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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 39

ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue features a grab bag of items that caught the interest of *Reports* in recent weeks:

- ✓ Defense Spending by State
- ✓ COVID-19 Safe Places
- ✓ State Revenues During the Pandemic

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 39

ISSUE 2

JANUARY 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

Economic Impact Payments by State

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has released state data on the first round of a refundable federal tax credit enacted to respond to the COVID-19 recession.

COVID-19 Grants to States

Federal Funds Information for States has identified more than \$560 billion in grants flowing to states in response to COVID-19.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 39

ISSUE 3

FEBRUARY 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

When is a \$15 Minimum Wage not \$15?

If you adjust a \$15 federal minimum wage to account for differences among states' cost of living, you find that \$15 doesn't equal \$15 anywhere.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 39

ISSUE 4

FEBRUARY 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

A Pandemic Fiscal Stress Test Update

In its February 2021 update, Moody's Analytics finds the fiscal shock to states from the COVID-19 pandemic has declined to \$148 billion over three years, reduced to \$56 billion by federal fiscal relief that can be used to address state shortfalls.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 39

ISSUE 5

MARCH 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

Be Best, State Version

U.S. News and World Report released its 2021 version of *Best States Rankings*.

NCSL Takes the State Fiscal Pulse

The National Conference of State Legislatures has updated its state fiscal outlook for fiscal year 2021.

Women in the House (and Senate)

In 2021, women account for 30.6% of state legislators.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 39

ISSUE 6

MARCH 2021

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 this first update of 2021, **Idaho** reclaims the top spot, while **Maryland** most closely approximates the national average economic performance.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 39

ISSUE 7

APRIL 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

Volcker Alliance Finds Improved State Budget Practices

In its five-year assessment of state budget practices, the Volcker Alliance concludes that things have improved.

Better-than-Expected Revenue Results

A recent release by the Urban Institute's State and Local Finance Initiative shows that most states' revenue collections over the last year held up remarkably well.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 39

ISSUE 8

APRIL 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

The 2021 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. Like last year, the top-ranking state in 2021 is **Iowa**.

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VOLUME 39

ISSUE 9

MAY 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

Eco-Friendliest States

WalletHub released a report that ranks states based on various environmental attributes.

Retiree-Friendliest States

Yahoo! Finance highlights the states least desirable for retirement.

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VOLUME 39

ISSUE 10

MAY 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

State Tax Collections in FY 2020

Examining what happened to state tax collections in FY 2020 sheds light on the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the economic jolt was the strongest.

COVID-19 Cases, Deaths, Vaccinations, and Hesitancy

As the pandemic moves to a new phase—mitigation through vaccination—it is interesting to note the variation in state rates of infection, death, vaccination, and vaccine hesitancy.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 39

ISSUE 11

JUNE 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

2021 KIDS COUNT: TRENDS

The 2021 edition of the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s assessment focuses on performance trends on the study’s key child well-being indicators.

2019 Overdose Deaths by State

The latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show persistently high death rates in many states.

States with the “Worst” Drivers in 2021

A top-10 list of states with the worst drivers focuses on traffic citations, which could depend on factors other than driver performance.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 39

ISSUE 12

JUNE 2021

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 this second update of 2021, the impact of COVID-19 shutdowns, re-openings, and federal aid, plus the release of the 2020 census count, have upended results.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 39

ISSUE 13

JULY 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

Index of State Economic Momentum: Take 2

The most recent issue of *Reports* had an update of the Index of State Economic Momentum and noted something unusual in each of its three components that led to atypical results in the overall measure. One of those oddities was self-inflicted and is addressed herein. Specifically, the update used two sets of population figures that really shouldn't have been compared. Using consistent population data changes things up a bit.

The 2020 Census

New state population data may have a big impact when distributing billions in federal assistance to state and local governments.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 39

ISSUE 14

JULY 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

The Business of Taxing Business

To supplement its work on state business tax climates, the Tax Foundation has released a study that seeks to estimate the tax cost of doing business in each state.

Opioid Settlement Update

A bipartisan coalition of attorneys general announced final agreements with an opioid manufacturer and the three major pharmaceutical distributors.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 39

JOINT ISSUE 15-16

AUGUST 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

State and Local Finances in FY 2019

The Census Bureau has released its state and local finance series for fiscal year 2019, which allows an apples-to-apples comparison of tax structures and burdens among the states. This issue highlights the revenue data.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 39

ISSUE 17

SEPTEMBER 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

COVID and the Supplemental Poverty Measure

In 2020, for the first time, poverty is estimated to have been lower using the supplemental poverty measure than using the official poverty definition.

Drug Overdose Deaths Spike

Drug overdose deaths increased more than 30% between February 2020 and February 2021.

Food Insecurity Eases

The Department of Agriculture has released its 2020 report on food insecurity in the United States.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 39

ISSUE 18

SEPTEMBER 2021

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 third update of 2021, COVID-19 and policy responses to it continue to wreak havoc on state results, as do out-of-date population data.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 39

ISSUE 19

OCTOBER 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

Ranking the Best State Safety Nets

The Center for American Progress recently published a study comparing states' social safety nets and economic outcomes.

Ranking the Best States for Workers

Each year, Oxfam America calculates its Best States to Work index, scoring and ranking states on wage levels and working conditions.

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VOLUME 39

ISSUE 20

OCTOBER 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

A Federal Budget Update: So Many Balls in the Air

With federal fiscal year 2022 now underway, Congress is facing its usual backlog of appropriations bills. This year it has even more balls in the air, however, with physical infrastructure, reconciliation, and the federal debt limit all in play.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 39

ISSUE 21

NOVEMBER 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

Defense Spending by State in 2020

Department of Defense state spending data for fiscal year (FY) 2020 shows an 8% increase over FY 2019 and wide disparities among states.

More Jobs than Jobless

In August 2021, 42 states had more job openings than they had job seekers.

A Sneak Peek at FY 2021 State Revenues

A new report includes data on state general fund revenues for FYs 2019 and 2020, with estimates for FY 2021.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

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ISSUE 22

NOVEMBER 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

Mapping and Bridging the Digital Divide

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress was working to bridge the digital divide, but its efforts have accelerated.

Wrenches in the Census

A report from the Urban Institute attempts to quantify the accuracy and fairness of the 2020 decennial census.

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STATE POLICY REPORTS

VOLUME 39

JOINT ISSUE 23-24

DECEMBER 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

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 2021.

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