

S/P/R

STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 34

ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

State and Local Finances in FY 2013

The Census Bureau has released its state and local finance series for fiscal year 2013, which allows an apples-to-apples comparison of tax structures and burdens among the states. This issue focuses on the revenue highlights of the new data.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 34

ISSUE 2

JANUARY 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

Evaluating the Costs and Benefits of Pre-K

A new study by the Washington Center for Equitable Growth estimates the state-by-state costs and benefits of an effective nationwide early childhood education program.

Tax Burdens in Each State's Largest City

To provide an apples-to-apples comparison of the District of Columbia's tax burden relative to other places, the District's Office of Revenue Analysis prepares an annual study that compares tax rates and tax burdens among the largest cities in each state, including Washington, DC.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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ISSUE 3

FEBRUARY 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

When Disaster Strikes

In determining a state's eligibility for disaster assistance, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) relies almost exclusively on a single measure, which multiplies a state's decennial population by a "public assistance indicator." After receiving recommendations for improving the disaster assistance process, FEMA appears ready to alter that approach.

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FEBRUARY 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

Balances and Business Cycles in Sectors and Regions

As the current economic recovery grows older, some observers are sizing up where states stand. Recent releases have considered 1) whether states have sufficiently replenished their rainy day funds, 2) how big should those rainy day funds be, and 3) which sector is currently most vulnerable to an economic downturn.

Undocumented Immigrants and State-Local Taxes

The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy recently updated its estimates of the state-local tax payments made by undocumented immigrants in each state.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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ISSUE 5

MARCH 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

Fiscal Capacity, Effort, Need, and Gaps

The recently updated Representative Revenue System is an elegant construction that provides a lens through which to view a state's ability to finance public services. Taken a step further, it also can identify a potential role for federal assistance to equalize differences in fiscal capacity among the states.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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ISSUE 6

March 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

Index of State Economic Momentum

The Index of State Economic Momentum, developed by *Reports* founding editor Hal Hovey, ranks states based on their most recent performance in three key measures of economic vitality: personal income growth, employment growth, and population growth. *Reports* updates the index each quarter. For the first quarter of 2016, **Massachusetts** most closely approximated the national average economic performance.

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ISSUE 7

APRIL 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

The 2016 Camelot Index

The Camelot Index was developed by *Reports* founding editor Hal Hovey, a longtime observer and analyst of state budgets and economies. It ranks states on six “quality of life” measures: economy, health, crime, education, society, and state government. This year’s index features revisions to some measures, but no big changes in overall results.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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ISSUE 8

APRIL 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

A(nother) Call for State Capital Spending

A report from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities asserts that the time is right for states to address their many unmet infrastructure needs.

The Future of the State and Local Tax Deduction

A recent analysis by the Tax Policy Center examines the state and local tax deduction in the context of potential federal tax reform and the possibility that it could put this deduction in play.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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MAY 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

A Tale of Decline, Excepting Medicaid

Federal Funds Information for States (FFIS), publisher of *Reports*, recently released an analysis of federal grants that compares each state's receipt of fiscal year 2015 funding on a per capita basis. The national average was \$1,827, an increase of \$170 from the previous year.

Climbing Medicaid Clawbacks

FFIS also has reported on rising costs associated with state payments to the federal government for Medicare Part D, known as the "clawback." These payments have seen double-digit increases in the last two years.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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ISSUE 10

MAY 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

Pew on OPEB Liabilities

Pew's latest contribution on retirement issues documents funding trends and changes in state retiree health insurance.

Gambling is Not a Sure Bet for States

A recent report by the Rockefeller Institute, *State Revenues from Gambling: Short-Term Relief, Long-Term Disappointment*, sounds a cautionary note about expanded gambling in states.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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JUNE 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

State Minimum Wages Mostly Track Cost of Living

Calls to raise the federal minimum wage often overlook the fact that more than half the states have minimum wages that are higher than the federal rate. A few states are on track to raise their rates to \$15 per hour.

If Every State Taxed Marijuana

Imagine if states had an extra \$7.1 billion per year to spend on public goods and services. That's the amount of new revenue the Tax Foundation estimates states would collect with a 20% sales tax levied on the retail sale of marijuana.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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ISSUE 12

JUNE 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

Index of State Economic Momentum

In the second quarter of 2016, **Arkansas** matched the national average economic performance. **Utah** remained at the top of the list, and **Wyoming** slipped into to the bottom spot.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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ISSUE 13

JULY 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

A Fiscal Update

Fiscal year (FY) 2017 has just begun for the 46 states that follow a July-June fiscal year. In its recent *Fiscal Survey of States*, the National Association of State Budget Officers got a read on how FY 2016 was shaping up, and what governors proposed for FY 2017.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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ISSUE 14

JULY 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

Assessing Pre-K Enrollment, Spending, and Quality

In its *State Preschool Yearbook* for 2014-2015, the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) evaluates states on a host of indicators. It finds increases in enrollment, quality, and funding, while noting that “access to a high-quality preschool program remained highly unequal.”

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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JOINT ISSUE 15-16

AUGUST 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

State Compensation Comparisons

A July report by CBIZ Human Capital Services for the state of Missouri compares average annual state government compensation among the 50 states.

Feds Weigh in on State-Local Education, Corrections Spending

A report by the U.S. Department of Education highlights state and local governments' spending decisions for corrections versus education.

CBO Outlook Holds Good and Bad News

In its August update, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) offered projections that could inform state fiscal and budget estimates in the coming months and years.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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SEPTEMBER 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

SNAP Caseloads Going Down, Down, Down

A recent report by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) documents a steep decline in the number of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants in recent years, and a very steep decline in recent months.

SPM: A Better Mousetrap?

The Census Bureau published the sixth release of the supplemental poverty measure (SPM), which takes account of programs and expenses that are not reflected in the official poverty measure.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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SEPTEMBER 2016

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Index of State Economic Momentum

In the third quarter of 2016, **Michigan** most closely approximated the national average economic performance. **Utah** remained at the top of the list, while its neighbor, **Wyoming**, remained at the bottom.

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OCTOBER 2016

IN THIS ISSUE

State Revenue Woes

The latest state revenue summary from the Rockefeller Institute raises concerns about the trajectory of state revenues. The growth rates for the first calendar quarter of 2016 were anemic, and preliminary results for the second quarter were downright gloomy.

Speaking of Which

In a related development, the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) released personal consumption expenditures by state for 2015, which have an impact on state economies and revenues.

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OCTOBER 2016

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A Review of State Tax Commissions

The Urban Institute recently released two reports, one of which focused on state tax commissions over the past 20 years.

With a Focus on Economic Development

The companion study delved deeper into the economic development perspective of state tax commissions.

Curtailing Non-Compete Clauses

The Obama administration has released a “call to action” for states to give attention to non-compete clauses imposed on employees.

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NOVEMBER 2016

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Block Grants R Us?

Proposals to convert Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to block grants have appeared repeatedly in recent House budget resolutions, and now they could see the light of day.

TANF as a Cautionary Tale

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities recently released new data on state TANF benefits, which document changes since the program's inception in 1996.

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NOVEMBER 2016

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High School Graduation Rates

In its publication, *Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States*, the U.S. Department of Education updated figures for high school graduation rates and related information.

State Spending: The Song Remains the Same

The National Association of State Budget Officers (NASBO) recently released its annual *State Expenditure Report*, which includes new state spending data for fiscal years 2014-2016.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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JOINT ISSUE 23-24

DECEMBER 2016

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Index of State Economic Momentum

The Index of State Economic Momentum, developed by *Reports* founding editor Hal Hovey, ranks states based on their most recent performance in three key measures of economic vitality: personal income growth, employment growth, and population growth. *Reports* updates the index each quarter. In the final quarter of 2016, **Indiana** most closely approximated the national average economic performance.

The Continuum of State Fiscal Stress

Reports developed the Continuum of State Fiscal Stress to give a sense of the challenges states face in a given fiscal year. This edition of the continuum focuses on fiscal year 2016.

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