

STATELINE MIDWEST



MIDWEST

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BIG DATA CENTERS, BIG REWARDS?

As the number of these centers grows, states are offering new or enhanced tax incentives, but questions also are being raised about the demands on water resources and electricity

by Jon Davis (jdavis@csg.org)

A central part of much of the modern economy, data centers are proliferating across the Midwest, offering economic opportunities while possibly placing increasingly heavy burdens on states' water resources and electrical load capacities.

They house the computers and servers that store emails and texts, backup files, passwords, websites and streaming services along with anything and everything done online in "the cloud."

They also host artificial intelligence and "crypto-mining" programs (used to solve cryptographic problems or tasks to earn digital currency, such as Bitcoin).

Because they run 24 hours per day, data centers need a lot of uninterrupted electricity and constant cooling to keep from overheating — factors raising concerns these facilities may overburden already-stressed electrical distribution systems and water resources.

Data centers are in a growth spurt currently driven by the rise in generative AI technology, according to The Synergy Group, a Nevada-based market analytics firm focused on the tech sector.

An April analysis notes the United States already hosts about half of the world's more than 1,000 "hyperscale"

centers, ones with at least 5,000 servers, 10,000 square feet of space and 40 megawatts (MW) of capacity. That number is expected to double by 2028.

A June 2024 report by S&P Global also notes this rise in data centers and estimates how the numbers and power capacity of data centers in four Midwestern metropolitan regions will rise by 2028:

- In Chicago, an increase in the number of data centers from 66 to 122, and from 997 MW of capacity to 1,839 MW.
- In Columbus, Ohio, an increase in the number of data centers from 40 to 85, and from 914 MW of capacity to 1,627 MW.
- In Des Moines, Iowa, an increase in the number of data centers from 27 to 48, and from 712 MW of capacity to 1,286 MW.
- In Omaha, Neb., an increase in the number of data centers from 38 to 46, and from 1,233 MW of capacity to 1,798 MW.

The U.S. Energy Information Agency in June noted that North Dakota saw the fastest relative growth in commercial electricity consumption, up 2.6 million MW, or 37 percent, from 2019 to 2023. The EIA attributed this steep increase in North Dakota to the rise of data centers in the state.

'INFRASTRUCTURE OF FUTURE'

Most Midwestern states offer tax

incentives specific to data centers, typically some mix of sales and/or personal property tax exemptions (see state-by-state listing on page 3).

As part of these laws, states often require a minimum capital investment; some also set benchmarks on the number of new jobs being created and the wages being paid.

In Michigan, legislators in 2015 enacted a sales/use tax exemption on equipment for smaller-scale "co-located" data centers (ones that lease capacity to other companies). Measures introduced this year, HB 4906 and SB 237, would extend the exemption to larger-scale enterprise data centers.

These new exemptions would last through 2050, or through 2065 for centers built on qualifying "brownfield" industrial sites or former power plants.

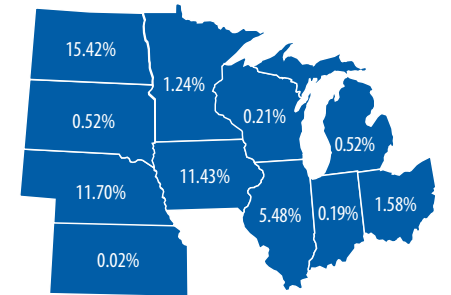
"There are a lot of knowledge-economy and tech-based industries that like to be close to data centers," says Rep. Joey Andrews, sponsor of HB 4906.

"You get one of these, you're going to start seeing other associated industries move into the area around them. You start to be able to build that tech sector and knowledge economy base."

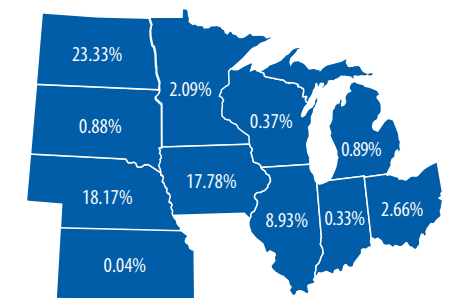
Andrews envisions this kind of increased economic activity and tax base as being transformative for his district along the Lake Michigan shoreline.

DATA CENTERS AND ENERGY CONSUMPTION IN THE MIDWEST

% of total state electricity consumed in 2023



Projected % of total state electricity consumed in 2030



About the state-level data

These numbers come from a May 2024 Electric Power Research Institute study. State projections for 2030 are the average of four scenarios of data center electrical load growth: low, moderate, high and higher. These projections are based on loads in each state as of 2023, plus national projections of data center load growth. No other state-level factors (including new or proposed projects) are considered in the 2030 projections.

Fifteen states, including Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska and North Dakota, accounted for 80 percent of the national data center load in 2023, according to the EPRI study. It listed opportunities and challenges for future data center load growth in these states:

- **Strengths** — Strategic location (Illinois), nuclear generation (Illinois), existing or potential for future renewable energy generation (Illinois and Iowa), low electric rates (Iowa), low operational costs (North Dakota), and tax incentive programs (Illinois, Nebraska and North Dakota).
- **Challenges** — Location (Iowa, Nebraska and North Dakota) and transmission connectivity (Illinois)

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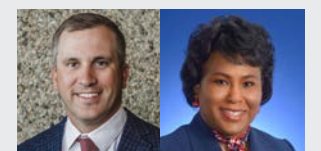
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MORE STATES ARE SENDING A MESSAGE TO SCHOOLS: CURB CELL PHONE USE BY STUDENTS

Already prevented by most U.S. schools for non-academic use, cell phones have become the target of new state-level bans or other legislative actions, including laws passed this year by the **Indiana, Minnesota** and **Ohio** legislatures. The overarching goal of these measures is to curb the use of cell phones during the school day due to concerns that range from disruptions in learning to adverse impacts on the school environment and young people's mental health.

There are variations in these laws, however, from one state to the next.

- Minnesota's law, SF 3567, broadly calls for every school district to adopt a policy on student possession and use of cell phones; it tasked two state associations of school principals with developing a set of best practices.

- Ohio's HB 250 requires all school districts to develop a policy that reduces cell phone-related distractions in the classroom and that makes overall use "as limited as possible" during the school day. However, the new law also notes that cell phones must be allowed when necessary to monitor or address a student's health concern or to implement any special education instruction, supports or services detailed in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Legislators charged the state Department of Education and Workforce with crafting a model policy on cell phone use.

- Indiana's SB 185 also includes exceptions related to a student's IEP and health care needs; additionally, language in the new law "permits a student to use a wireless communication device in the event of an emergency." The law also explicitly gives teachers the latitude to allow cell phone use by students for educational purposes.

Iowa, Kansas and Michigan are among the other U.S. states where legislation was introduced in 2024 to limit cell phone use in schools, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. Bills did not pass prior to legislative adjournment in Iowa and Kansas, and the Michigan proposal had not advanced out of committee as of late October. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 76.1 percent of U.S. schools prohibited the non-academic use of cell phones in 2021-'22.

TYPES OF STATE-LEVEL POLICIES ON CELL PHONES IN SCHOOLS

| Policy or law | States |
|--|---|
| Incentivizes restrictions on use | Arkansas, Delaware, Idaho and Pennsylvania |
| Recommends restrictions on use | Alaska, Alabama, Connecticut, Oklahoma, Oregon and Washington |
| Requires schools to have cell phone policy | California, Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio and Virginia |
| Has statewide restriction | Florida, Louisiana and South Carolina |

Source: Education Week (state listing as of June 2024)

KANSAS REVAMPS ITS BUDGET PROCESS, WITH A NEW JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE LEADING THE WAY

In the weeks leading up to the 2025 legislative session, a newly formed bicameral committee in **Kansas** has been getting a jump-start on development of a new state budget. Members are building the budget "from the ground up," *The Topeka Capital-Journal* reports, conducting an agency-by-agency analysis that leads to recommendations for the full Legislature.

The work of this joint Special Committee on Legislative Budget (established earlier this year by legislative leaders) marks a significant change in Kansas' budget-making process.

For many years, a budget report submitted by the governor (statutorily due by the eighth calendar day of session) served as the starting point of discussions and negotiations. Now, the Legislature will have its own proposals ready for consideration at the start of session by various House and Senate committees.

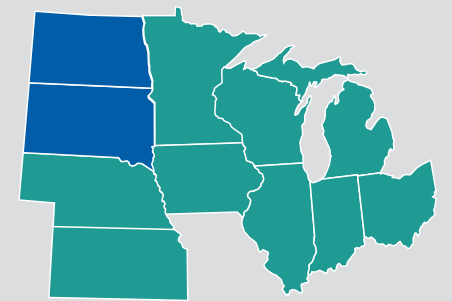
Proponents of this new legislative-led process have said it will allow for more deliberation and vetting of agency requests, as well as curb the inclusion of last-minute budget additions or provisos at the end of session.

According to a 2021 report by the National Association of State Budget Officers, 15 U.S. states, including **South Dakota** and **Wisconsin**, reported having a joint legislative body develop a budget proposal. In eight of these states (none in the Midwest), the governor's budget is not introduced as a bill or a series of bills.

"Together," authors of the NASBO report note, "these two characteristics (the governor's budget not introduced as a bill and a budget proposal developed by a legislative body) likely indicate an especially strong role played by the legislative branch in budget development."

In Kansas, Gov. Laura Kelly will continue to submit a budget proposal and appropriations bills near the start of session.

TIMELINE ON GOVERNOR'S SUBMITTAL OF BUDGETS TO LEGISLATURES*



- Governor submits budget to legislature prior to start of session
- Governor submits budget near start of legislative session

*The governor's budget is introduced in the legislature as a bill or bills in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Source: National Association of State Budget Officers, "Budget Processes in the States" (2021)

SAVED LIVES: SOME OF THE STEEPEST DECLINES IN DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS ARE IN MIDWESTERN STATES

Following and often exceeding a national trend, rates of drug overdose deaths are dropping in every Midwestern state, according to data collected by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The U.S. decline between May 2023 and May 2024 was 12.7 percent. **Nebraska** recorded the second-sharpest decline in the nation (28.6 percent), and double-digit drops also occurred in **Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, South Dakota** and **Wisconsin** (see map).

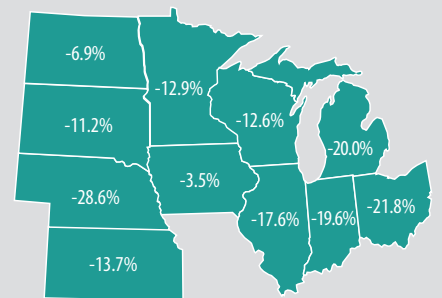
In 2022, the number of drug overdose deaths in the United States reached 111,000, a more than doubling of deaths in less than a decade's times. That year, fentanyl and other synthetic opioids were involved in close to 70 percent of all overdose deaths.

In response to this public health problem, state legislatures have taken a series of actions in recent years.

One approach has been to implement new harm reduction policies: investing in treatment options; increasing the availability of fentanyl test strips; expanding access to naloxone or other medications that can reverse an overdose from opioids; and providing greater legal immunity to individuals who reach out for medical assistance while either experiencing or witnessing a drug overdose. A second approach has been to increase criminal penalties related to the illicit manufacture, distribution and delivery of fentanyl and/or for instances of a fatal overdose involving fentanyl or any other drug.

In 2023, two committees of The Council of State Governments' Midwestern Legislative Conference — Criminal Justice and Public Safety and Health and Human Services — explored policy options for states to reduce drug overdose deaths. That report, "Reducing Harm, Increasing Criminal Penalties," is available at csgmidwest.org.

CHANGE IN DRUG OVERDOSE DEATHS: MAY 2023 TO MAY 2024*



*The change is based on provisional counts for 2024. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes in its compilation of this state-level data that a final year-over-year change may differ from the provisional counts.

GOING MOBILE: DIGITAL DRIVER'S LICENSES ARE BECOMING AN OPTION IN A GROWING NUMBER OF STATES

Iowa and **Ohio** are among the first states in the nation to offer mobile driver's licenses and state identification for residents, an option likely soon on the way in other parts of the Midwest.

In October 2023, Iowa became an early adopter with the launch of a new app that allows individuals to keep a digital version of a state-issued ID on their smartphone. By July of this year, more than 32,000 residents had downloaded Iowa Mobile ID. The option also is available via wallet apps on Apple and Samsung phones. This summer, the Ohio Department of Transportation announced that state-issued driver's license or identification cards could be added to the Apple Wallet app.

These digital IDs can be used to verify identity at some airports as well as a person's age at participating businesses (for purchases of alcohol and tobacco, for example, or entry into age-restricted venues).

This year in Illinois, legislators passed a bill (HB 4592) authorizing the secretary of state to issue mobile identification cards. Laws also have been enacted in states such as **Indiana** (HB 1506 of 2019) and **North Dakota** (HB 1072 of 2021). Transportation officials in North Dakota have said they plan to offer a mobile-ID option sometime in 2025.

In many of the early-adopter states, there have been limits on the use of these mobile driver's licenses. For instance, law enforcement in Iowa and Ohio may still require a physical ID for identity verification.



STATES COMPUTING THE BENEFITS, AND POTENTIAL COSTS, OF ATTRACTING MORE DATA CENTERS

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

According to Andrews, a \$3 billion data center project proposed in the city of Benton Harbor would double property tax revenue to local school districts and governments, and ease high unemployment with construction jobs.

Under the legislation, projects would have to invest at least \$250 million and create at least 30 new jobs, offering an annual wage at or above 150 percent of the median wage of the region in which they're located.

The Michigan bills also echo some other states' requirements that qualifying data centers have their buildings be certified under one or more national or international green building standards.

When crafting HB 4906, Andrews says, attention was given to the existing data center laws and incentives in other states (particularly Michigan's neighbors) that are vying to be hubs of what he calls "the infrastructure of the future."

"Everything is going to run through this sort of technology," he adds.

DATA CENTERS: NEED FOR POWER

Do utilities and state utility regulators need to do more to account for the large amount of electricity required to operate these data centers?

Energy leaders in Ohio have been mulling this question.

In March 2023, AEP Ohio, which provides power to 1.5 million customers in the state, declared a moratorium on new data center service agreements.

At that time, the utility said it was already serving about 600 MW of data center load and had agreements to connect an additional 4.4 gigawatts (GW) by 2030, an amount that could be handled by the region's transmission system. However, AEP Ohio also was facing potential demand for another 30 GW, which would require building more transmission infrastructure.

In 2024, AEP Ohio filed with the Public Utilities Commission tariff plans for data centers, one in May and then a revised version in October. The May 2024 proposal, for example, called for the data centers to make a monthly payment equal to 90 percent of the maximum amount of electricity they would need. A previous 60 percent demand charge was not sufficient, AEP Ohio said.

The revised tariff plan, released in October, sets the demand charge at 85 percent. This charge is meant to cover the cost of infrastructure needed to bring electricity to those facilities; a data center must pay it if even if less electricity is used in a given month. The October proposal also would require data centers and cryptominers using more than 25 MW per month to:

- provide proof they are financially viable and able to meet the plan's requirements; and
- pay an "exit fee" if a project is canceled or they unable to meet obligations outlined in their service agreement.

The requirements would be in place for up to 12 years, including a four-

year ramp-up period. AEP Ohio says its revised plan also creates a sliding scale that would give small and mid-sized data centers more flexibility, and outlines a process to end its March 2023 moratorium.

Another AEP utility, Indiana Michigan Power, in July filed a data center tariff proposal with the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission, seeking 20-year contracts for users of 150 MW or more, with a minimum monthly demand charge of 90 percent of contract capacity.

In North Dakota, Public Service Commission Chairman Randy Christmann in September said the legislature should address data centers in its 2025 session, as more oversight will be needed to keep the state's power grid functional.

Christmann, a former legislator, says there is enthusiasm for attracting data centers, especially to the state's oil-producing regions where natural gas — a byproduct of oil production that must either be burned off or transported elsewhere by pipelines — could provide the power.

That's good, he says, but legislators need to consider what happens if data centers locate in an area where the local utility or electric co-op can't handle the load demand or afford to build new transmission lines.

"I'm putting it out there ... so people understand it is a potential issue," Christmann says. "I'm not looking to take a heavy regulatory hand, but with nothing, there is the potential for bad things happening."

The commission currently has no

direct oversight of data centers, he adds; only in cases where those facilities get electricity from a regulated utility does the agency have authority over the electrical rates sought by the utility.

DATA CENTERS: NEED FOR WATER

Data centers must keep equipment cool, which can require millions of gallons of water daily. Michigan's legislative proposals would require these centers to use municipal water systems. Andrews adds that there is a sunset provision (no incentives for new projects after 2029), giving legislators the chance to examine the impacts on water and electricity systems.

The bills include language that "encourage" those claiming tax exemptions "to take direct steps to adopt practices to mitigate negative environmental impacts," including efforts to conserve, reuse and replace water. These steps would not be required.

Indiana officials have proposed building a 50-mile pipeline to carry up to 100 million gallons daily from the Wabash River watershed to the Limitless Exploration/Advanced Pace Research and Innovation District — a project aimed at attracting high-tech manufacturing and data center operations to a 9,000-acre site northwest of Indianapolis.

That pipeline has been on hold as the Indiana Finance Authority wraps up studies of the Wabash River's watershed and headwaters. Findings were expected to be released in December.



Michigan Rep.
Joey Andrews



Randy Christmann,
chair of North Dakota
Public Service
Commission

EXAMPLES OF STATE TAX INCENTIVES SPECIFIC TO DATA CENTERS: OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM BENEFITS AND REQUIREMENTS IN MIDWEST**ILLINOIS**

- Offers mix of sales and use tax exemptions for items used to construct and operate data centers
- Exemptions last up to 20 years
- Requires minimum capital investment of \$250 million
- Requires project to result in at least 20 permanent full-time or full-time-equivalent jobs; average pay must be at least 120 percent of average wage in host county
- Project must demonstrate within two years it is carbon neutral or meets a green building standard
- Offers income tax credit for construction of data center in underserved area

**IOWA**

- Provides sales and use tax refunds (between 50 percent and 100 percent depending on project size) on equipment and electricity used to operate data centers
- No property tax on equipment or computers
- Requires minimum investment of \$200 million (some incentives available for smaller projects)

**MICHIGAN**

- Provides sales and use tax exemptions for equipment sold to data centers
- Only applies to a co-located data center (a center housing shared data from multiple companies)

**NEBRASKA**

- Provides mix of investment credits, sales tax refunds/exemptions and personal property tax exemptions specific to data centers; some as part of broader, tiered incentive program that is no longer accepting new applications in certain tiers
- Incentives in tiered program contingent on investment of \$200 million and hiring of 30 new employees

NORTH DAKOTA

- Provides sales tax exemption on information technology equipment and computer software
- Facility must be at least 15,000 square feet; 50% of space used for data processing

OHIO

- Provides partial or full sales tax exemption on purchase of electricity and equipment to construct, operate centers
- Requires minimum investment of \$100 million and annual payroll of more than \$1.5 million

**INDIANA**

- Provides sales and use tax exemption on equipment and electricity purchases (local property tax exemption may also be available)
- Exemptions last up to 20 years for projects with capital investments of less than \$750 million, up to 50 years for projects with larger investments
- Requires varying minimum investment levels based on population of county where center is located (between \$25 million and \$150 million)

**MINNESOTA**

- Provides sales tax exemption on electricity use and purchases of items used to operate data centers
- Sales tax exemption for data center project lasts for up to 20 years
- Provides permanent exemption from personal property tax on equipment
- Requires qualifying facility to be at least 25,000 square feet
- Requires minimum capital investment of at least \$30 million for new centers, \$50 million for refurbished centers

**WISCONSIN**

- Provides exemption from sales and use tax on long list of items needed to construct, operate data centers
- Minimum investment varies based on population of county where center is located (\$50 million to \$150 million)

Sources: Stream Data Centers, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity "Data Center Investment Program 2023 Annual Report," and CSG Midwest research

AGRICULTURE & RURAL AFFAIRS

In demand: More non-operators view farmland as an attractive investment, raising questions about the impacts of ‘absent landlords’ on rural areas

by Rebecca Leis (rleis@csq.org)

In recent years, many state legislatures have tightened their foreign ownership laws out of concern that, at the very least, farmland ought not to be owned by foreign adversaries.

Yet foreign owners are just one of three categories of non-operating farmland owners, the other two being corporations and investors.

While no state prevents farmland transfers to individual investors by inheritance or sale, six Midwestern states have longstanding laws that restrict corporate ownership of agricultural land.

Predominantly enacted between 1930 and 1970, these measures sought to protect the family farm unit. At the time, and today, supporters of these state-level restrictions maintain that when land is owned by the individual who farms it, the farmer and the rural community are better off.

In the Midwest, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin limit corporate ownership of farmland. These states carve out exceptions for a family farm corporation, an ownership structure that generally limits the number of stockholders, requires a familial relationship between owners, and/or stipulates that a stockholder reside on or operate the farm.

In some instances, the state-level restrictions on corporate ownership have faced constitutional challenges and sometimes been invalidated, as was the case in Nebraska. In other Midwestern states, court decisions have weakened the enforceability or scope of the measures.

Where these laws remain, questions sometimes are raised about whether they unduly limit agricultural operators’ access to capital or their ability to adapt to new or changing models of ownership. A case in point: North Dakota, where legislators reworked the state’s law in 2023 with the hope of growing its livestock industry while still protecting family farmers.

‘LOCAL OWNERSHIP IS IDEAL’

North Dakota’s laws against corporate ownership were among the nation’s strictest.

“If a group of four or so farmers wanted to pool their resources to build an animal livestock facility operated by another individual, they would have been prevented from doing so [under the old statutory framework],” Rep. Paul Thomas says, using this scenario as an example of how the state-level restrictions were stifling growth and opportunities.

Livestock farming is capital intensive, Thomas adds, and many traditional lenders tend not to venture into this industry.

North Dakota’s HB 1371, signed into law in April 2023, narrowly expands corporate ownership of farmland in the state.

Now, an authorized livestock farm corporation may own or lease up to 160 acres of farmland so long as the entity has no more than 10 shareholders.

Under the law, when an individual owns a majority of stocks in an LLC, or 75 percent of shares in a corporation, that shareholder must be actively engaged in farming.

Thomas, a sponsor of HB 1371, explains that constituents were very leery of separating farmland ownership from local operators. That is why the law ties majority investors to operator status.

“Local ownership is ideal, as it keeps wealth circulating within the state and rural communities,” he says.

But Thomas also notes that the shift of ownership to non-operators and a rise in farm consolidations can and does happen, regardless of a state’s limit on corporate farmland ownership.

The sense that local ownership of North Dakota’s agricultural land is slipping away is backed by a 2021 U.S. Department of Agriculture study. In North Dakota, non-operating landlords live, on average, 420 miles from the rented farmland, the highest average distance among the 50 states. Additionally, more than 50 percent of North Dakota’s farmland acreage was being rented out as of 2022, one of the highest rates in the nation.

INVESTORS AS OWNERS

According to the USDA, 283 million acres, or 31 percent, of all U.S. farmland is owned by non-operator landlords. Most non-operator landlords have some ties to the land. Often, it was inherited and retained for any number of reasons (whether it’s the sentimental value or because the land can generate considerable rental income).

There are no restrictions preventing this type of non-operator farmland ownership. Similarly, there are no restrictions on selling farmland to individual investors, a trend that often garners media attention when a billionaire purchases large amounts of farmland.

Farmland, too, attracts interest from institutional investors: corporate entities that pool money on behalf of clients.

The number of farmland properties owned by the seven largest institutional investors increased 231 percent between 2008 and 2023, and the value of those holdings rose more than 800 percent, to around \$16.2 billion, according to an 2023 investigation by Reuters.

André Magnan, a University of Regina sociology professor who studies farm financialization, explains that while a vast majority of sales are farmer-to-

farmer, agricultural land is increasingly viewed as a smart asset by those outside the agriculture industry.

“[It] is considered a hedge against inflation, and investors believe that with a growing world population, there will be increasing demand for food,” he says.

In 2016, Saskatchewan began prohibiting pension funds and large trusts from acquiring farmland; this legislation (Bill No. 187) was introduced and passed after a private investment group sold more than 100,000 acres to the Canada Pension Plan.

VARIATION IN STATE LAWS

Of the six Midwestern states that have laws against corporate farming, not all preclude institutional investment ownership.

For example, in Wisconsin, domestic corporations and trusts may own farmland or carry out farm operations, provided there are 15 unrelated shareholders or less and no more than two classes of shares.

In Iowa, authorized trusts comprised of less than 25 beneficiaries may own up to 1,500 acres of farmland and may own even more if it is leased to the previous owner.

Minnesota flatly prohibits pension and investment funds or trusts from owning agricultural land or using it for farming purposes. South Dakota’s and North Dakota’s anti-corporate-farming laws similarly restrict institutional investors, without exception.

Starting in the mid-2000s, real estate investment trusts (REITs) also began purchasing farmland in states that allow this type of ownership model in the agricultural sector.

Under a REIT, individuals (as opposed to asset managers) pool resources to purchase farmland. Farmland ownership among the two publicly traded farmland REITs has increased by approximately 180,000 acres in a little over a decade.

Gladstone Land, which entered the farmland market in 2013 and focuses on niche crops, owns 9,686 acres in Michigan and Nebraska. Farmland Partners, which went public in 2014 and focuses on row cropping, owns approximately 44,000 acres in the Midwest.

In Canada, the farmland investment firm Bonnefield has \$1 billion in assets under management that comprise approximately 134,000 acres across seven Canadian provinces. According to Magnan, when a landlord is an investment company in Toronto or Calgary, those rent payments end up in the hands of partners or the investors, with the result being less revenue circulating in the local economy.

NEXUS TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY

In 2021, the USDA studied the relationship between “absent” non-operator farmland owners (those located more than 100 miles from the rental farmland) and local economic factors.

It found that “the prevalence of absent landlords is associated with declining local employment rates.” When data was analyzed at the state and county levels, per capita income growth was lower in areas with higher rates of landlord absenteeism.

This federal study only looked at the correlation between income levels and the prevalence of landlord absenteeism; it did not make any causal links.

TRENDS IN VALUE AND OWNERSHIP OF FARMLAND

| | |
|-------------|---|
| \$6,590 | AVERAGE PER ACRE VALUE OF CROPLAND IN 11-STATE MIDWEST IN 2024 (a 30.7% rise in value from 2014) |
| 36.1% | % INCREASE IN VALUE OF U.S. CROPLAND BETWEEN 2014 AND 2024 |
| 283 MILLION | # OF ACRES OF U.S. FARMLAND OWNED BY NONOPERATOR LANDLORDS IN 2014 (roughly 31% of total farmland) |
| 27% | APPROXIMATE % OF ACRES OF RENTED U.S. FARMLAND OWNED BY “ABSENT LANDLORDS”: THOSE LIVING 100 MILES OR MORE FROM THE RENTED FARMLAND |
| 3x | THE # OF INSTITUTIONALLY OWNED AGRICULTURAL PROPERTIES TRIPLED BETWEEN 2009 AND 2022 (Ownership by multinational corporations, private equity firms, pension funds, etc.) |
| 371 MILLION | # OF ACRES OF U.S. FARMLAND EXPECTED TO CHANGE HANDS BY 2035 (about 41% of all U.S. farmland) |

Sources: U.S. Department of Agriculture data and CSG Midwest calculations (first four rows); National Family Farm Coalition (fifth row); and American Farmland Trust (sixth row)



Members of U.S. Congress had mandated the study as part of the 2018 farm bill, seeking to better understand, in part, the impacts of absent landlords on the economic stability of rural communities.

Fast forward to 2023, and concerns about corporate “land grabs” led to the introduction of the Farmland for Farmers Act. This congressional proposal seeks to restrict future farmland ownership and leasing by corporations, pension funds and investment funds.

The bill’s supporters also say it would protect and enhance the role of states in regulating farm ownership, in line with the intent of the anti-corporate farming laws passed in the mid-20th century.

For example, the proposed federal legislation spells out a role for state attorneys general and other state officials in enforcing the act. It also explicitly authorizes states to adopt their own, “more restrictive requirements” on farmland ownership.

Rebecca Leis is CSG Midwest staff liaison to the Midwestern Legislative Conference Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee. Saskatchewan MLA Steven Bonk and Kansas Sen. Marci Francisco serve as committee co-chairs. North Dakota Rep. Paul Thomas is the vice chair.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Seeing the promise of biomarker testing in disease diagnosis and treatment, some states are mandating that health plans cover it

by Tim Anderson (tanderson@csg.org)

Give the right treatment to the right patient at the right time. That is the promise of precision medicine, and one form of it, biomarker testing, has been the subject of a legislative trend that started in Illinois in 2021 (HB 1779).

Since then, 14 other states have passed similar laws requiring health insurance plans to cover biomarker testing when it is backed by sufficient medical and scientific evidence. State Medicaid programs also often are included in these coverage mandates.

“Those who have gone through the cancer journey know that the care for cancer can take a significant toll on a person,” Iowa Rep. Brian Lohse says.

“If you’re able to tailor a treatment, a cure, for an individual with biomarker testing, that toll can be limited — fewer side effects, fewer ER visits.”

He led the work on HF 2668, a bill that added Iowa to the growing list of states with a biomarker testing mandate. It passed this year with near-unanimous legislative approval, as did Indiana’s SB 273.



Iowa Rep. Brian Lohse

disease or condition. (Screening for conditions or diseases is not part of these mandates.)

LIMITS OF STATE MANDATES

How do states determine clinical effectiveness, the trigger that then requires insurers to cover biomarker testing?

The language in these state laws spells out several ways — for example, approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, national or local coverage decisions by the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and clinical practice guidelines or consensus statements developed by independent organizations or medical professional societies. (The National Conference of Insurance Legislators

has developed model language, which Lohse says he used in crafting the Iowa bill.)

According to Lin, these laws still leave considerable room for interpretation on what is clinically useful and what is not.

Her recent research on biomarker testing laws centered on another question: How effective will the new mandates be in

expanding access across the state’s entire population?

Lin warns of several limitations.

For instance, many residents are not covered by state-regulated plans, including those who are uninsured or on Medicare. Some of the laws also exclude Medicaid from the mandate.

Sometimes overlooked, too, is the large number of people receiving employer-based coverage through self-insured plans, under which health services are provided to workers by an employer’s own funds rather than through the purchase of outside health insurance.

Self-insured plans are exempt from state coverage mandates. According to KFF’s 2024 edition of “Employer Health Benefits,” 63 percent of covered workers in the United States are enrolled in self-funded plans.

One of the concerns raised this year in committee testimony in Ohio over biomarker testing legislation (HB 24) is that the mandate only would apply to the smaller- and medium-sized businesses that purchase health insurance. It would not touch larger-sized firms that self-insure.

Even for those individuals covered by state-regulated plans, Lin says, access to biomarker testing is uneven.

“We know already that with some of this more advanced, newer testing, there are disparities in terms of who gets it and when they get it,” she notes. “Payer coverage is one part of it, but it’s not going to solve the entire issue.”

She notes, for example, that many states now require coverage for mental health services, yet gaps in access persist.

“A lot of times, the most vulnerable people don’t get reached,” she says.

“So as medicine advances, and as we get better testing and therapies, how are we going to make sure that those populations are reached?”

She suggests that legislators carefully and regularly review the impact of the biomarker testing laws. Did access increase after implementation? What can be done to close gaps in access and improve equity?

‘WAVE OF THE FUTURE’

The new Indiana and Iowa laws do include some language on legislative oversight.

In Indiana, legislators will get an annual report on biomarker testing in the Medicaid program, including information on the number of patients who received the testing, the amount of state funding expended, the 10 most common conditions for which the testing was ordered, and results for patients (therapies used, treatments avoided, impacts of treatment).

In Iowa, by November 2025, the state Department of Health and Human Services is required to report on the number of biomarker tests provided during the fiscal year and the costs incurred by public health insurance programs.

“There are certainly some unknowns about costs, so we want to be sure to monitor it,” Lohse says.

However, he points to studies in states such as Minnesota that have predicted only a small increase in health premiums.

Minnesota’s law was enacted in 2023 (as part of the omnibus SF 2995). Prior to passage of the measure, as statutorily required for any legislation calling for a new coverage mandate, the Minnesota Department of Commerce conducted a review of potential impacts. For the nonpublic insured population, the department estimated that monthly per-member expenditures would increase by between 9 cents and 22 cents in year one and between 14 cents and 32 cents in year 10.

Lohse sees potential cost savings as well, because biomarker testing can prevent spending on unsuccessful treatments and improve long-term outcomes for patients.

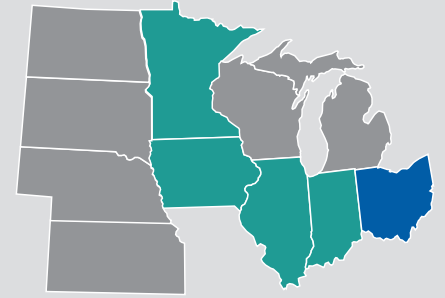
“Insurers already are moving in this direction [of covering testing],” he says.

“There are a whole bunch of conditions and diseases where I think biomarkers are going to be able to help. As we worked on the bill, we heard not just about cancer treatment, but conditions like preeclampsia, rheumatoid arthritis and pain management.

“It’s the wave of the future.”

Tim Anderson is CSG Midwest staff liaison to the Midwestern Legislative Conference Health & Human Services Committee. Kansas Rep. Susan Concannon and Illinois Sen. Julie Morrison serve as committee co-chairs. South Dakota Rep. Taylor Rehfeldt is the vice chair.

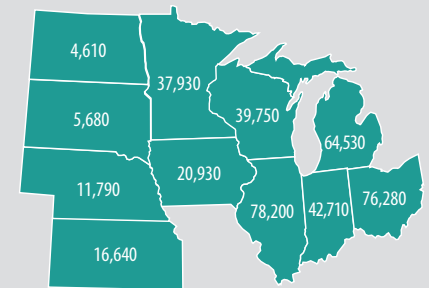
STATUS OF MEASURES REQUIRING HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE OF BIOMARKER TESTING



- Law enacted requiring coverage for all state-regulated plans
- Legislation introduced and still active as of November 2024

Source: American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

EXPECTED # OF NEW CANCER CASES TO BE DIAGNOSED IN 2024



Source: American Cancer Society

‘DISEASE AGNOSTIC’ LAWS

With biomarker testing, an individual’s tissue, saliva or blood is collected and analyzed for the presence of biological markers. The results can help diagnose conditions and inform decisions about treatment.

“[Doctors] can say to a patient, ‘We have found this kind of cancer with this mutation, and we have this medication to give to you that’s effective,’” says Grace Lin, an associate professor of medicine at the Philip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies at the University of California, San Francisco.

“If we didn’t have that testing, we would just go down the list of drugs, and some of them wouldn’t work at all or wouldn’t be as effective.”

Improving access to more precise and successful treatments for cancer, in particular, has been behind the push for these new state-level coverage mandates. In some of the early-adopter states, the requirement only applied to biomarker testing for cancer.

Today, most of the laws are “disease agnostic,” and require biomarker testing whenever there is evidence of it being effective in diagnosing, treating, managing or monitoring a



ESTIMATES OF HEALTH INSURANCE STATUS AND TYPE OF COVERAGE, 2023*

| State | Uninsured | Private ¹ | Public ² |
|---------------|-----------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Illinois | 6.2% | 69.7% | 35.6% |
| Indiana | 6.9% | 67.8% | 37.4% |
| Iowa | 5.0% | 71.8% | 37.8% |
| Kansas | 8.4% | 73.2% | 31.7% |
| Michigan | 4.5% | 69.9% | 41.3% |
| Minnesota | 4.2% | 75.0% | 35.1% |
| Nebraska | 6.1% | 74.1% | 32.7% |
| North Dakota | 4.5% | 80.8% | 29.3% |
| Ohio | 6.1% | 67.3% | 39.2% |
| South Dakota | 8.3% | 73.3% | 32.3% |
| Wisconsin | 4.9% | 72.8% | 36.0% |
| United States | 7.9% | 67.0% | 37.4% |

* State and U.S. percentages add up to more than 100% because people can be covered by more than one type of health insurance (private and public) during the year.

¹“Private” includes coverage from employers, direct purchases from an insurance company or through the U.S. Affordable Care Act health insurance exchanges, and TRICARE for military families.

Some employer-based coverage is self-insured, which means health services for workers are provided by a firm’s own funds rather than through the purchase of health insurance. Self-insured plans are exempt from many state insurance laws, including coverage mandates. According to KFF’s 2024 edition of “Employer Health Benefits,” 63% of covered workers in the United States are enrolled in self-funded plans.

²“Public” includes Medicare, Medicaid, and care provided by the military and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, “Health Insurance in the United States: 2023”

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

School librarians: Integral to learning in some schools, absent in others

by Derek Cantù (dcantu@csq.org)

The typical American school experience consists of some common traits; recess, field trips, group projects, social cliques and whole-school assemblies, to name a few examples.

For many students, visits to the school library are part of this list as well. It's where they can find a quiet place to study, learn something new through reading, or take part in a Scholastic Book Fair.

What's typical for many students, however, is out of reach for others.

More than 12 percent of U.S. public schools didn't have a library media center in 2020-'21, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. (The lack of a library is much more prevalent in charter schools compared to traditional public schools.) A separate national study, done by the SLIDE project, estimates that 29.5 percent of U.S. schools didn't have librarians during that same school year. In the Midwest, the estimate was 32.7 percent.

"As a teacher in a Detroit charter school without a school library, I saw

the negative impact of no library and scarce resources on both the staff and students in my school," Michigan Sen. Darrin Camilleri says.

"We need to help all students have

the resources they need to succeed, including grade-level-aligned texts and knowledgeable, accessible school librarians."

He has introduced bills (SB 741-SB 743) requiring every public school to have a library and to employ at least one librarian, either part-time or full-time depending on student population size. Under Camilleri's legislation (still in committee as of October), Michigan schools could seek a state waiver from the librarian mandate. It would be automatically granted to schools/districts with fewer than 51 pupils.

NEBRASKA: LIBRARIAN MANDATE

Few states in the Midwest mandate that K-12 schools have libraries as well as employ librarians.

One exception is Nebraska. Under current law there, the staffing requirements are scaled based on school size. For example, a school with

a population of between 70 and 249 students must have a certified teacher with an endorsement in library sciences who devotes at least one-fifth of his or her time to library media services.

However, even with this state requirement, Nebraska's school librarians struggle with diminishing budgets, increased responsibilities with limited prep time, and public misinformation about the profession, says Courtney Pentland, a school librarian in Lincoln, Neb. (Note: Pentland is immediate past president of the American Association of School Librarians; her comments for this article are based solely on her work as a school librarian, not with the association.)

ROLE IN STUDENT LEARNING

Pentland compares the role of a school librarian to that of a cruise ship director.

"We're the person that keeps the ship going in the right direction, but we also have all of these other things that we have to maintain to make sure that we're serving our population the best way we can," she says.

In addition to assisting and supervising students, today's school librarians must act as a cooperative and sometimes lead instructor (for example, as it relates to new literacy education approaches such as the "science of reading"), an academic research expert, a procurement officer, an event planner (given that the physical library space is usually one of the largest rooms in a school), and a media specialist who teaches students to differentiate legitimate sources from disinformation and AI-manipulated content.

Recent research points to the positive academic benefits that full-time certified librarians can have. When analyzing the academic performance of North Carolina students from similar demographic backgrounds, the authors of a 2023 Old Dominion University study found that "students who attend schools with a full-time certified librarian have higher math and reading test scores than students who do not."

"School librarians see the big picture and help students build on prior knowledge and make connections in ways that may not be available or familiar to classroom teachers," the authors noted, cautioning that further research was needed to determine some of the most impactful practices used by librarians.

For states that don't require librarians, Pentland says, library services are usually one of the first areas to get cut. The comparatively higher level of advanced education needed to become a librarian — a master's degree or, at least, several hours of additional coursework in many states — also makes recruitment efforts a challenge.

And for states that do require school librarians, the job can entail having to juggle dual teaching roles while traveling between multiple schools with limited prep time.

Pentland also says a rise in misinformation about school librarians, and the in-person or online harassment that follows, is causing individuals

to leave or give second thought to entering the profession.

According to a 2023 *School Library Journal* survey, 24 percent of respondents reported harassment in the previous year related to library books or displays. Results from that same survey found that the Midwestern region had the largest share of school librarians who have considered leaving the profession or taking early retirement — 41 percent.

"The [state] bills that have been passed or attempted to be passed that would criminalize librarians and educators for doing their jobs, ones that maybe restrict access to scholarly databases or maybe restrict their ability to purchase materials ... it makes some [librarians] question whether it's worth it," Pentland says.

TWO NEW LAWS IN MINNESOTA

Providing more supports for school librarians is among the goals of two new laws in Minnesota.

Last year, as part of its omnibus education bill (HF 2497), the Legislature allocated \$1 million for a statewide census of school libraries. Those dollars also are being used to help recruit and retain school librarians through professional development opportunities and tuition assistance for those seeking licensure.

Of the 1,800 schools that had responded to the state survey as of October 2024, 80.6 percent reported having a library media center.

Sen. Mary Kunesh, chief sponsor of the bill and a former school library media specialist herself, says the survey also sought

answers to other questions: "What sort of support systems [are] you providing? What support systems are you missing? What kind of collaborative relationships do you have with your county libraries, your state?"

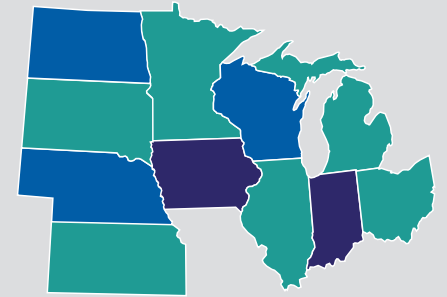
According to Kunesh, policymakers will use the information to help expand library access.

This year, Minnesota legislators created the position of "state school librarian" (HF 5237). This individual will help school librarians across the state develop reading and media literacy curricula, support academic standards, secure grants, access library data collections, and provide guidance on book-removal requests.

Kunesh also envisions the state school librarian evolving into an unofficial legislative liaison, one who can provide a "direct link from the school library media specialist to the Legislature."

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

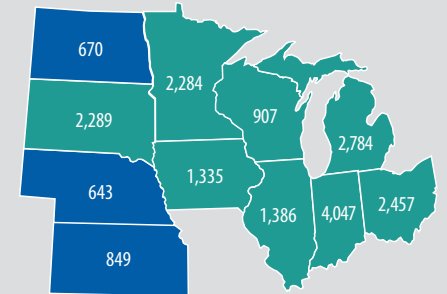
STATE-LEVEL REQUIREMENTS, BY STATUTE OR REGULATION, FOR SCHOOLS TO EMPLOY FULL- OR PART-TIME LIBRARIANS



- Mandate in place and enforced in some way
- Unenforced mandate
- No mandate found

Source: EveryLibrary Institute

OF STUDENTS PER SCHOOL LIBRARIAN IN STATE'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS, AS OF FALL 2022*



- Student-to-librarian ratio is lower than U.S. ratio (1,262 students per school librarian)
- Student-to-librarian ratio is higher than U.S. ratio (1,262 students per school librarian)

* The ratio is a CSG Midwest calculation of National Center on Education Statistics' data on public school enrollment and employment of full-time-equivalent librarians



Michigan Sen. Darrin Camilleri



Minnesota Sen. Mary Kunesh



STAFFING OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES BY EACH MIDWESTERN STATE'S PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

| State | % that continuously employed a school librarian over a 4-year period ¹ | % with library support staff, but no school librarian (2018-'19) |
|--------------|---|--|
| Illinois | 44.7% | 0.0% |
| Indiana | 63.1% | 25.9% |
| Iowa | 96.4% | 0.9% |
| Kansas | 54.2% | 30.4% |
| Michigan | 22.3% | 31.5% |
| Minnesota | 41.6% | 45.9% |
| Nebraska | 98.4% | 0.0% |
| North Dakota | 77.1% | 5.3% |
| Ohio | 55.8% | 29.8% |
| South Dakota | 34.9% | 24.2% |
| Wisconsin | 86.1% | 6.2% |

¹ For school years 2015-'16 through 2018-'19.

Source: *The School Librarian Investigation — Divergence & Evolution*, or SLIDE (2021)

ELECTION WRAP-UP FOR THE MIDWEST: PARTISAN SHIFTS IN TWO STATES, AMENDED CONSTITUTIONS IN SEVEN

More than 1,200 state legislative races. Two elections for governor. Twenty-four proposals to amend state constitutions, enact new citizen-initiated statutes or repeal laws recently passed by state legislatures.

A lot was at stake in the November 2024 elections across the 11-state Midwest, and turnout was high across much of the region. According to a state-by-state analysis by the University of Florida Election Lab, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan led the nation in voter turnout, and Iowa, Nebraska, Ohio and South Dakota also topped the national average (see bottom map on this page).

Here is a look at some of the key results and takeaways from the 2024 elections.

CHANGES COMING IN MICHIGAN AND MINNESOTA

Entering this year's election, one party fully controlled the legislature — majorities in both chambers — in every Midwestern state. (Nebraska has a nonpartisan unicameral legislature.)

That changes in 2025 as the result of Republican election gains in Michigan and Minnesota.

The GOP took control of the Michigan House and now has a six-seat advantage: 58-52. Democrats still have control over Michigan's upper chamber (there were no Senate elections in 2024) as well as the governor's office.

In Minnesota, a 67-67 split in the House appears likely for the session ahead, as the result of a three-seat gain by Republicans. (Two close House races were the subject of recounts as of mid-November). Democrats maintained control of the Senate, and Gov. Tim Walz is in the middle of his term.

According to Minnesota's online legislative publication *Session Daily*, a tied House has only occurred one other time in the state's history, in 1979. That year, a power-sharing agreement was reached between the two parties, with Republicans being given the speakership and Democrats one-vote majorities on key legislative committees.

There has not been an evenly split legislature in the 11-state Midwest since the Iowa Senate in 2005. The power-sharing agreement there included the election of co-Senate presidents and co-committee chairs, one from each party.

Soon after the elections in Minnesota, both House caucuses chose speaker-designates: Melissa Hortman for the DFL and Lisa Demuth for the Republicans.

LEGISLATIVE SUPERMAJORITIES IN SIX MIDWEST STATES

In contrast to the even split in Minnesota, many of the region's legislatures will continue to be run by parties that enjoy supermajority status (three-fifths or two-thirds, depending on the state): Democrats in Illinois, and Republicans in Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, North Dakota and South Dakota.

The most lopsided partisan advantage is in South Dakota, where 91 percent of the legislative seats (96 of 105) are held by Republicans.

A legislative supermajority can provide procedural advantages to the controlling party in every state, but it is particularly important in Kansas, where Republicans control the Legislature and the governor's office is held by Democrat Gov. Laura Kelly. By maintaining supermajorities in the Kansas House and Senate, Republicans can overturn gubernatorial vetoes via party-line votes.

In two legislative chambers, parties lost their supermajority advantage: Republicans in the Wisconsin Senate and Ohio House. Wisconsin had the region's largest overall net shift in partisan control of legislative seats, with Democrats picking up 14 seats.

In 2025, Republicans will control about 63 percent of the 1,501 partisan legislative seats in the Midwest. This does not include Nebraska, where elections for the Unicameral Legislature are nonpartisan.

However, this year's results in Nebraska will mean a supermajority of members, 33 of 49, identify with the Republican Party. This status is important because in Nebraska's one-house legislature, the filibuster, or the threat of one, plays an outsized role compared to most other U.S. state legislatures. A vote of 33 Nebraska senators can block filibuster attempts.

Nebraska is one of six Midwestern states with a Republican governor. That number includes two governors elected for the first time in 2024: North Dakota's Kelly Armstrong and Indiana's Mike Braun.

VOTER-APPROVED CHANGES TO CONSTITUTIONS, STATUTES

The 2024 elections resulted in state constitutions being amended in seven Midwestern states: Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

In all, a total of 15 proposed constitutional amendments appeared on ballots across the Midwest. Measures in Nebraska and South Dakota on the future of abortion policy and in Ohio on redistricting captured the most national attention.

The results in Nebraska and South Dakota bucked recent national trends.

Since the U.S. Supreme Court's *Dobbs* decision in 2022, ballot measures to protect or enshrine abortion rights have been approved by voters in 11 states, and prior to this year's November elections, no such ballot proposal had been defeated.

However, South Dakotans rejected a measure that would have given a

complete right to abortion during the first trimester and limited state-level restrictions later on in a pregnancy. As a result, a statutory ban on most abortions remains in place.

In Nebraska, competing proposals appeared on the ballot. Voters rejected an abortion-rights constitutional amendment and approved one that prohibits the procedure after the first trimester, with exceptions for medical emergencies or for pregnancies caused by sexual assault or incest.

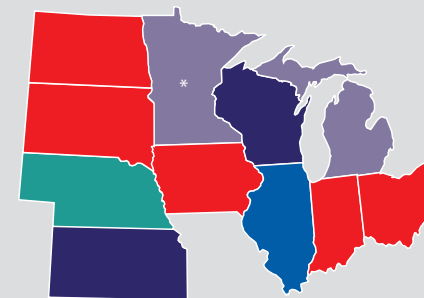
Ohioans were asked again this year to consider changes to the state's redistricting process. Last decade, they approved a pair of measures that aimed to encourage bipartisanship and prevent gerrymandering, but still kept map-making powers with the General Assembly and a commission of elected officials. This year's proposed constitutional amendment called for creation of a citizen-led, nonpolitician redistricting commission. Voters rejected the measure.

Here are other results from some of this year's proposals to amend state constitutions, enact citizen-initiated statutes, or repeal laws recently enacted by state legislatures:

- North Dakotans rejected two citizen-initiated proposals, one to eliminate the property tax and another to legalize recreational marijuana.
- Indiana and Iowa voters modified constitutional language related to gubernatorial lines of succession.
- Minnesotans approved a legislatively referred constitutional amendment to continue using lottery-derived revenue to fund environmental and natural resources projects.
- Iowa and Wisconsin voters agreed to add new constitutional language that prohibits voting by noncitizens.
- Two citizen-initiated statutes were voted down in South Dakota: one prohibiting a sales tax on "anything sold for human consumption" and a second legalizing recreational marijuana. South Dakotans also rejected a proposed constitutional amendment to establish a nonpartisan primary system. They did approve a legislatively referred amendment authorizing work requirements for certain enrollees in the state's Medicaid program.
- Nebraskans approved citizen-initiated statutes that legalize medical marijuana and ensure workers can earn paid sick time.
- According to Ballotpedia, Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio and South Dakota are among the 23 states nationwide that allow for a veto referendum. Under this process, voters have the opportunity to overturn a measure recently passed by the legislature and signed into law. This citizen-initiated veto authority was used in South Dakota to repeal a law on carbon pipelines and in Nebraska for a law providing tax credits for donations to private school scholarship programs.

Article written by CSG Midwest director of policy and research Tim Anderson. He can be reached at tanderson@cs.org.

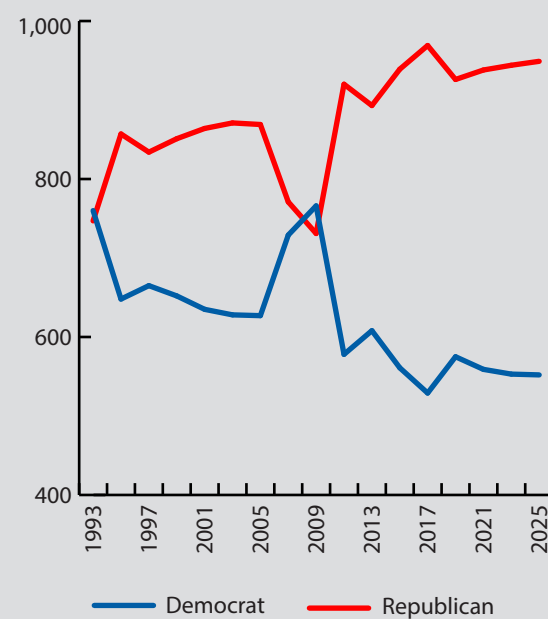
PARTISAN CONTROL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS IN MIDWEST ENTERING 2025



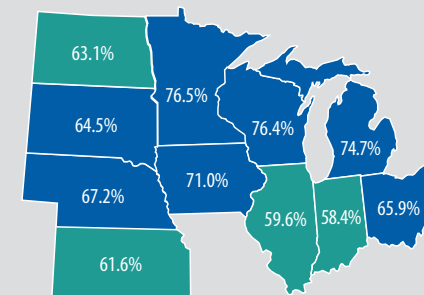
- Democrats have majorities in both legislative chambers and the governor's office
- Republicans have majorities in both legislative chambers and the governor's office
- Republicans have majorities in both legislative chambers; governor is Democrat
- Split control of legislature; governor is Democrat
- Nonpartisan unicameral legislature; governor is Republican

* As of mid-November, recounts were likely in two races for the Minnesota House. Current results showed a 67-67 partisan tie in the House. Democrats have control of the Minnesota Senate.

of seats held by two major parties in Midwest's 20 partisan legislative chambers: 1993-2025



PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES OF VOTER TURNOUT IN 2024 GENERAL ELECTION (BASED ON BALLOTS COUNTED AS OF MID-NOVEMBER)



- Higher than preliminary estimate of U.S. voter turnout rate: 63.5%
- Lower than preliminary estimate of U.S. voter turnout rate: 63.5%

* Voter turnout is calculated in various ways. This data is from the University of Florida Election Lab, which calculates turnout based on the following: the state's number of ballots counted and its total voting-eligible population.





PROFILE: SOUTH DAKOTA SENATOR CASEY CRABTREE

‘Addition, not subtraction’: His views on legislating are grounded in a belief that common goals are best met if individual lawmakers know their voices are heard

by Jon Davis (jdavis@csg.org)

“What’s best for the team?”

As a young athlete and, ultimately, college football player, Casey Crabtree says he learned the value of continually asking that question — and living by it.

He also believes it can be used to frame effective legislative leadership.

“Politics is a game of addition, not subtraction,” he says. “It’s working together with everybody to achieve a common goal.”

The work needs to be done quickly every year in South Dakota, where legislators must get all the people’s work, including a new state budget, done in 40 days or less.

Crabtree himself had a bit of a crash course on legislative leadership.

He joined the state Senate in 2020, and only one year later, caucus colleagues selected him as one of four majority whips, as well as chair of the Senate Commerce and Energy Committee. In advance of the 2023 legislative session, he was chosen majority leader.

There have been some unique institutional and legislative challenges during Crabtree’s time in office and leadership. In 2022, the Senate voted to remove the state’s attorney general. It marked the first such impeachment and removal of a state elected official in South Dakota history.

This past year, led in part by Crabtree, the Legislature took on one of the state’s most controversial issues: a proposed pipeline that would go through many South Dakota communities, transporting liquefied carbon dioxide gas from ethanol plants to an underground storage site. The proposal has raised thorny political questions about state vs. local control and landowner rights.

The Legislature passed a set of new pipeline laws and regulations in 2024; an attempt at a citizen veto of one of the laws, via a referendum on this year’s fall ballot, soon ensued. That veto referendum prevailed in November.

In an interview with CSG Midwest, Crabtree shared his perspective on legislating during turbulent times. Here are excerpts, with questions and answers lightly edited for clarity and brevity.

Q How have you applied that question of “What’s best for the team?” to your work in the Legislature and as a leader?

A It’s really knowing that when you’re working with folks, it’s about listening to them a lot more than



BIO-SKETCH: SOUTH DAKOTA SEN. CASEY CRABTREE

- ✓ was selected majority leader in late 2022 and served in this position in 2023 and 2024; previously was a majority whip for the Senate Republican Caucus
- ✓ has been a member of the South Dakota Senate since 2020
- ✓ serves as the director of economic development for Heartland Energy, a South Dakota-based, nonprofit public power company
- ✓ is a graduate of Northern State University in South Dakota, where he played football
- ✓ lives in the southeast South Dakota town of Madison with his wife, Ashley, and their two children: Casyn and Callan

“It’s not just listening. It’s working hard to understand exactly where your colleagues are coming from and what they want to achieve, and then pulling that together into a collective goal.”

you pushing your agenda. I’ll tell you flat out, too, it is not just listening. It’s working hard to understand exactly where your colleagues are coming from and what they want to achieve, and then pulling that together into a collective goal.

Q You led a supermajority caucus: 31 of 35 members of the Senate in 2024. What were some of the challenges in maintaining that collective or team goal with so many members and, seemingly, so much control?

A It’s not necessarily about agreeing on 100 percent of things, right? I lean on the Ronald Reagan quote quite a bit — the person who agrees with you 80 percent of the time is a friend, not a 20 percent traitor. So you’ve got to communicate that quite a bit, and communicate that we’ve got a common set of values. Then work toward our goals from there.

Q In terms of political leadership, who have been your role models, and why?

A Historically, South Dakota has had some fantastic governors to learn from. Gov. [George] Mickelson is one that sticks out to me. Gov. Mickelson died in a plane crash when I was fairly young. *[Editor’s note: Mickelson and other officials died in 1993 on their way home from Cincinnati in an effort to prevent a meat-packing plant from closing.]* He was really skilled at bringing all

people together. I’ve read a lot on him, talked to a lot of folks that had served with him and worked with him over the years. He’s one that sticks out in my mind.

Q You ascended quickly in leadership. How did your style evolve over this short period of time, from when you were majority whip in 2021 and 2022 to majority leader in 2023 and 2024?

A I’m probably quicker today to have a more direct conversation with somebody. We have 40 days in South Dakota to balance our budget, and every introduced bill gets a hearing in South Dakota. In this upcoming session, we’ll handle all that work in 38 days. So I’ve learned to probably be more direct in those conversations because I think that helps those other legislators who are working to meet our deadlines. But I try to do that while being conscientious of building our team and trying to keep everybody rolling toward a common agenda.

Q What did you learn about the legislative institution and your fellow legislators during the 2022 impeachment and removal of the state’s then attorney general?

A [It] was something that had never happened in our state’s history before. That’s one that you wish you didn’t have to go through,

but you’re elected to make a decision in those situations and I’m extremely confident that everybody did what was right. I’m proud of my colleagues for the way they handled themselves during that whole period.

They didn’t run right to the news and say all kinds of things; they studied the situation, they listened carefully, and then they made the decision that was best for the state of South Dakota and its people. *[Editor’s note: The attorney general was removed from office as the result of his actions related to a fatal car accident in which he was the driver.]*

Q This year, the Legislature passed bills to address a particularly contentious issue: the regulation of carbon pipelines. How would you describe your approach to policymaking on a high-profile topic like this one?

A The issue itself is somewhat emotional for folks, and I think my leadership style was much like this: Put emotions to the side and really deal with the facts of the situation. I think that’s a challenge, but if you want to lead, you’ve got to separate facts from emotion. By doing that, as you’re listening to every possible stakeholder, you can study the situation.

So we worked hard through something that’s a controversial and emotional subject. ...

It would have been very easy just to say, well, we’ll just do nothing and let turmoil continue to happen. My colleagues all came to the table, and we worked hard to try to find the best possible solution in a tough situation.

PROFILE: INDIANA HOUSE MINORITY FLOOR LEADER CHERRISH PRYOR



Longtime legislator talks about the 'core of what an elected official is supposed to do,' as well as why housing policy remains a focus of her legislative work

by Derek Cantù (dcantu@csq.org)

When thinking back on a valued legislative accomplishment, Cherrish Pryor tells the story of a bill she worked on for a constituent, a mother who tragically lost her son only weeks away from his high school graduation.

When thinking ahead to a policy priority for 2025, the Indianapolis legislator talks about what she has heard and learned about the rise of investor-owned purchases of single-family homes, and the impact that this trend is having on residents and neighborhoods in her city.

Pryor also speaks about what she sees as an everyday responsibility, and opportunity, beyond the legislative process: making government work better for her constituents.

"That's the core of what an elected official is supposed to do, not only pass laws that help people, but to be that conduit, through constituency services, to make sure that people are getting responses from agencies," Pryor says.

She has been doing it now for more than 15 years, first as a member of the City-County Council in Indianapolis and now as a member of the Indiana House.

FROM LEGISLATIVE INTERN TO LEGISLATIVE LEADER

Pryor got her start as a legislative intern and assistant for long-serving former Indiana Rep. Bill Crawford.

She then moved on to serve in various roles in local government, including as a legislative and public affairs director for the City-County Council, as chief deputy for the Marion County treasurer's office, and as real estate manager for the county auditor's office.

In some of these earlier staff positions, Pryor gained a deep understanding about property taxes and how they affect the lives of people and the success of communities. This early work cemented in her a legislative passion on the issue of property taxation, as well as housing.

"Everybody deserves housing that they can afford, that is safe, and that they can feel comfortable in," she says.

Pryor first joined the Indiana House in 2008, ascended to the position of Democratic floor leader a decade later, and has been continually elected to this leadership title by legislative colleagues ever since.

Pryor says she takes some of the same principles of good constituent relations to her role as a caucus leader. Take accountability for your actions, be open to feedback, and show an openness to listen and work hard on behalf of your legislative colleagues.



BIO-SKETCH: INDIANA REP. CHERRISH PRYOR

- ✓ has served as minority floor leader since 2018; first elected to the Indiana House in 2008
- ✓ previously served as a member of the Indianapolis City-County Council
- ✓ named a Legislator of the Year in 2023 by the National Black Caucus of State Legislators; she currently serves as the group's treasurer
- ✓ resides in Indianapolis, has been part of several of the city's civic organizations, and is an active member of her church
- ✓ has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Indiana University and a master's degree in public affairs from Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

"When my [caucus] colleagues are working on issues, I want to be someone they know is working as hard for them as I do for the constituents in my district."

She discussed her views on leadership, legislating and public service in a recent interview with CSG Midwest. Here are excerpts, with questions and answers lightly edited for clarity and brevity.

Q Which legislative victories from your tenure in office are you particularly proud of, and why?

A From the standpoint of property taxes, my freshman year I got a significant bill [HEA 1344 of 2009] passed. It was a bill to verify homestead deductions, and we needed it because we had people who had two or three homestead deductions on their property. Sometimes people had far more than that.

My bill provided a statewide homestead verification program, and that program for several years brought in millions of additional dollars to the local units of governments.

And then from a human standpoint, there was a particular piece of legislation that came about because of a situation here where a local high school student had died. He was a senior, and he was on track and getting ready to graduate. The school did not want to give that student his diploma. But the family really wanted their child to get their diploma. He had earned it, done all the work, basically, to get it.

I was able to get a law passed that said if a student is on track for graduating and getting a diploma, then the parents could petition the school and get a

diploma for their child [posthumously]. [Editor's note: This provision was included in HB 1384, passed in 2017.]

Q One of your priority issue areas this past legislative session was on fair housing practices. Can you talk about the work you're doing in this area and what you're trying to accomplish?

A One piece of legislation that I introduced [HB 1113], and that I will probably introduce again, deals with investors and trying to get a handle on investors that have been going into communities purchasing properties.

Oftentimes, they're overbidding people who are wanting to use those homes to actually live in. When these investors are bidding \$30,000 or \$40,000 over the asking price, and you're a family just starting out or a young person just wanting to live the American dream, then you're going to continually get outbid or outpriced.

Home ownership is really important to me. I am trying to figure out a way where we're not allowing blocks and blocks to be filled with investor-owned properties where people are renting properties, and where every year or two years the whole dynamic of the community or the neighborhood changes because renters are moving in and out all the time.

We want to provide stability in the neighborhoods and then also, quite frankly, provide stability of the housing market. [Editor's note: HB 1113 would put in

place new rules and restrictions on investors purchasing single-family residences.]

Q How do you view your role and work as part of your caucus leadership team?

A The one thing that is important to me as the Democratic floor leader is that if my colleagues have a concern or issue, they feel comfortable coming and talking to me about it. And when my colleagues are working on issues, I want to be someone they know is working as hard for them as I do for the constituents in my district.

Q You also have taken on a leadership role at the National Black Caucus of State Legislators. Can you describe how your participation with this group has influenced your work?

A I'm one of 150 in the Indiana General Assembly, so there's 150 very strong personalities and we all come with our different backgrounds. And with the National Black Caucus, you're having to deal with other people from other states who are sometimes at the top of leadership in their own states. Being able to navigate and come to a consensus with those individuals on difficult policies has been very beneficial to me. We're able to take wise feedback and guidance here in Indiana, and other states are able to get feedback and guidance based on what we're doing in Indiana.

SESSION RESOURCES FOR YOU: A REMINDER TO LEGISLATORS TO TAP INTO THE SERVICES OFFERED THROUGH CSG

As legislators and legislative leaders prepare for 2025 sessions, CSG Midwest stands ready to help through its support of the Midwestern Legislative Conference — a nonpartisan, binational group of all legislators from 11 Midwestern states and the province of Saskatchewan. The provinces of Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario are affiliate members of the MLC. Here are two services to keep in mind as you prepare for and begin a new legislative year.

CUSTOMIZED IN-STATE TRAINING

Through its Under the Dome initiative, the MLC brings customized, in-state training to legislators and legislative staff.

The idea for an Under the Dome workshop comes from legislators in each state or province. CSG Midwest then develops and delivers the programming — in a particular policy area, for example, or on a topic related to professional and leadership development or on an institutional issue in state legislatures.



Reflecting the MLC's nonpartisan structure and commitment, an Under the Dome program must get the bipartisan support of a state's legislative leaders before being brought to the capitol. (In many cases, the ideas for programming come from the leaders themselves.) If you are interested in partnering on an Under the Dome, contact CSG Midwest director Laura Tomaka at ltomaka@csq.org or 630.925.1922.

INDIVIDUALIZED RESEARCH ASSISTANCE

The Council of State Governments regularly fields research requests from legislators and legislative staff seeking comparative state information, laws and trends on a wide variety of subject areas. Requests are made in one of two ways: 1) Call CSG Midwest at 630.925.1922; or 2) Email our Information Request Helpline at csqm@csq.org.

CONGRATULATIONS TO 20 UNDER 40 AWARD RECIPIENTS FROM THE MIDWEST

Six legislators from the Midwest are among this year's recipients of a 20 Under 40 Leadership Award from The Council of State Governments. The award goes to 20 elected or appointed officials in state government, all under the age of 40, who exemplify strong leadership and a passion for public service. Of the winners from this region (pictured below), five are graduates of CSG Midwest's Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development: South Dakota Rep. Sydney Davis, Kansas Rep. Nick Hoheisel, Michigan Rep. Donovan McKinney, Wisconsin Sen. Mark Spreitzer and Illinois Rep. Maurice West.



Michigan Sen.
Mary Cavanagh



South Dakota Rep.
Sydney Davis



Kansas Rep.
Nick Hoheisel



Michigan Rep.
Donovan McKinney



Wisconsin Sen.
Mark Spreitzer



Illinois Rep.
Maurice West

IT'S A WRAP: JOIN COLLEAGUES FOR A SERIES OF POLICY-FOCUSED WEBINARS TO CLOSE THE YEAR

To cap the work they did over the course of this biennium, six policy committees of The Council of State Governments' Midwestern Legislative Conference are hosting a series of webinars in December for legislators, legislative staff and interested others. Registration is free and can be completed at csqmidwest.org. Here is a summary of the five end-of-the-biennium webinars:

- **Tuesday, Dec. 10** — Participants will explore policy considerations on water use and management as the region experiences growth in data centers, which need a considerable amount of water to operate. This webinar is being co-hosted by the MLC Energy and Environment Committee and the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus.
- **Wednesday, Dec. 11** — Hosted by the MLC Health and Human Services Committee, this webinar will look at state policies and laws that ensure quality legal representation for young people in child welfare systems.
- **Monday, Dec. 16** — How can states build new partnerships to provide comprehensive services to adolescents and lower incidences of violence? These questions will be explored in a webinar hosted by the MLC Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee.
- **Tuesday, Dec. 17** — Legal experts will provide an overview of what legislators should know about Indigenous treaty law and its implications for state and provincial partnerships with Indigenous nations.



There will be a particular emphasis on treaties related to water and the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin. This webinar is being co-hosted by the MLC Midwest-Canada Relations Committee and the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus.

• **Thursday, Dec. 19** — Experts from the Center on Rural Innovation will share insights on how policymakers can better identify workforce needs in rural communities, with a particular focus on tech-sector careers, and explain how to create and maintain a network of partners to train prospective workers. This webinar is being hosted by two MLC committees: Agriculture and Rural Affairs and Education and Workforce Development.

ABOUT THE MLC COMMITTEES

A bipartisan, binational group of state and provincial legislators from the Midwest serves on and leads the six MLC policy committees. They regularly produce policy resources for legislators and offer a mix of learning and networking opportunities, including in-person meetings, policy workshops and webinars.

PLANS FOR IMPROVED RAIL SERVICE IN MIDWEST GET BIG BOOST

The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Commission (MIPRC) has secured a federal grant to advance planning work for the long-term development of a regional passenger rail network.

MIPRC, formed by a compact agreement in 2000, receives secretariat services from CSG Midwest. With this new multi-year grant from the Federal Railroad Administration, MIPRC will be able to greatly enhance its mission of promoting, coordinating and supporting improvements in passenger rail service.

Three years ago, the FRA unveiled its long-term

Midwest Regional Rail Plan, which includes new interstate rail corridors and faster, more frequent train service to connect 12 Midwestern states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin. Each of these states are members of MIPRC or eligible to join the compact.

In support of the FRA plan, MIPRC will work with state departments of transportation to develop preliminary ridership and revenue forecasting for each planned corridor, an analysis of the economic impacts, and a strategy for building out the corridors in different phases.



REGIONAL COLLABORATION ENSURES SAFE SHIPMENTS OF WASTE

An interbranch, interstate group of state leaders gathered in October as part of an ongoing, CSG-led collaboration on the U.S. Department of Energy's transport of radioactive waste and materials through the Midwest, including possible future shipments of spent nuclear fuel from the region's nuclear power plants.

A mix of state legislators and executive branch officials serves on The Council of State Governments' Midwestern Radioactive Materials Transportation Committee.

The committee is the primary forum through which Midwestern states are involved in planning and preparing for DOE shipments. Its fall 2024 meeting was held in Bismarck, N.D.



As part of this year's meeting of the CSG Midwestern Radioactive Materials Transportation Committee, committee members learned about the work of the North Dakota Legislative Assembly's High-Level Radioactive Waste Advisory Council. Leading the discussion (and pictured above) were North Dakota Sens. Jim Roers and Dale Patten, North Dakota Rep. Jon Nelson, North Dakota state geologist Ed Murphy, and North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality director David Glatt.

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.

ALUMNI NOTES: THANK YOU TO OUR RETIRING GRADUATES

The end of the year marks the end of legislative service for these graduates of the Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development.

BILLD CLASS OF 1998

- Iowa Rep. Todd Taylor

BILLD CLASS OF 2000

- Indiana Rep. Robert Cherry

BILLD CLASS OF 2001

- Nebraska Sen. Ray Aguilar
- South Dakota Sen. Jean Hunhoff

BILLD CLASS OF 2007

- Wisconsin Rep. Joan Ballweg

BILLD CLASS OF 2008

- South Dakota Sen. Ryan Maher

BILLD CLASS OF 2011

- Kansas Sen. Jeff Longbine
- North Dakota Rep. Corey Mock

BILLD CLASS OF 2012

- South Dakota Sen. Jim Bolin
- South Dakota Rep. Kristin Conzet
- Iowa Rep. Joel Fry

BILLD CLASS OF 2013

- Illinois Rep. Kelly Burke

BILLD CLASS OF 2014

- Wisconsin Sen. Melissa Agard
- Kansas Rep. Susan Concannon
- Indiana Rep. Dennis Zent

BILLD CLASS OF 2015

- South Dakota Rep. Fred Deutsch
- Wisconsin Rep. Evan Goyke

BILLD CLASS OF 2016

- South Dakota Sen. Shawn Bordeaux
- Kansas Rep. Dennis "Boog" Highberger

BILLD CLASS OF 2017

- Iowa Sen. Jeff Edler
- North Dakota Rep. Shannon Roers Jones
- Nebraska Sen. Tony Vargas
- Nebraska Sen. Anna Wishart

BILLD CLASS OF 2018

- South Dakota Rep. Oren Lesmeister
- Nebraska Sen. Lou Ann Linehan
- South Dakota Sen. Reynold Nesiba

BILLD CLASS OF 2019

- Nebraska Sen. Lynne Walz

BILLD CLASS OF 2021

- South Dakota Sen. Bryan Breitling
- South Dakota Rep. Linda Duba
- Kansas Rep. John Eplee
- Indiana Rep. Chuck Goodrich
- Kansas Rep. Jason Probst
- North Dakota Sen. Jim Roers

BILLD CLASS OF 2022

- Michigan Rep. Abraham Aiyash
- Wisconsin Rep. Samba Baldeh
- Michigan Rep. Andrew Beeler
- South Dakota Rep. Becky Drury
- Kansas Rep. Christina Haswood
- South Dakota Sen. Erin Tobin

BILLD CLASS OF 2023

- Kansas Rep. William Clifford
- Wisconsin Rep. Donna Rozar

Q & A WITH BILLD ALUMNI: REFLECTIONS FROM THREE GRADUATES AT THE END OF THEIR LEGISLATIVE SERVICE

SOUTH DAKOTA SEN. JIM BOLIN | BILLD CLASS OF 2012 | SERVED 2009-2024

Law or legislative work I'm particularly proud of: "As far as laws, passing increased funding for roads in South Dakota in 2015. This was a very important bill that we got passed to increase the excise tax on cars from 3 percent to 4 percent, and then we also raised the gas tax by 6 cents. That has really helped maintain good roads in South Dakota. I sometimes jokingly say we don't dredge harbors here like you do in Savannah, Georgia, or in New Orleans, or in Galveston, Texas, but we do have to have good roads."

"Another one is the fact that over the last four years, we've had a tuition freeze. The Legislature has been able to fund extra money to the colleges and universities in our state, and it has allowed the Board of Regents to freeze tuition. That's resulted in some pretty large increases in student population."

How I'd like to be remembered as a legislator: "A thoughtful legislator. I'm generally on the conservative side of things, but I didn't let any group, or any organization, dominate or control me. I made up my own mind on issues and came to my own conclusions and voted my conscience. That's how I would like to be remembered."

Lessons I've learned on effective legislating: "Build relationships with other legislators, especially if you can cross the aisle. It's also important that you can become somewhat of an expert, or a reliable individual, on at least one major topic that the legislature deals with — whether it's tax policy, whether it's education, whether it's infrastructure. You probably should try to concentrate on one particular topic so that you can be a resource for other legislators."



ILLINOIS REP. KELLY BURKE | BILLD CLASS OF 2013 | SERVED 2011-2024

Law or legislative work I'm particularly proud of: "Near the beginning of my tenure, I got interested in ABLE accounts, something that was enacted federally [but required state implementation]. I was able to work with other folks in the legislature to create the framework where a person with disabilities could save money in their post-secondary life. Without these programs, these savings would have disqualified that person from receiving federal benefits. Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs (another BILLD Fellow) and his office got very interested in it and worked with us. Illinois basically created the pool [the National ABLE Alliance] where 18 other states have joined a consortium that represents more than one-quarter of the nation's ABLE-eligible population."

"One other thing, I've worked on a ton of budget issues. I was the appropriations chair during the budget impasse, which was not for the faint of heart. I look at where Illinois was 15 years ago financially, fiscally, and where we are now, we still have challenges, we still have things to do, but it's been amazing [progress]. I had a very small part, but it has been incredibly gratifying. And a part of that work was in higher education. A bipartisan group of us, after the impasse had ended, decided to put together what we called the higher education working group. We got numerous things accomplished through that group [new scholarship programs, improved application and financial aid processes, etc.]"

How I'd like to be remembered as a legislator: "As a hard worker. Somebody you could rely on to dig into the details and get the job done. Somebody with an open mind and an open door. A good friend."

Lessons I've learned on effective legislating: "My philosophy has become, 'Never burn a bridge.' I feel that bipartisanship has deteriorated over 14 years for a lot of different reasons. People were more willing to extend a hand and work across the aisle. The change could be because of the political climate; it could be that in Illinois, we've moved to a supermajority. But this philosophy is something that was reinforced with programs like BILLD and the Edgar Fellows program. These lessons were extremely valuable, and they help you get things done. I would urge people to not lose sight of that."



NORTH DAKOTA REP. COREY MOCK | CLASS OF 2011 | SERVED 2009-2024

Law or legislative work I'm particularly proud of: "While I've shaped major policies and cast 8,055 votes across eight regular and four special sessions, I'm most proud of my behind-the-scenes work that helped those who needed it most. A story that captures this perfectly:

In 2011, I used my knowledge of American Sign Language and connections to the deaf community to spearhead legislation requiring certification for sign language interpreters. Instead of taking credit, I asked Sen. Dave Oehlke, who represented the School for the Deaf's district, to be the primary sponsor. Through bipartisan collaboration and persistent refinement, we passed a bill that brought tears to its supporters' eyes. As [former] North Dakota Rep. Brynhild Haugland wisely said, 'Most any good thing can be accomplished eventually if you are not particular to who gets the credit.'"

How I'd like to be remembered as a legislator: "As a legislative institutionalist with insatiable curiosity; a passionate parliamentarian who guided colleagues regardless of party; and a colleague who brought depth, humor and warmth to the chamber. I believe in mixing serious work with tasteful shenanigans — the legislature needs both wisdom and wit."

Lessons I've learned on effective legislating: "In the legislature, as in kindergarten: share everything; play fair; clean up your own mess; apologize when you hurt someone; and remember to sing, dance, play and learn every day. The days are long, but the years are brief. And as my partner reminded me daily: "Play nicely with others."



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

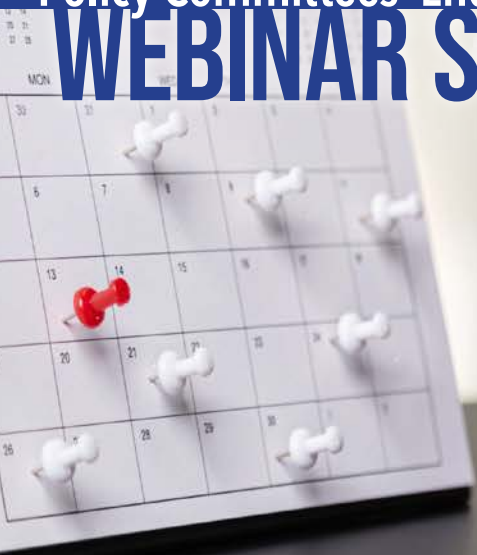
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Midwestern
Legislative
Conference

Midwestern Legislative Conference (MLC)
Policy Committees' End of Biennium

WEBINAR SERIES



TUES, DEC 10

11:00 a.m. EST
10:00 a.m. CST

Data Centers in the Midwest: Their Expected Growth and Potential Impacts on Water Use and Management

MLC Environment and Natural Resources Committee and the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus

WED, DEC 11

10:30 a.m. EST
9:30 a.m. CST

Seen and Heard: State Strategies to Ensure Quality Legal Representation for Youths in Child Welfare Systems

MLC Health and Human Services Committee

MON, DEC 16

2:00 p.m. EST
1:00 p.m. CST

Prevent Violence, Transform Young Lives: The Promise of Comprehensive Adolescent Services and the Role for States

MLC Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee

TUES, DEC 17

11:00 a.m. EST
10:00 a.m. CST

Indigenous Treaty Law in the U.S. and Canada: A Primer for State and Provincial Leaders

MLC Midwest-Canada Relations Committee and the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus

THURS, DEC 19

2:00 p.m. EST
1:00 p.m. CST

Tech and Workforce Development For Rural Regions: Building Collaborative, Community-Led Solutions

MLC Agriculture and Rural Affairs and the MLC Education and Workforce Development Committees

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CSG Midwest Office Staff

Laura A. Tomaka, Director
Tim Anderson, Director of Policy and Research
Mitch Arvidson, Senior Program Manager
Derek Cantù, Policy Analyst
Jenny Chidlow, Director of Operations
Jon Davis, Policy Analyst and Communications Specialist
Cheryln Gnadt, Graphic Designer and Marketing Specialist

Katie Kelly, Development Manager
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The Council of State Governments
Midwestern Office
701 E. 22nd Street, Suite 110 | Lombard, IL 60148-5095
Phone: 630.925.1922
csgm@csg.org | csgmidwest.org
Follow us on X: @CSGMidwest