CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS

1. “Measuring elections: data, not anecdotes.” The Canvass. NCSL. March 2013. 6 pg. (NCSL has taken the measure of the Elections Performance Index, evaluated Evaluating Elections, and then done a quick survey of the many ways in which the states are already helping themselves make better policy choices when it comes to election administration.)

2. Shanton, Karen. “Voter verification without ID documents.” Legisbrief. Vol. 21. No. 15. April 2013. 2 pg. (Not all states have followed the lead of requiring some type of ID verification at the polls; in at least 20 states, voters can cast a ballot in person on election day without showing an ID document.) VF: Election procedure.

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

3. “Kids count in Missouri.” 2012 data book. The state of our state’s children. Collaborative project of Partnership for Children, Children’s Trust Fund, The Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis at the University of Missouri, and more than 20 public and private organizations across the state. 173 pg. (The annual Kids count in Missouri data book documents the status of children in Missouri’s 114 counties and the City of St. Louis.)

4. Brown, Sarah Alice. “Kids are not adults.” State Legislatures. Vol. 39. No. 4. April 2013. Pg. 20-23. (Brain research is providing new insights into what drives teenage behavior, moving lawmakers to rethink policies that treat them like adults.)


6. Clemmitt, Marcia. “Homeless students.” CQ Researcher. Vol. 23. No. 13. April 5, 2013. Pg. 305-322. (Advocates for the homeless say more needs to done to make sure they graduate and that the root causes of homelessness-poverty and a lack of affordable housing-have not been adequately addressed.)

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES


ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT


EDUCATION

10. Ujifusa, Andrew. “‘Parent Trigger’ laws catching fresh wave.” Education Week. Vol. 32. No. 26. March 27, 2013. Pg. 23-27. (A ‘parent trigger’ is a legal maneuver through which parents can change the administration of a poorly performing public school—most notably, by transforming it into a charter school.)

11. Griffith, Michael. “State pre-K funding: 2012-13 school year.” ECS. P-3. April 2013. 11 pg. (An analysis conducted by the Education Commission of the States (ECS) found that the majority of state policymakers around the country have spared pre-K funding from the chopping block, and in about half of the states, increased funding—many substantially.) VF: Education-early childhood.


15. Carpenter, John. “Is affordable higher education a moral imperative for the state?” Illinois Issues. Vol. XXXIX. No. 4. April 2013. Pg. 20-22. (The price of higher education, long a crucial rung on the ladder of opportunity, has risen so dramatically in our generation that it can hardly be considered an affordable option.)


17. Ben-Asher, Noa. “The lawmaker family.” Washington University Law Review. Vol. 90. No. 2. 2012. Pg, 363-420. (There are increasing conflicts over families trying to “opt out” of various legal structures, especially public school education. This article shows that the position of U.S. courts on opting-out conflicts has shifted dramatically over the 20th century; in the early part of the century, parents mostly prevailed in such conflicts, while today, the state typically prevails.)

FINANCE & REVENUE


FIREARMS


HEALTH, WELFARE & SOCIAL SERVICES


INSURANCE


MOTOR VEHICLES


PENSIONS & RETIREMENT


27. Sanford, Paula & Joshua Franzel. “How to ‘DB-ize’ your supplemental DC retirement plan. Government and Finance Review. Vol. 29. No. 2. April 2013. Pg. 14-20. (Supplemental defined contribution plans-plans that are not intended to be the primary retirement savings vehicle for employees-will be more prominent than previously.)


30. “State & local pensions. An overview of funding issues and challenges.” Center for State & Local Government Excellence. Jan. 2013. 8 pg. (This primer lays out key facts about public pension plans, how they compare with the private sector and what kind of reforms are taking place to restore pension plan health.) VF: Public employee retirement systems.

31. “Pension funding: a guide for elected officials.” Report from the Pension Funding Task Force. 2013. 7 pg. (This report concludes that the most important step for local and state governments is to take their pension funding policy on an actuarially determined contribution (ADC,) VF. Public employee retirement systems.

PRIVACY


33. “Drone use, restrictions now on radar of many state legislatures.” Stateline Midwest. Vol. 22. No. 3. March 2013. Pg. 12. (As part of what the American Civil Liberties Union calls “an unprecedented surge of activity” to address the domestic use of drones, legislators in three Midwestern states were considering new privacy protection as of late Feb.)
RESEARCH

34. Mejeur, Jeanne. “How to score a perfect 10.” State Legislatures. Vol. 39. No. 4. April 2013. Pg. 32-34. (To evaluate research and sources of information, consider the answers to these 10 questions.)

STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENT


39. “Minnesota goes from paper to plastic with tax refunds on debit cards.” Stateline Midwest. Vol. 22. No. 3. March 2013. Pg. 12. (Starting next year, Minnesota will begin issuing individual income-tax refunds via debit cards instead of paper checks; state officials say the transition will save about $400,000, reduce check fraud and deliver refunds to taxpayers a month earlier.)

TAXATION


TECHNOLOGY ISSUES

41. “Broadband expansion.” Congressional Digest. Vol. 92. No. 4. April 2013. Pg. 1-32. (This issue discusses how best to balance private-sector investment with government intervention to ensure that all Americans have access to modern telecommunications technology.)


TRANSPORTATION

43. “Pumped up.” Clark, Korey. Capitol Journal. Vol. XXI. No. 11. Pg. 1-3. (States—even some controlled by usually tax-averse Republicans—are opting to increase gas taxes and other fees to provide funding for transportation projects.)

VETERANS