TRENDS AND TRANSITIONS



People & Politics





New York Senator Dale Volker

Volker, is retiring after 38 years in the Legislature. A lawyer and former police officer, Volker was first elected to the Assembly in 1972, winning the seat held by his father for 22 years. He later won a Senate special election, and became one of the most influential senators in Albany. "Over the past 38 years as an elected official, I have always put the people over politics," he said. Volker was praised by colleagues on both sides of the aisle for his integrity, hard work and dedication.

The oldest member of the Texas Legislature in a primary run-off in April. Representative **Delwin Jones**, 86, had served more some 30 years in the Legislature—from 1965-1973 as a Democrat, and as a Republican from 1989 to now. Jones provoked GOP conservatives by joining with 10 other House Republicans to oust Speaker Tom Craddick last year and help elect Joe Straus speaker. Perry is a political newcomer who was inspired by the Tea Party movement to run. He has no Democratic opposition in the general election. "Anybody who has farmed in West Texas

knows that this is like another hailstorm,"
Jones says. "You get over it."

a 23-year veteran of the Legislature, suffered from diabetes and chronic kidney disease. So when it reached the point she needed a kidney transplant, her donor was the woman who sits next to her on the House floor—Assistant Clerk C.J. Leong. Leong had offered to drive her boss to the medical center for classes about treatment and options and became interested in becoming a donor. Without telling Mau-Shimizu, Leong went through the process of seeing if she was a match. She was. The operations were performed in September, and there have been no complications. Now they are linked not only by their profession, but for life by their kidneys.

It's been 40 years since Richard Hollington Jr. served in the Ohio House of Representatives. But he's back. Hollington, who served from 1967 to 1970, agreed to return on a temporary basis. He is replacing former Representative Matthew Dolan, who left to pursue a county office. House Republican Leader Bill Batchelder talked the 77-year-old Hollington into another, albeit shortened,

freshman term—he is sitting in only until the end of the year. "I'm sitting in about the same seat that I sat in 40 years ago," he said. "It hasn't changed a bit around here."

eorgia Senator **Preston Smith** was stripped of his chairmanship of the powerful Judiciary Committee after he refused to go along with a Republican caucus position in favor of a tax on hospitals that would help fill a \$600 million gap in Medicaid funding. Smith voted against the bill, as did Senator **Mitch Seabaugh**, who resigned his position as whip. The Senate Republican Caucus unanimously elected Senator **John Wiles** majority whip. Smith, the youngest member of the Senate, announced he will run for attorney general.

The Florida House decided to send its term-limited speaker out in style. They wheeled a red Harley Davidson into the chamber for the motorcycle-loving **Larry Cretul** as "Easy Rider" played on the sound system during a going away ceremony. The bike was just a prop, though. Cretul owns his own Harley. But members did give him a helmet signed by his House colleagues, a special tag that reads SPEAKER, and leather jackets for him and his wife.



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CHINA WINS!

The growing trade deficit between the United States and China eliminated or displaced an estimated 2.4 million jobs in America between 2001 and 2008, according to a new report from the Economic Policy Institute.

The report, "Unfair China Trade Costs Local Jobs," shows that every state, as well as Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico, suffered job losses because of the trade imbalance.

California has lost 370,000 jobs, followed by Texas, New York, Illinois and Florida, which all lost more than 100,000 jobs to China. As a share of total state employment, New Hampshire has lost the most, followed by North Carolina, Massachusetts, California and Oregon.

Most jobs have been lost because of the growing imports of computers, electronic equipment and parts.





Source: Economic Policy Institute Briefing Paper #258, "Unfair China Trade Costs Local Jobs," May 23, 2010, page 12. Based on EPI analysis of Census Bureau, International Trade Commission, and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

CHECK OUT More information on the jobs lost in "Unfair China Trade Costs Local Jobs" at www.ncsl.org/magazine.



n recent years, the drug Salvia divinorum, or Salvia, has gained the attention of state legislators. It's an herb related to mint, and native to parts of Mexico, where it has been used as part of indigenous religious rituals. Common ways of ingesting it include infusing it into a tea, smoking dried leaves and chewing it.

In the United States, the use of Salvia is most common among 18- to 25-year-olds and to a much lesser extent among younger adolescents. The psychoactive effects of Salvia are hallucinogenic and vary based on the method of ingestion. For example, smoking Salvia can lead to strong, instantaneous effects, whereas chewing it or drinking tea can lead to longer lasting, but milder, reactions. Some common effects include uncontrollable laughter, visions, feelings of sadness and loss of physical coordination.

So far, there has been limited study into the long-term effects of Salvia, its potential for addiction or abuse, or its potential medicinal benefits. Initial studies have found that, since Salvia increases dopamine levels in the brain, it contains the potential to be addictive. Other studies, though, have found that Salvia may have some medicinal value in treating gastrointestinal disorders.

No federal laws control or regulate the distribution of Salvia. Since 2006, lawmakers in 20 states, however, have passed laws ranging from banning anyone from selling it to minors to outlawing it entirely. Several states have classified Salvia as a Schedule 1 substance, modeled after the federal Controlled Substances Act, where Schedule 1 substances are considered to have a high potential for dependency and no accepted medical use.

STATES WITH SALVIA LAWS

California	Maine	Ohio
Delaware	Maryland	Oklahoma
Florida	Mississippi	South Dakota
Illinois	Missouri	Tennessee
Kansas	Nebraska	West Virginia
Kentucky	North Carolina	Wisconsin
Louisiana	North Dakota	

CHECK OUT state laws dealing with salvia at www.ncsl.org/ magazine.

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TRENDS AND TRANSITIONS

Battle Over Bottles

Over the last few years, consumers across the country have started going green by recycling, driving hybrid vehicles and bagging their groceries in reusable sacks. What kind of beverage to drink and how it's bottled have also been a focus of consumers who are concerned about limiting their carbon footprint, as evidenced by the increasing sales of aluminum water bottles and the push to drink tap water.

Now, a new study by Quantis International shows drinking bottled water might not be that bad after all. The study, released earlier this year, compared the environmental impacts of water and other beverages, including filtered and unfiltered tap water and the use of reusable plastic, steel and aluminum containers. The overall conclusion of the study was that water, no matter how it is packaged, has the least environmental impact compared to the other beverages in the study, such as juice, beer and soda.

According to the study, water represents

41 percent of a consumer's total beverage consumption, but represents just 12 percent of a consumer's impact on climate change. On the other hand, the study showed that, all together, milk, coffee, beer, wine and juice make up 28 percent of a consumer's total beverage consumption, but represent 58 percent of climate change impact.

The difficulty in making these comparisons is that each type of beverage requires different kinds of containers. Carbonated beverages such as soda and beer can't be bottled in thin plastic like the kind used to bottle water. Juices have special bottling requirements to maintain safety and quality.

The good news is that plastic beverage bottles are growing lighter. Beverage companies are continually improving bottle designs and the recyclability of their packaging. They have made closures and labels recyclable and removed inks and materials that are not.

State legislatures have weighed in on recycling and green efforts as well. A new California law will restore and protect the California Beverage Container Recycling Fund that had been raided by the California general fund in recent years, halting many beverage



recycling efforts.

In 11 states, consumers can receive an incentive (usually 5 cents or 10 cents) when they return their used bottles. These laws have a proven record in encouraging recycling. Some states, however, are looking at new bills that would make product producers—rather than the government—responsible for recovery, recycling and reuse of containers.

SERVICES FOR MENTAL ILLNESS

One in 17 Americans lives with a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia, major depression, bipolar disorder or post traumatic stress disorder. Without proper treatment, mental illness can affect both the individual and society, often leading to unemployment, substance abuse, homelessness or incarceration.

Roughly one-third of adult homelessness is associated with serious mental illness, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. And approximately 22 percent of incarcerated people have been diagnosed with mental illness, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness reports untreated mental illness costs the United States more than \$100 billion each year in lost productivity. Individuals with serious mental illnesses are also at high risk of additional chronic medical conditions, such as pulmonary disease and diabetes, and on average die 25 years earlier

than other Americans.

People with serious mental illnesses, however, can usually be helped with proper treatment, which generally combines medication and psychotherapy. But nearly 80 percent of people with an unmet mental health need cite cost as the reason for not receiving treatment, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health.

In July 2010, new federal provisions will go into effect that require insurance plans that offer mental health coverage to provide the same financial and treatment coverage they offer for physical illnesses. More than 40 states already had addressed this issue to some degree, through state mental health parity laws or by requiring insurers to provide certain mental health benefits. In addition, the federal health reform law enacted in March is likely to increase care for people with mental illness by increasing access to insurance coverage for this population.

State Medicaid programs are the main source of funding for treatment and support services for people with a serious mental illness. The federal enhanced Medicaid matching funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 have helped states maintain Medicaid eligibility levels. To reduce recent budget gaps, however, some states have had to cut mental health service programs.

For fiscal year 2010, Michigan's budget included a \$40 million reduction to mental health services, and Ohio cut \$190 million from local mental health agencies. Arizona cut more than \$35 million to behavioral health services for FY 2011.

Not all states are cutting mental health services, however. Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue called for \$20 million more in his amended FY 2010 budget for the state mental health system and an additional \$50 million for FY 2011 to maintain staffing levels in state hospitals and improve patient care.

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