Your online connection to the latest fiscal information in the states

The Fiscal Link

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

- NCSL’s new Center for Results-Driven Governing opened its doors this week with the release of its flagship report *The ABCs of Evidence-Informed Policymaking: Principles and Strategies for State Policymakers*.

- Kick off NCSL’s upcoming five-part webinar series, *Budgets, Taxes, and Pensions, Oh My!* with a webinar on public pension management.

- Miss out on Base Camp? Read our complete coverage of the sessions and speakers, including Moody’s Analytics economist Mark Zandi, coronavirus expert Dr. Deborah Birx and White House economic advisor Larry Kudlow.

- NCSL took a deep dive into the state CRF allocations for schools and colleges.

*October Fiscal Brief*

**Broadband Spending: Bridging the Digital Divide**

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on distance learning and working from home has illuminated the digital divide - the gap between those who have access to high speed internet and devices and those who do not. October’s Fiscal Brief provides examples of how states are using their COVID-19 relief fund allocation for broadband and technology purposes to help people working remotely, patients getting treatment through telehealth and students attending school online.

Read More
**NCSL in DC**

**Congress Passes Stopgap Funding Bill to Avoid Shutdown**

Congress is passed a continuing resolution (CR), on Wednesday that would fund the federal government at fiscal year 2020 levels through Dec. 11. Without H.R. 8337, which provides almost $8 billion in food assistance programs and relief to farmers, federal agency operations would cease today. The CR includes provisions that would extend for one year the surface transportation authorization (FAST Act), which had been set to expire at the end of September, and authorize the transfer of nearly $14 billion to ensure the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund with $10.4 billion for the highway account and $3.2 billion for the transit account. NCSL had strongly advocated for the inclusion of this extension, urging congressional leadership to ensure the authorization did not lapse. While there were early reports that the House version of the CR could contain some state and local aid, no additional funding was included. H.R. 8337 also extends flood insurance programs and several health provisions. Read more.

**Read More**

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**State News and Reports**

- **California** | The Legislative Analyst’s Office posted an examination of the pandemic’s effect on state transportation revenues and how estimated declines will impact major transportation programs.

- **District of Columbia** | The Office of the Budget Director released a series of reports highlighting and explaining the investments the D.C. Council made through the FY 2021 budget, with particular attention to items that promote racial equity and justice.

- **Oregon** | In a budget information report, the Legislative Fiscal Office analyzed funding for and costs of fire protection and firefighting.
• **West Virginia** | In a [review](#), the Legislative Auditor Performance Evaluation and Research Division recommended that the legislature consider terminating the Public Port Authority’s existence.

**Federal News and Reports**

• According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis state personal income increased 34.2% at an annual rate in the second quarter of 2020.

• The Congressional Budget Office [reports](#) that the federal debt is expected to increase to 195% of gross domestic product by 2050. The ballooned projection mostly reflects the budgetary effects of legislation enacted to address the pandemic.

**Other Items of Interest**

• Moody’s Analytics [reports](#) that the economic outlook has marginally improved since June but warns of a double-dip recession if state and local governments do not receive additional stimulus.

• Relying on data and evidence to make spending decisions—which has proved useful in times of prosperity—is critical now during a recession. A [new report](#) from The Pew Charitable Trusts shares four strategies to help state and local leaders make strategic, targeted decisions in this time of fiscal distress.

**The Fiscal Link Bonus Reel**

• Webinar | NCSL: [Green Means Go? What’s Next for a New Federal Transportation Infrastructure Package?](#)

• Webinar | Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy: [What’s Tax Got to Do With It?](#)

• Virtual Meeting Presentation | Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis: [COVID-19 and the U.S. Economy: Progress on Health and Incomes](#)

**Additional Resources**

- Visit the [NCSL Fiscal Affairs Program homepage](#).
- Visit the [NALFO homepage](#).
- Consult a [list of legislative fiscal offices](#) that maintain webpages.
- 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 Emily Maher 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.

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