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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 38

ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

New Year, New Minimum Wages

Twenty-one states began 2020 with higher minimum wages. Others will see increases later in the year. How do states compare once their minimum wages are adjusted for differences in the cost of living?

Income Inequality

In its most recent update of state income data, the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) finds that income inequality remains a concern.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 38

ISSUE 2

JANUARY 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

Federal Spending Per \$1 of Taxes Paid

States have an enduring interest in their “terms of trade” with the federal government. Because of persistent deficit spending, most states get more than \$1 in spending for every \$1 they send to the federal treasury. But a few states are net donors.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 38

ISSUE 3

FEBRUARY 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

A Federal Budget Refresher

It's been almost 20 years since the federal budget was in balance. This issue of *Reports* deconstructs the broad trends in federal revenues and spending that have contributed to a yawning budget deficit. It also touches on the president's recent budget submission.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 38

ISSUE 4

FEBRUARY 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

Budget Process Challenges

The Volcker Alliance has updated its analysis of good state budgeting practices. The results vary by state and measure, but the report notes that retiree benefits and transparency remain challenging for some states. It also makes an argument for accrual accounting.

Intergovernmental Dependency: Is the Sky Falling?

Another recent report tackles intergovernmental finance, focusing on state and local reliance on federal funds.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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ISSUE 5

MARCH 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

Opioid Funding by State

In recent years, Congress has increased funding for states to deal with the opioid crisis.

A Last Hurrah

The Urban Institute released a summary of state tax collections in January 2020.

A First Step

Congress increased state Medicaid matching rates in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 38

ISSUE 6

MARCH 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

Index of State Economic Momentum

The Index of State Economic Momentum 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 first quarter of 2020, **Utah** remained in the top spot, while **Virginia** and **California** most closely approximated the national average economic performance.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 38

ISSUE 7

APRIL 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

Stress-Testing in a Pandemic: The Moment of Truth

To assess states' fiscal situations as a result of the current coronavirus pandemic and ensuing recession, Moody's Analytics has employed its stress-testing methodology. Also, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has weighed in on the need for additional federal fiscal relief.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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ISSUE 8

APRIL 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

The 2020 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, the top-ranking state is **Iowa**.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 38

ISSUE 9

MAY 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

A Reality Check on Federal Fiscal Assistance

It has been assumed that federal fiscal assistance will be provided for state revenue losses from the COVID-19 recession, but pushback has emerged.

Employment: The Canary in the Coal Mine

In the Great Recession, a portion of federal fiscal relief was linked to a state's unemployment rate, for good reason.

The Past as Precedent

In the "dot com" recession and the Great Recession, the federal government provided fiscal assistance to states. The scale was different, but there were common elements.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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ISSUE 10

MAY 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

COVID-19 Job Losses: The Dominoes Begin to Fall

The April employment and unemployment data show a steep and sudden increase in state unemployment rates. They also expose some states' unique sensitivities.

Already, state and local government job losses have begun, while early reports of April tax collections signal the challenges ahead.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 38

ISSUE 11

JUNE 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

Camelot Components: State Solvency

Hal Hovey, *Reports* founding editor, developed the State Solvency Index in 1993 to evaluate state finances and financial management. It is a component of the Camelot Index, highlighted in *Reports* Volume 38, Issue 8. This issue of *Reports* delves into the most recent solvency details.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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ISSUE 12

JUNE 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

Index of State Economic Momentum

The Index of State Economic Momentum ranks states based on their most recent performance on three key measures of economic vitality: personal income growth, employment growth, and population growth. *Reports* updates the index each quarter. In the second quarter of 2020, **Idaho** moved into in the top spot, while **Minnesota** most closely approximated the national average economic performance.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 38

ISSUE 13

JULY 2020

IN THIS ISSUE: ALL CORONAVIRUS ALL THE TIME

Stress Test Update

Moody's Analytics has updated its projection of state fiscal needs to combat COVID-19. The takeaway? Needs are greater and the time for action was yesterday.

UI Recovery Trends

Which state workforces are seeing the quickest recovery from COVID-19?

Tax Mix Matters

The Pew Charitable Trusts recently posted an article that posits, "Where States Get Their Money Will Shape Pandemic's Fiscal Fallout."

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 38

ISSUE 14

JULY 2020

IN THIS ISSUE: ALL CORONAVIRUS ALL THE TIME

The Value of Added FMAP

The Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) is commonly known as the Medicaid matching rate. It directs billions of dollars in federal aid to states in normal times, and even more now.

State and Local Employment Plunges

The Economic Policy Institute's analysis of the Bureau of Labor Statistics jobs report shows a decline of nearly 1.5 million state and local government jobs between February and June 2020.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 38

JOINT ISSUE 15-16

AUGUST 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

A Federal Budget Update

Most years, *Reports* dedicates this issue to sharing the federal budget update it has been providing at various annual meetings. Even though we're grounded by the pandemic this year, the show must go on.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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ISSUE 17

SEPTEMBER 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

Potential Applications of Regional Price Parities

The Bureau of Economic Analysis has published 2018 state cost of living estimates and their impacts on state per capita income. Apart from being fascinating, these Regional Price Parities offer the possibility of tailoring federal policies to states' unique circumstances.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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SEPTEMBER 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

Index of State Economic Momentum

The Index of State Economic Momentum ranks states based on their most recent performance on three key measures of economic vitality: personal income growth, employment growth, and population growth. *Reports* updates the index each quarter. In this update, **Idaho** remained in the top spot, while **Minnesota** most closely approximated the national average economic performance.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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ISSUE 19

OCTOBER 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

State and Local Finances in FY 2018

The Census Bureau has released its state and local finance series for fiscal year 2018, which allows an apples-to-apples comparison of tax structures and burdens among the states. This issue highlights the new revenue data.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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ISSUE 20

OCTOBER 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

Transfer Payments and Second Quarter Personal Income

The Bureau of Economic Analysis has released data showing the effects of pandemic response programs on state personal income.

Ascendant Energy Sources

The country is moving away from coal and toward natural gas and renewable energy, but the rate of transition is uneven across the states.

The Perilous State of UI Trust Funds

Many states have been forced to take out loans to cover their unemployment insurance claims this year.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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ISSUE 21

NOVEMBER 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

The 2020 Census: What's at Stake?

More than \$1.5 trillion in annual federal spending relies on Census-derived data.

Going to Pot

Fifteen states and the District of Columbia have legalized recreational marijuana, including four states that voted in favor of legalization this month.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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NOVEMBER 2020

IN THIS ISSUE

The State-Federal Balance of Payments in FY 2019

State officials are often curious about where their state lands on the giving-versus-receiving spectrum in their “balance of payments” with the federal government. The New York State Comptroller’s office has released its most recent analysis addressing that question.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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JOINT ISSUE 23-24

DECEMBER 2020

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Index of State Economic Momentum

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The Continuum of State Fiscal Stress

Reports developed the Continuum of State Fiscal Stress to highlight four measures that can signal a rocky road ahead. This edition focuses on fiscal year 2020, when things changed.

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