health for Priority Health.

The root cause of asthma-related visits had been addressed not through a medical intervention, but by understanding and then addressing place-based determinants of health. “We were able to really change the trajectory of those families,” she said.

She believes that success story provides valuable lessons for state leaders on health policy. One is to look “beyond the 20 percent,” referring to how much clinical care contributes to variations in health outcomes among the U.S. population. The other 80 percent is driven by individual behavior, socioeconomic factors and the physical environment.

Mold and allergens in homes. Lead in the drinking water. Communities that aren’t walkable. A lack of affordable housing options. Those and other place-based factors contribute mightily to health outcomes and costs.

“Today’s fastest-growing populations are the least healthy,” Wilson noted. That means the cost of health inequities will rise and rise if not addressed; one study, for instance, pegs the current total cost at \$320 billion and has it increasing to \$1 trillion by 2040. “We have to get this under control; it is not a sustainable system,” Wilson said.

She urged legislators to consider adopting more place-based health policy strategies, using a three-step approach: “Understand the context” and root causes of the inequities, try interventions based on what you’ve learned, and then evaluate whether they worked. “We have to get to a place where people have the opportunity to be as healthy as us,” Wilson said, regardless of where they live.

— Article written by Tim Anderson (tanderson@csg.org), director of communications for CSG Midwest



Shannon Wilson, vice president of population health, Priority Health

WANT TO KNOW HOW TO FOSTER INNOVATION? LOOK BEYOND THE ‘EUREKA’ MOMENTS IN HUMAN HISTORY

Steven Johnson finally dove into the topic he was supposed to present at the 2020 Midwestern Legislative Conference meeting that wasn’t (due to COVID-19): whence innovation? Some of the answer, he said in July during a lunch session at the MLC’s 77th Annual Meeting, lies in looking beyond a single “Eureka” moment, and some is in allowing conditions for creative thinking to thrive.

Johnson, who joked that he had “devoted the last three years of my life to preparing for this conference,” has dedicated much of his award-winning work as an author, PBS host and keynote speaker to identifying patterns for innovation.

Too often, Johnson said, we look only at the individuals who had the “Eureka” moment when something is thought to have been invented. Oftentimes, though, those moments are the culmination of myriad slow hunches and hints of possibilities — the result of keeping hunches alive and revisiting old ideas. For example, he said, the World Wide Web began in the 1980s as a simple file program used by Tim Berners-Lee, a scientist at CERN (the European particle physics laboratory), to keep track of the many people he met there. It grew from a social map of his office, and Berners-Lee eventually realized the broader implications of being able to easily link people, files and ideas.

“He had that thought, but also the patience to let that idea mature,” Johnson said.

As a society, we focus on winners, but a lot of people have almost won, and much can be learned from them as well. Twenty years before Thomas Edison invented the phonograph, Édouard-Léon Scott de Martinville invented the phonautograph, the first machine capable of recording sound. It recorded sound waves on paper but lacked the critical playback component. “It was a great idea, but it was the wrong one,” Johnson said. “Why did he miss out?”

De Martinville was too focused on stereography and dictation, and he worked alone. Better ideas come from working with other people, Johnson said, and that’s why providing spaces for collaboration and the free flow of ideas is critical to innovation. Take, for example, the coffeehouse, which first appeared in 17th-century London and became the place where transformative ideas such as museums, stock markets and magazines were born.

“This was a multidisciplinary space,” Johnson said. “It was not defined by a single university department; it was not defined by a single religion. It was a multicultural space.” This idea persists in the 21st century as shared workspaces.

Johnson also said there is an underappreciated connection between play and creativity — something that starts as fun can become something much more serious, like the 1961 computer game “Spacewar!,” which was developed by graduate students at MIT as an outgrowth of software designed to move pixels across a screen. As the game’s popularity spread, professors took notice and let them further experiment with it. “There’s a direct line from monkeying around in 1961 at MIT to the computer revolution,” he said.

At any given moment, new possibilities open, and exploring that space “is the work of innovation,” Johnson said.

When Sputnik was launched in 1957, researchers realized they could trace the satellite’s location in orbit in real time using the Doppler effect on its signal to Earth. From that, they realized that if a satellite could communicate its location to a ground station, the reverse would be possible. And from that, they developed a forerunner of the Global Positioning System used in smartphones.

“In fact, I guarantee that someone in this room has used all that technology within the last 24 hours to find a coffee house,” Johnson joked.

— Article written by Jon Davis (jdavis@csg.org), assistant editor and policy analyst for CSG Midwest



Steven Johnson, acclaimed author and expert on innovation



PROFILE: OHIO SENATOR BILL REINEKE, INCOMING CHAIR OF THE MLC

While adapting to constituents' changing needs, state and regional legislative leader hasn't forgotten the workforce issues that initially propelled him to office

by Derek Cantù (dcantu@csq.org)

Seek new state resources and options for communities to address the health and safety concerns that arise when their local landfills become a destination for out-of-state trash.

Serve as the lead sponsor of a new law that requires additional layers of input from local government officials on the placement of wind and solar energy projects.

Today, Ohio Sen. Bill Reineke counts these policy changes as among his biggest legislative accomplishments and priorities. Nearly a decade ago, when he first ran for office, neither of these issues would have made his to-do list.

They rose to the top because of an outlook on legislating that defines his work in the Capitol: Draw inspiration from the people you serve.

"I really enjoy representing my constituents," says Reineke, who represents a district in north-central Ohio. "Rural America's got some unique issues, and I feel there are some local issues that we've been able to address, mostly [involving] rural farmlands and how we grow in our small cities."

That focus on growth is partly what led Reineke to run for office in the first place.

He had been involved in his county's Chamber of Commerce and the local Rotary Club, as well as other local economic development groups — all while serving as a business partner in Reineke Family Dealerships, a three-generation business that has expanded to employ more than 400 people.

At the time, Reineke did not think enough was being done at the state level to help his community, and its businesses and workers, prosper. And there was one area of particular concern: the readiness of young people for success in the workforce.

Since joining the Ohio General Assembly, after his first election win as a write-in candidate in 2014, workforce development has driven Reineke's legislative agenda.

"Complacency is no longer acceptable," he says. "We have to adapt. We're teaching our kids they have to learn technology because things are changing so quickly."

Reineke served three terms in the Ohio House before winning a state Senate seat in 2020. Along the way, he also has been an active member of The Council of State Governments and its bipartisan, binational Midwestern Legislative Conference (MLC).

He joined the MLC's officer team a year ago and will be the group's chair in 2024.

Whether it be policy discussions on water quality, education or energy,



BIO-SKETCH: OHIO SEN. BILL REINEKE

- ✓ was first elected to the Ohio House in 2014 and the Senate in 2020
- ✓ serves as chair of the Senate Energy & Public Utilities Committee, as vice chair of the Senate Transportation Committee, and as a member of the Governor's Executive Workforce Board
- ✓ is a business partner at Reineke Family Dealerships
- ✓ is a graduate of Morehead State University
- ✓ lives in Tiffin; has two adult daughters
- ✓ is a 2016 graduate of CSG Midwest's Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development (BILLD)
- ✓ will serve as chair of the CSG Midwestern Legislative Conference in 2024

"Complacency is no longer acceptable. We have to adapt. We're teaching our kids they have to learn technology because things are changing so quickly."

Reineke has enjoyed hearing the perspectives offered by lawmakers from across the region, on both sides of the U.S.-Canada border.

"I'm more cognizant of how useful it can be working together with the other 10 states and four provinces [of the MLC]," Reineke says.

Part of his job as MLC chair in 2024 will be to host his legislative colleagues and friends from the region; they will be coming to Columbus on July 21-24 for the MLC's 78th Annual Meeting.

In an interview with CSG Midwest, Reineke discussed his views on leadership, his legislative priorities, and his plans as MLC chair. Here are excerpts.

Q How would you describe your leadership style?

A My personal style is more of a consensus builder. I like to listen. Basically, the projects that I've been involved in [as a legislator] are projects that are the result of constituents coming to me with an issue — most recently dealing with land use and solar and wind projects [SB 52, signed into law last year] and currently the landfill issue [SB 119]. If these were issues you told me eight years ago that I'd be involved in, I'd say, "I'm not sure that's right."

Q What will be the topic of your MLC Chair's Initiative?

A My focus will be on workforce. I have a passion for that because I've lived that world. What's really frustrated me, being involved in politics, is understanding how our kids are falling through the cracks. And if we could provide a better education system for them and better internships and training and workforce development in the education system, we would be much better off. So I will focus on that issue: helping students find their purpose.

Q During a session at this year's MLC meeting, you referenced SB 1, much of which was incorporated into Ohio's new budget. Can you summarize your goals with this law?

A I was surprised to see the high remediation numbers in Ohio, roughly one out of four kids. I say these students are "falling through the cracks" because they are graduating from high school and needing remediation in math and English. At the same time, career-tech education has not been emphasized. It's kind of down at the bottom of the stack and it's stigmatized. ... We're not going to do this anymore because we need the skills and jobs [associated with career and technical education], and our employers are demanding them. ...

With SB 1, we are combining our education and workforce departments together, making our Department of

Education the Department of Education and Workforce.

The idea is that we if have more interactions between education leaders and groups like our governor's task force on workforce, and if we can restructure our Department of Education, we will better understand the in-demand jobs in our state and have a training structure to provide for that.

Q Columbus is hosting Midwest legislators next year for the MLC Annual Meeting; what can they expect to see and learn?

A I'm really excited to have everybody come to Columbus because it's centrally located throughout the state. We are the home of eight U.S. presidents. I think if you look at the history connection that we have, it's just remarkable. I represent President Hayes' and President Harding's homes and libraries in my Senate district, so I've paid particular attention to the presidents and the effect they've had on Ohio.

Also, there is all the innovation that's happening in Ohio — with Intel moving here with its most advanced semiconductor manufacturing facilities in the world, with Ford and GM manufacturing their batteries here, and Honda expanding their testing track program. There's just so much innovation happening, and we'll be excited to showcase it.

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR LEGISLATORS
EXPLORES POLICIES TO STEM FENTANYL-
RELATED OVERDOSE DEATHS

In a new Issue Brief written as part of its support of two binational, bipartisan Midwestern Legislative Conference committees, CSG Midwest takes a comprehensive look at legislative responses to stem the rise of fentanyl-related overdose deaths.

Available at csgmidwest.org, “Reducing Harm, Increasing Criminal Penalties” explores a host of new laws and investments from across the region. This new resource guide was developed on behalf of the MLC’s Health and Human Services and Criminal Justice and Public Safety committees.

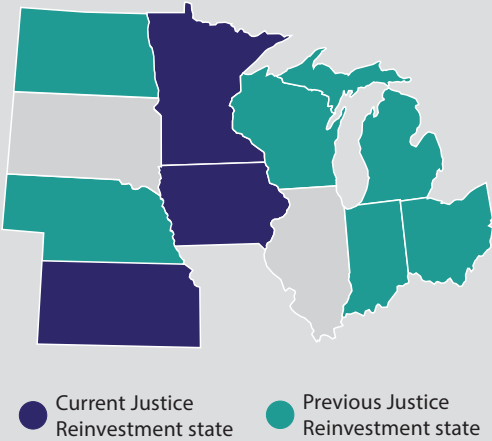


CSG JUSTICE CENTER'S WORK INFORMED
MINNESOTA'S 2023 PUBLIC SAFETY LAW

With his signing of SF 2909 in May, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz put the capstone on a two-year, bipartisan, interbranch project to improve criminal justice policy in the state. The CSG Justice Center provided technical assistance to Minnesota leaders as they studied evidence-based approaches to increase public safety and improve community supervision. Among the changes in the law:

- a \$44 million increase in funding for community corrections as well as a more stable and equitable funding formula for Minnesota counties and tribes; and
- a plan for the consistent use, statewide, of evidence-based policies by local community corrections systems in areas such as risk and need assessments, incentives and sanctions, case plans, training and quality assurance.

CSG JUSTICE CENTER IN MIDWEST: WORK ON
JUSTICE REINVESTMENT INITIATIVE



CSG NATIONAL CONFERENCE IS COMING SOON

The Council of State Governments will hold its 2023 National Conference on Dec. 6-9 in Raleigh, N.C.; an early registration discount is available through Nov. 1.

Visit csg.org to learn more and to register.

State leaders from all three branches of government take part in this annual event, which also includes participation from leading policy experts as well as private sector and community partners. Together, they share ideas and explore solutions to the many complex policy issues facing states.



REGION’S LAWMAKERS MOTORED TO DETROIT
THIS SUMMER, AND CAME HOME WITH IDEAS
TO ADVANCE THEIR LEGISLATIVE SERVICE

More than 500 took part in the 2023 Midwestern Legislative Conference meeting

led by Sen. Roger Victory, chair of The Council of State Governments’ Midwestern Legislative Conference, the Michigan Legislature hosted more than 500 state and provincial legislators, their families and others in July.

Over the course of four days, participants took part in a diverse mix of learning and networking opportunities, all of which were geared toward advancing the work and service of the region’s state and provincial legislators.

Many of the sessions and workshops are highlighted in this edition of *Stateline Midwest*.

The meeting was held in downtown Detroit, and members of the Michigan Legislature’s bicameral Detroit Caucus were instrumental in making the meeting a success. For her many efforts, Michigan Sen. Sylvia Santana was named honorary MLC co-chair.

Generations of Midwestern legislators and their families have taken part in the nonpartisan, binational MLC Annual Meeting. It is one of the many products and services provided to legislators through the MLC, which counts all legislators from 11 Midwestern states and the Canadian province of Saskatchewan as members. The provinces of Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario are affiliate members.

CSG Midwest provides staff support to the MLC. Next year’s meeting will be held July 21-24 in Columbus, Ohio, with Ohio Sen. Bill Reineke, incoming MLC chair, and his legislative colleagues serving as hosts.



Michigan Sen. Roger Victory, chair of CSG’s Midwestern Legislative Conference, chats with Michigan Sen. Sylvia Santana and Michigan Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist II before the keynote session at the MLC Annual Meeting. (photo: Patrick Yockey)



Minnesota Rep. Sandra Feist participates in a session at the four-day July meeting, which brought together hundreds of legislators from the Midwest. (photo: Patrick Yockey)

MLC RESOLUTIONS VOICE SUPPORT FOR POLICIES
THAT IMPROVE FOOD SECURITY, BORDER OPERATIONS

On the final day of this year’s Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting, participating lawmakers approved policy resolutions urging federal action on subjects such as border operations and the farm bill.

One of these new policy statements is tied to the MLC Chair’s Initiative of Michigan Sen. Roger Victory on “Food Security: Feeding the Future.” Specifically, the resolution notes the importance of continuing investments in nutrition incentive programs in the U.S. farm bill as well as helping states build resilient food infrastructure systems.

The other resolutions:

- call on the U.S. Customs and Border Protection to expand hours of operation at several ports of entry along the U.S.-Canada border;
- urge passage of a new U.S. federal farm bill; and
- affirm continued support of the relationship and shared interests between the MLC and Taiwan.

The MLC Annual Meeting is typically the venue for legislators to consider policy resolutions. A bipartisan committee reviews and votes on these resolutions before they are sent to a vote of the full MLC. This year’s resolutions can be viewed at csgmidwest.org.

SEN. MARY KUNESH SET TO JOIN MLC OFFICER TEAM

Later this year, Minnesota Sen. Mary Kunesh will join the four-officer team that leads The Council of State Governments’ Midwestern Legislative Conference.

She was elected to the position in July by fellow members of the MLC.

First elected to the Minnesota Senate in 2020, Kunesh serves as Education Finance Committee chair and as assistant majority whip. She was a member of the

Minnesota House for four years, and is a 2021 graduate of CSG Midwest’s Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development.

Here is the planned MLC officer team for 2024:

- Ohio Sen. Bill Reineke, chair;
- Saskatchewan Speaker Randy Weekes, first vice chair;
- Kunesh, second vice chair; and
- Michigan Sen. Roger Victory, immediate past chair.




Minnesota Sen. Mary Kunesh (right) speaks at the MLC Executive Committee meeting in July as Kansas Rep. Susan Concannon looks on. (photo: Patrick Yockey)

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.


SEVEN BILLD GRADUATES
EARN NATIONAL CSG
TOLL FELLOWSHIPS

The newest class of national CSG Toll Fellows includes seven legislators from the Midwest, all of whom are graduates of the Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development. Toll Fellows is the nation's premier leadership development program for state government officials. Participants are nominated by their peers and chosen by alumni of the program.


Congratulations to these BILLD graduates on becoming Toll Fellows:




Michigan Rep.
Abraham Aiyash,
BILLD Class of 2022




Ohio Sen.
Hearcel Craig,
BILLD Class of 2015




Kansas Rep.
Mari-Lynn Poskin,
BILLD Class of 2022



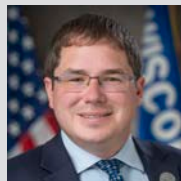
South Dakota Rep.
Rebecca Reimer,
BILLD Class of 2019



North Dakota Sen.
Kristin Roers,
BILLD Class of 2019



North Dakota Rep.
Shannon Roers Jones,
BILLD Class of 2017



Wisconsin Sen.
Mark Spreitzer,
BILLD Class of 2017



COMMITMENT TO LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Leadership development is a core part of The Council of State Governments' mission to champion excellence in state government.

CSG Midwest's BILLD program provides annual training for newer state and provincial legislators from this region. Toll Fellows is an "intensive leadership boot camp" for officials in all three branches of state government. This year's five-day program was held in August.

The 2023 Toll Fellows class from the Midwest also includes Bryan Echols, senior advisor and deputy director of impact investments for the Illinois treasurer; Michael Queensland, Wisconsin Senate chief clerk and director of operations; Sara Stolt, deputy commissioner for the North Dakota Department of Health & Human Services; and Jason W. Thompson, senior assistant revisor of statutes in Kansas.

"Toll Fellows are selected based on their demonstrated commitment to solve problems, to work collaboratively to get things done, and their belief that state government can and must be a force for good," said David Adkins, CSG's executive director and CEO.

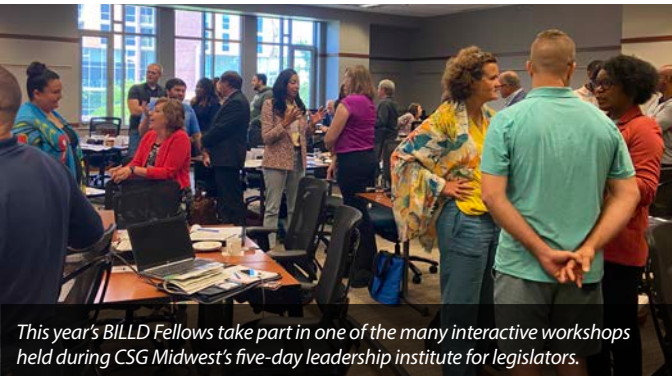
FOR 28TH YEAR, LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE GIVES
NEWER LAWMAKERS THE CHANCE TO DEVELOP
SKILLS FOR SUCCESS IN THE LEGISLATIVE ARENA

Five days of learning, leadership development and relationship building marked the experience of legislators taking part in The Council of State Governments' 28th annual Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development.

Biographical sketches of this year's bipartisan, binational group of BILLD Fellows were included as an insert in this print edition of *Stateline Midwest*.

The 2023 BILLD program was held in August in Madison, Wis. It featured:

- a roundtable discussion on legislative strategies with three current leaders: Minnesota House Minority Leader Rep. Lisa Demuth (BILLD Class of 2021); Indiana House Minority Leader Phil GiaQuinta (BILLD Class of 2009); and Wisconsin Senate President Pro Tempore Patrick Testin (BILLD Class of 2018);
- training on communication, leadership style, time and focus management, bipartisan collaboration, negotiation and conflict resolution;
- policy sessions on the Midwest's labor force and economy, cybersecurity and digital modernization in state governments, and U.S.-Canada relations;
- featured speakers who provided their expertise on the region's state legislative institutions and how to build excellence in them, the interplay



This year's BILLD Fellows take part in one of the many interactive workshops held during CSG Midwest's five-day leadership institute for legislators.



between the legislative and judicial branches, and the enduring legacy of principled political leadership.

Serving state and provincial legislators in their first four years of service, BILLD is a signature program of CSG's Midwestern Legislative Conference.

Fellows are selected via a competitive application process overseen by the MLC's BILLD Steering Committee. Applications for next year's BILLD program will be available later this year or in early 2024.

POLICY, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP
HELD FOR LEGISLATORS AT MLC ANNUAL MEETING

Providing a forum for legislators to advance their leadership skills is an ongoing goal of The Council of State Governments' Midwestern Legislative Conference. The BILLD program reflects this goal, as do the professional development workshops held regularly at the MLC Annual Meeting.

At this year's MLC meeting, a packed room of legislators learned ideas on how to foster good-faith policy debates and common ground in their capitols around issues of science — even in an age of deep polarization and fragmented information ecosystems.

Dietram Scheufele, the Taylor-Bascom Chair in Science Communication at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, led the July workshop. He is one of the most widely cited experts in the fields of political communication, science communication, and science and technology policy.

Scheufele pushed lawmakers to examine and reflect on how they perceive, discuss and debate issues — including those seen as controversial — when either the available science or information behind these issues is ever changing.

Scheufele stressed the need for methodical communication that respects multiple viewpoints while also adhering to the principles of scientific analysis. Among the takeaways for legislators: use language that speaks to shared values rather than tribal identities, and present evidence as being the "best available right now" (acknowledging that it will, and should, change).



According to Scheufele, there has been a proliferation of forces that harm thoughtful discourse — for example, the spread of misinformation and individuals' reliance on biased sources.

Additionally, the proprietary data and algorithms used by various online platforms push individuals into cyclical echo chambers, often limiting the ability to communicate effectively on settled science, to engage in meaningful policy debates, and to find social consensus.

These developments make thoughtful communication from legislators around issues of science even more essential. It allows constituents to logically and competently consider potential approaches to public health mitigation protocols, the spread of artificial intelligence, or other concepts where there are no absolute truths.

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

CSG Virtual Events & Web-Based Meetings

Visit csgmidwest.org, csg.org and csgjusticecenter.org to find dates of upcoming webinars and view recordings of past webinars on public policy, professional development and leadership training.



MLC

CSG National Conference

December 6-9, 2023 | Raleigh, North Carolina

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



Midwestern Legislative Conference Annual Meeting

July 21-24, 2024 | Columbus, Ohio

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



MLC

Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development

August 23-27, 2024 | Madison, Wisconsin

Contact: Amanda Seidel ~ aseidel@csg.org
630.925.1922 | csgmidwest.org



BILLD

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