



# LED Committee Report

Vol. 3, No. 7  
Sept. 27, 2010

*An Information Service of the NCSL Labor and Economic Development Committee*

## LABOR AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

### New Committee Vice-Chairs Named

NCSL President Senator Richard Moore has named Representative Lana Gordon, R-Kansas, and Representative Brent Yonts, D-Kentucky, as the 2010-2011 Co-Chairs of the Labor and Economic Development Committee. Gwennetta Tatum, staff attorney with the Mississippi Legislature, is the Legislative Staff Chair for 2010-2011. Senator Moore has also finalized the selection of Vice-Chairs for the Committee. Please see below for a complete list of Committee officers. Some additional officers may be appointed in the coming weeks.

### Labor and Economic Development Committee

#### Officers, 2010-2011, as of September 21, 2010

#### Co-Chairs:

Rep. Lana Gordon, Kansas  
Rep. Brent Yonts, Kentucky

#### Vice-Chairs:

Rep. Angel Cruz, Pennsylvania  
Rep. Herbert Dixon, Louisiana  
Rep. Anna Fairclough, Alaska  
Rep. Julie Fisher, Utah  
Sen. Gary LeBeau, Connecticut  
Sen. Brandt Hershman, Indiana  
Rep. Patrick Long, New Hampshire

#### Immediate Past Chair

Rep. Juan Zapata, Florida

#### Legislative Staff Chair:

Gwennetta Tatum, Mississippi

#### Staff Vice-Chairs:

Linda Bussell, Kentucky  
LeNee Carroll, Indiana  
Jeff Houch, Illinois  
Gilbert Loreda, Texas

#### Immediate Past Staff Chair:

Andrea Wilko, Utah

#### NCSL Committee Staff

Diana Hinton Noel, D.C.  
Jeanne Mejeur, Denver  
James Ward, D.C.

### Committee Jurisdiction – We have issues!

The Labor and Economic Development Committee has one of the broadest jurisdictions of any of NCSL's 12 standing committees. Below are the subjects that fall within the Committee's purview:

- Arts and Culture
- Consumer Affairs
- Employment
- Growth Management
- International Trade
- Life-long Learning
- Public Employees Retirement
- Social Security
- Unemployment
- Urban Renewal
- Workforce Development
- Adult Education
- Davis Bacon Act
- Employment Training
- Historic Preservation
- Labor
- Minimum Wage
- Right-to-Work Laws
- State Minimum Wage
- Unemployment Compensation
- Violence-Workplace
- Workplace Discrimination
- Community Revitalization
- Economic Development
- Family Medical Leave Act
- Housing
- Libraries
- Pensions
- School-to-Work Transition
- Travel and Tourism
- Unions
- Workers Compensation
-

## UPCOMING MEETINGS



Labor and Economic Development Committee officers met on September 17<sup>th</sup> via conference call to begin planning Committee programs for the Fall Forum. Topics may include unemployment, arts and economic development, employee misclassification, workplace drug issues, and international trade. More information about the Committee's agenda will be sent out to Committee members in the next few weeks.

Each of the Standing Committees will present up to four sessions during the Fall Forum. In addition, there will be six concurrent Issue Briefings, on the most challenging issues facing the states, along with plenary programs and pre-conference seminars.

Full meeting information, including registration and hotel information, is available on the Fall Forum page: <http://www.ncsl.org/Default.aspx?TabID=714&tabs=2638,122>. Check back often for program and speaker updates. Below is the general schedule for the meeting:

### Wednesday, December 8, 2010

8:00 am - 5:00 pm Pre-Conference Workshops and Seminars

### Thursday, December 9, 2010

8:00 am - 12:45 pm Pre-Conference workshops/ Seminars Task Forces/ Working Groups  
10:30 am - 12:00 pm Standing Committee Officers Orientation/Steering Committee Meeting  
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm Standing Committee Staff Officers Luncheon  
1:00 pm – 2:30 pm Opening Plenary  
2:45 pm - 5:30 pm Standing Committee Sessions  
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm Reception at Hotel

### Friday, December 10, 2010

8:30 am - 11:30 am Standing Committee Sessions  
11:45 am - 1:15 pm Plenary Luncheon Program  
1:30 pm - 3:00 pm Issue Briefings  
3:15 pm - 4:45 pm Issue Briefings  
6:00 pm - 7:30 pm Reception at Hotel

## IN THE NEWS

### U.S. Dept. of Labor Issues Final Rule for Unemployment Compensation Program Interest-Free UI Loans

September 17, 2010: The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration announced a final rule regarding the Unemployment Compensation Program. This rule implements federal legislation requiring the department to establish criteria for states to qualify for interest-free federal loans for the payment of unemployment compensation. The purpose of the legislation spurring today's final rule was to encourage states to adequately forward fund their unemployment compensation systems to minimize the need for advances. The final rule conditions a state's receipt of interest-free advances upon the state meeting new funding goals as well as existing requirements.

Press Release: <http://www.dol.gov/opa/media/press/ETA/ETA20101289.htm>

Final Rule: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2010-09-17/pdf/2010-22926.pdf>

### **Twenty-Two States Share \$8 Million in Grants for Unemployment System Improvements**

September 8, 2010: The U.S. Department of Labor announced more than \$8 million in grants to 22 states to make automation and technology upgrades within their unemployment insurance systems. The states are Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Washington. The funding will be used by states to make a variety of automation upgrades to unemployment insurance systems, including:

- enhanced call centers
- interactive voice response system technologies
- acquisition of document management technologies
- imaging systems and optical character recognition applications
- automated systems to improve linkages of claimants to re-employment services

A full list of eligible uses of funds is available at <http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/UIPL/UIPL26-10acc.pdf>.

Press Release: <http://www.dol.gov/opa/media/press/eta/eta20101267.htm>

### **Updated NCSL 2010 Bill Tracking Summaries Now Available**

Updated legislative bill tracking summaries for are now available on a wide range of issues, including equal pay, minimum wage, family leave, sick leave, telecommuting/flexible schedules, pensions, jobs creation, EITC, and unemployment. <http://www.ncsl.org/?tabid=19750>

### **State Unemployment Rates For August 2010**

State unemployment rates were little changed in August, according to figures released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics on Sept. 21, 2010. Twenty-seven states saw their unemployment rates increase, while unemployment dropped in 13 states and Puerto Rico, and remained unchanged in 10 states and the District of Columbia.

<http://www.ncsl.org/?tabid=13308>

### **U.S. Dept. of Labor – The State of the American Worker**

Video-taped presentation by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor Hilda Solis, on the state of the American worker.

<http://www.dol.gov/laborday/>

## **NEW REPORTS**

### **Congressional Budget Office Reports**

#### **Estimated Impact of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act on Employment and Economic Output From April 2010 Through June 2010. August 2010**

<http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/117xx/doc11706/08-24-ARRA.pdf>

#### **Fiscal Policy Choices in Uncertain Times: CBO Director Doug Elmendorf's presentation to Macroeconomic Advisers, September 2010.**

[http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/118xx/doc11866/CBO\\_Presentation\\_to\\_Macroeconomic\\_Advisers\\_09-16-10.pdf](http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/118xx/doc11866/CBO_Presentation_to_Macroeconomic_Advisers_09-16-10.pdf)

### **Bureau of Labor Statistics Reports**

#### **Monthly Labor Review Online – August, 2010 Issue**

Feature articles include The Expanding Role of Temporary Help Services From 1990 to 2008; Time-Use Surveys: Issues in Data Collection on Multitasking; and Revising the Standard Occupational Classification system for 2010.

<http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2010/08/mlr201008.pdf>

#### **Real Earnings Update**

Real average hourly earnings for all employees was unchanged from July to August, seasonally adjusted. This result stems from a 0.3 percent increase in average hourly earnings, which was offset by a 0.3 percent increase in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U). Real average weekly earnings was about

unchanged over the month. September 17, 2010  
<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/realer.pdf>

#### **Consumer Price Index Update**

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the CPI-U increased 0.3 percent in August, the same increase as in July. The index for all items less food and energy was unchanged in August after rising 0.1 percent in July. September 17, 2010.

<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/cpi.pdf>

### **GAO Reports**

#### **State and Local Government Pension Plans: Governance Practices and Long-term Investment Strategies Have Evolved Gradually as Plans Take On Increased Investment Risk.**

GAO-10-754, August 24, 2010. <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10754.pdf>

#### **Defined Benefit Pension Plans: Plans Face Valuation and Other Challenges When Investing in Hedge Funds and Private Equity.**

GAO-10-915T, July 20, 2010. <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10915t.pdf>

#### **Private Pensions: Long-standing Challenges Remain for Multiemployer Pension Plans**

GAO-10-708T, May 27, 2010. <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10708t.pdf>

#### **Sudan Divestment: U.S. Investors Sold Assets but Could Benefit from Increased Disclosure Regarding Companies' Ties to Sudan.**

GAO-10-742, June 22, 2010. <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10742.pdf>

#### **Community Development Block Grants: Entitlement Communities' and States' Methods of Distributing Funds Reflect Program Flexibility**

GAO-10-874, August, 2010. <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d101011.pdf>

#### **Export Promotion: Increases in Commercial Service Workforce Should Be Better Planned**

GAO-10-874, August 31, 2010. <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10874.pdf>

#### **Export Promotion: The Export-Import Bank's Financing of Dual-Use Exports**

GAO-10-1052R, September 15, 2010. <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d101052r.pdf>

#### **Whistleblower Protection: Sustained Management Attention Needed to Address Long-Standing Program Weaknesses**

GAO-10-722, August 17, 2010. <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10722.pdf>

#### **Recovery Act: Opportunities to Improve Management and Strengthen Accountability over States' and Localities' Uses of Funds**

GAO-10-999, September 20, 2010. <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10999.pdf>

#### **Tax Administration: Usage and Selected Analyses of the First-Time Homebuyer Credit**

GAO-10-1025R, September 2, 2010. <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d101025r.pdf>

### **National Academy of Social Insurance**

#### **Workers' Compensation: Benefits, Coverage, and Costs, 2008**

Published in September, 2010, *Workers' Compensation: Benefits, Coverage, and Costs, 2008*, is the thirteenth in a series begun by the National Academy of Social Insurance to provide the only comprehensive national data on this largely state-run program. The study provides estimates of workers' compensation payments—cash and medical—for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and federal program providing workers' compensation. According to the study, workers' compensation payments for medical care and cash benefits for U.S. workers injured on the job increased 4.4 percent to \$57.6 billion in 2008. For the first time, medical benefits accounted for over half (50.4 percent) of all benefits paid. An 8.8 percent increase in payments for medical care drove

medical spending to \$29.1 billion in 2008 (the most recent year with complete data), while wage replacement benefits paid directly to injured workers rose by 0.3 percent to \$28.6 billion. For long-term trends, it is useful to consider workers' compensation benefits per \$100 of payroll covered by the program. By this measure, cash benefits were \$0.48 per \$100 of payroll in 2008. This is the lowest level since 1980 (the earliest date with comparable data).

[http://www.nasi.org/sites/default/files/research/Workers\\_Comp\\_Report\\_2008.pdf](http://www.nasi.org/sites/default/files/research/Workers_Comp_Report_2008.pdf)

**NCSL Staff Contacts:**

For more information, contact [Jeanne Mejeur](#), at 303-856-1467, or [James Ward](#), at 202-624-8683.

~~~~~ **Labor and Economic Development Committee** ~~~~~

*Denver office*  
7700 East First Place  
Denver, CO 80230  
Phone: 303-364-7700

**National Conference of State Legislatures**  
  
Website:  
<http://www.ncsl.org>

*Washington, D.C. Office*  
444 N. Capitol Ave., N.W.  
Washington, DC 20001  
Phone: 202-624-5400