

People & Politics



The flag over Mr. Jefferson's Capitol flew at half staff for two days in April to honor **Bruce Jamerson**, clerk of the Virginia House of Delegates, who died on Easter. He was 54. He was 34 when first elected clerk, making him the youngest person to hold the position since 31-year-old William Henry Manning in 1899. He spent his entire professional life in the halls of the House of Delegates. He started as a 17-year-old high school student and met his wife, who was working as a page, there. Only the 20th person to serve as clerk, Jamerson's professional reputation was esteemed. He issued a controversial ruling in 1998 against a Republican motion to seat three GOP members whose elections had not yet been certified, which allowed Democrats to re-elect Speaker Thomas Moss Jr. When Republicans took control of the House the next year, they re-elected Jamerson to make an orderly transition.

Jamerson worked under four speakers and helped plan the inaugurations of five governors. But his lasting legacy was in the bricks and mortar of the 223-year-old building Thomas Jefferson designed, and which houses the oldest legislative body in the United States. He provided the oversight, along with Senate Clerk **Susan Clarke Schaar**, of the \$105 million renovation completed in 2007, just days before Queen Elizabeth addressed the delegates during the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown. Jamerson was seated at her right.

Bruce embodied so much of what is good and noble about public service," said Speaker **William J. Howell**. "He was a consummate professional who understood well that the first rule of success is hard work. That he always did without fail, with a warm and friendly demeanor and out of an abiding respect for every member, staff colleague or visitor to Mr. Jefferson's Capitol." Governor Bob McConnell, who served as a member of the House for 14 years, said Jamerson "knew the history of Jefferson's Capitol, the Square that surrounded it and the individuals who worked in it better than anyone else. He loved his work and he loved our Commonwealth."

Jamerson was president of NCSL's American Society of Legislative Clerks and Secretaries in 2004-05 and chair of the Virginia Capitol Foundation from 2003-05. When the House returned the day after his death for a session on redistricting, Jamerson's lectern was draped in black crepe. Both the House and Senate adjourned in his honor.

He loved this building like it was his home," said Schaar, "and it was."

The domino effect in Arizona has put a new leader at the speaker's podium. Representative **Andy Tobin** was elected by his colleagues at the end of April to replace **Kirk Adams**, who resigned from the Legislature to run for Congress. That seat opened up when U.S. Representative Jeff Flake—whose uncle, Jake, was speaker of the Arizona House from 2003 to 2004—decided to run for the U.S. Senate when Senator John Kyl announced he would not seek reelection. Speaker **Tobi Edits** had been majority leader since late 2010. Representative **Steve Court** beat out two rivals—Representatives **David Gowan** and **Russ Jones**—for the majority leader position.

advanced degree in chemical engineering from Brigham Young University, and spent his life as an engineer, farmer, rancher and inventor. "Dennis Stowell was remarkably intelligent and personable," said Senate President **Michael Waddoups**. "We will miss his good cheer, his analytical capabilities and his strong convictions."

It's spelled out in the constitution, but not since the late 1800s has a New Hampshire legislative committee heard a citizen "redress of grievance," until now. House Speaker **William O'Brien** named a special Redress of Grievances Committee to hear a case against a school teacher who allegedly threatened a student's life if he didn't finish a class he needed to graduate, and three other citizen disputes. The boy's father demanded a public apology, but both the police department and the school district investigated the allegation, said it had no merit and denounced the committee for conducting a public hearing on a private matter.

Utah Senator **Dennis Stowell** died in April of complications from cancer. He was 66. Stowell's public service career spanned 25 years. Before his election to the Senate in 2006, where he served as vice chair of the Appropriations Committee, he served as mayor and county commissioner in his hometown. Stowell had an

Illinois' pension fund is woefully underfunded, with assets \$185.6 million short of liabilities, according to A Better Government Association. The group found that 27 of 286 retired officeholders are drawing pensions of more than \$100,000 a year, some while holding down other jobs. Former Senator **Arthur Berman** leads the pack. His combined pension, from 31 years in the General Assembly (which ended in 2000) and a later job with the Chicago Public Schools, is \$203,428 a year. Former Governor **Jim Edgar** receives \$134,843 from the state for his service between 1991 and 1999, along with his more than \$176,000 salary from his current job. Former Senate President **Emil Jones** is also on the list. Lawmakers passed pension reform legislation last year, but it won't affect current pension recipients or some older, current officeholders, who will get a 3 percent increase each year if they retire at age 60 or older. That includes 69-year-old **Michael Madigan**, speaker of the House for some 30 years.



Are We Prepared?

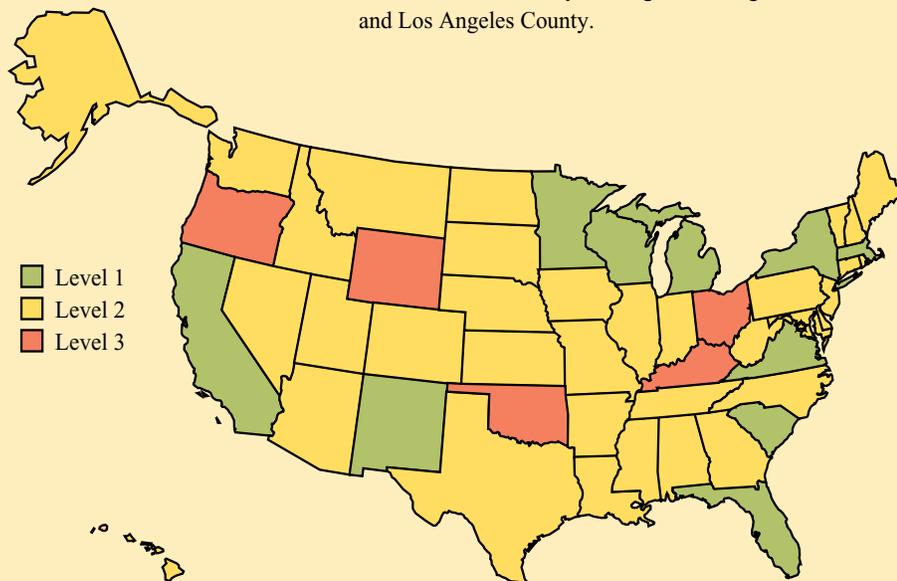
The United States manufactures and imports tens of thousands of toxic chemicals every year, making it potentially vulnerable to a terrorist attack or accidental spill, with deadly consequences.

State public health laboratories often are the first line of defense in responding to chemical emergencies. They help pinpoint the chemical involved and identify possible victims to target treatment, ease concerns, guide emergency response and save lives. Despite an increase in federal funding for public health laboratories following Sept. 11, 2001, appropriations in the last few years have been cut back, generating concern among lawmakers about how prepared the country is for chemical terrorism. The decrease in funding has caused workforce shortages, hamstrung laboratories' ability to train staff, and delayed the purchase and maintenance of critical equipment.

Fifty-four public health laboratories participate in the chemical side of the Laboratory Response Network, a national network of about 150 labs established by the CDC in 1999 to enhance the nation's ability to respond to both biological and chemical terrorism. These laboratories are classified by their ability to respond to an emergency locally, nationally or both. Level 3 laboratories are able to collect, store and ship specimens. Level 2 labs can detect human exposure to a wide range of chemicals. Level 1 labs—the most sophisticated—can analyze large numbers of samples and detect a wide range of chemical exposures.

PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORIES

The level of each state's lab in the Laboratory Response Network-Chemical. There are additional laboratories in New York City, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles County.



Source: Association of Public Health Laboratories, 2011.

Healthier Nation



There's a new tool to identify—and address—costly health care issues. It's called "Healthy People 2020," a 10-year national plan to improve Americans' health by shifting the focus from treating diseases to preventing them.

The plan was developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services with input from public health experts, government officials, more than 2,000 organizations, and comments from the public. It contains public health goals in 42 areas, ranging from heart disease and cancer, to diabetes and immunizations. It also aims at reducing illnesses, disabilities and premature deaths.

The national initiative has been around since 1980, when "Healthy People 1990" was released. What's new about the 2020 version is a focus on identifying, measuring and reducing health disparities by looking at a whole range of personal, social, economic and environmental factors that influence a person's health. Among the 13 new topic areas are dementias, genomics and emergency planning.

At least eight states have introduced measures this year addressing some of the Healthy People goals, although none has yet passed. New Mexico considered a memorial to align the state's health objectives with the national goals. California lawmakers looked at a bill to promote breast-feeding based on a "Healthy People 2020" goal, and the Hawaii Legislature focused on the plan's objective to reduce pre-term births.

Funding is available to states to incorporate national strategies into their health planning.

SL ONLINE

Check out NCSL's new webpage on Healthy People 2020 at www.ncsl.org/magazine.

Recall Season in Wisconsin

For much of American history, the recall has lurked quietly in state constitutions, rarely trotted out for legislators or state-wide officials. But that's about to change in Wisconsin.

Infuriated by Republican senators' votes in favor of Governor Scott Walker's effort to limit the influence of public employee unions, Democrats launched petitions against the eight Republicans eligible for recall; by May 4, six had been filed. Republicans, too, are outraged. They're mad that Democrats fled to Illinois to forestall a vote on the union bill and started petitions against eight of them. Three had been filed at press time. The total number of recall elections is like to stay at nine, but could climb as high as 10 (one petition against a Democrat is still active.).

These 16 lawmakers were last elected in 2008. Wisconsin's law requires that an official be in office for a year before a recall campaign can be launched, so November is the earliest date petitions could be circulated against the remaining 17 senators who, along with the governor, were elected in 2010. Whether recall proponents can keep voters engaged until then remains to be seen, but they say they're launching a recall petition against the governor and have already begun fund-raising for it.

Assuming all of the petitions have a sufficient number of valid signatures, a recall election will be held for the first eight petitions filed on July 12, with the ninth (against Republican Senator Rob Cowles) coming later. The incumbent will automatically be a candidate, and if more than one challenger files, the first election will be treated as a primary. A second election between the top-two vote getters would be held four weeks later.

Never have so many legislators faced recall at the same time. Twenty efforts to recall state legislators have succeeded in triggering an election, resulting in only 13 legislators ever being recalled in American history. In Michigan, two Democratic senators were recalled in 1983, which tipped the balance of the Senate to the Republicans, where it has stayed ever since. In Wisconsin, if Democrats are successful at recalling three Republican senators and replacing them with Democrats, control of the Wisconsin Senate would switch from Republican to Democratic.

The Battle of the Bulb

Lighting consumes more than 15 percent of all the electricity we use at home. That's why the inefficient incandescent light bulb is under attack. About 90 percent of the total power it consumes is wasted as heat instead of light.

The federal Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 requires Americans to switch to more efficient light bulbs by 2012. Specifically, 100 watt bulbs will need to be 30 percent more efficient by Jan. 1, 2012, followed by 75 watt bulbs the following year, and 40 and 60 watt bulbs in 2014. The lower wattage bulbs will use approximately 30 percent less energy than the old ones and will shine for at least 1,000 hours. We'll be changing light bulbs less frequently, lowering energy costs and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as well.

The law does not ban incandescent bulbs, nor does it require people to buy only spiral compact fluorescent bulbs. New incandescent halogen bulbs will be available when the law goes into effect, and they look exactly the same as the current ones. In fact, they are already being sold in California, which has started adapting to national standards. The state even moved its required transition to January 2011, a year earlier than the federal deadline.

At the other end of the spectrum are Georgia, Minnesota, South Carolina and Texas. Some lawmakers in these states have voiced their apprehension about the federal government interfering with their citizens' right to buy the bulbs of their choice. They have introduced legislation that would exempt traditional incandescent light bulbs manufactured within their states from federal efficiency requirements.



Collective Bargaining Bills Abound

Although Indiana, Ohio and Wisconsin have garnered the lion's share of media attention on collective bargaining, interest in the issue extends far beyond those battleground states. As of early May, 792 bills had been introduced in all 50 states so far this year. More than 500 of them seek to curb the activities of public sector unions and workers, including state employees, teachers, firefighters, police and transit workers. The following 14 states have enacted laws, and some passed more than one bill.

- ◆ **Arizona:** Limits employees' rights to picket and strike. Allows bidders on public contracts to not enter into agreements with unions.
- ◆ **Colorado:** Requires all public procurement contracts to be open to the public.
- ◆ **Idaho:** Limits union rights in teacher contracts and changes salary and evaluation provisions. Prohibits bidders on public works contracts from using union dues as a wage subsidy.
- ◆ **Indiana:** Limits the collective bargaining rights of teachers.
- ◆ **Michigan:** Allows the state to take control of local governments and appoint an emergency manager with authority to amend or terminate collective bargaining agreements.
- ◆ **Montana:** Lengthens the time miners can work, including the hours under collective bargaining agreements.
- ◆ **New Hampshire:** Repeals the law that continued public employee agreements and offered dispute resolution.
- ◆ **New Jersey:** Establishes arbitration and impasse procedures for police officers and firefighters.

- ◆ **Ohio:** Limits the collective bargaining rights of public employees.
- ◆ **Oklahoma:** Prohibits minors from joining unions without their parents' consent.
- ◆ **South Carolina:** Guarantees a secret ballot when establishing a union.
- ◆ **Utah:** Prohibits school employees from using paid leave for union activities. Requires unions to reimburse school districts for the costs of their activities. Requires unions, upon written notice, to quit collecting dues.
- ◆ **Wisconsin:** Limits collective bargaining for public employees (currently enjoined by court order).
- ◆ **Wyoming:** Prohibits using union dues for political contributions.

ONLINE

NCSL has created a database of collective bargaining legislation. Bills can be tracked by state, topic, sponsor, title, bill number or key word. Check it out at www.ncsl.org/magazine.



Revenue Review

The health of state revenues depends on where you live. Based on responses to NCSL's March budget update survey, several legislative fiscal office directors believe revenues have hit bottom and are starting to stabilize and even grow, while others continue to see declining revenues.

WHERE STATES ARE

PERSONAL INCOME TAX COLLECTIONS

(FY 2011)

22

Above Estimate

17

On Target

3

Below Estimate

GENERAL SALES TAX

16

Above Estimate

21

On Target

4

Below Estimate

CORPORATE INCOME TAX

11

Above Estimate

18

On Target

15

Below Estimate

Note: States did not respond to all questions. Source: NCSL State Budget Update: March 2011.