January 2020

THE FISCAL LINK: Your Online Connection to the Latest Fiscal Information in the States

NCSL & National Association of Legislative Fiscal Offices (NALFO) Updates

✓ Save the Date for Staff Hub ATL 2020! NALFO will be partnering with five other professional staff associations this fall for its annual professional development seminar. Join your colleagues in Atlanta Oct. 7-9 for this dynamic gathering of legislative staff.

✓ The Fiscal Affairs Program created a webpage highlighting how states tax e-cigarettes and vaping products. As of early 2020, 21 states and D.C. have enacted taxes on these alternative nicotine products.

✓ NCSL’s Andrew Smalley authored a LegisBrief, “Strengthening Student Loan Oversight.” In 2019 alone, nearly 20 states introduced legislation to modify student loan servicing oversight.

✓ NCSL’s Elections & Redistricting Program created 50-state census profiles. These profiles look at key census data and what it means for each state politically and economically, and what each state is doing to encourage a full and complete census count.

State News & Reports

✓ Alabama. The Legislative Services Agency’s Fiscal Division published the 2020 A Legislator’s Guide to Alabama’s Taxes. This report contains detailed information on each tax, such as a five-year history of collections, legislative history, and brief descriptions of comparable tax information in surrounding states.

✓ Arizona. The Joint Legislative Budget Committee released its Monthly Fiscal Highlight for January. According to the brief, December revenues were $52.6 million above the enacted budget forecast.

✓ California. The Legislative Analyst’s Office published another special report on the state’s Financial Information System project. The project started in 2005 with the goal of replacing the state’s “aging and decentralized” financial IT systems.
✓ **Georgia.** The House Budget & Research Office published a *policy brief* on homestead exemptions. These exemptions are a commonly used method to provide property tax relief to residents with rising home values.

✓ **Maryland.** The Department of Legislative Services released a new report, “Effect of Long-term Debt on the Financial Condition of the State.”

✓ **Mississippi.** The Legislative Budget Office released its FY 2021 Legislative Budget Recommendation Report. FY 2021 revenues are projected to be 0.5% below the revised estimate for FY 2020.

**Federal News & Reports**

✓ The Congressional Budget Office examined the tax benefit of having dependents and the distribution of that benefit under current law in 2019 and in 2026.

✓ The Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City reviewed how spending patterns and the role of inflation affect the actual costs of living for younger versus older households.

✓ The Bureau of Economic Analysis released an article on real gross domestic product (GDP) in the third quarter of 2019. It found GDP increased in 49 states and the District of Columbia. Texas was the fastest growing state at 4%.

**Other Items of Interest**

✓ The Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center now offers *Monthly Revenue Highlights* that provide the latest information on state revenues. The most recent two-pager showed continued growth in overall state tax revenues. For a more comprehensive analysis of trends, the institute produces *State Tax and Economic Review* quarterly reports. You can gain access to full datasets through its *subscription service*, available free to state fiscal staff.

✓ The Brookings Institute published a report assessing federal tax policies and how they relate to growth and income distribution.

✓ The National Association of State Procurement Officials released a graphic displaying the top 10 priorities of state procurement for 2020.

**Additional Resources**

✓ Visit the [NCSL Fiscal Affairs Program homepage](#).
✓ Visit the [NALFO homepage](#).
✓ Consult a list of legislative fiscal offices that maintain a webpage.
✓ Join [NALFO’s Listserv](#).
If you would like to be added to the distribution list for The Fiscal Link, or know a legislator or legislative staff person who should be added, just ask Savannah Gilmore or Erica MacKellar.

NOTE: Links to external websites and reports are for information purposes only and do not indicate NCSL’s endorsement of the content on those sites.