



POLICIES AND DIRECTIVES

**2026 Legislative Summit
Chicago, Illinois**

DEBATE CALENDAR

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1 **COMMITTEE: ELECTIONS AND REDISTRICTING**

2 **POLICY: ELECTION MAIL**

3 **TYPE: DEBATE RESOLUTION**

4 **WHEREAS**, all states send crucial election information through the mail, including voter
5 registration cards, information about upcoming elections, and absentee/mail ballots; and

6 **WHEREAS**, the United States Postal Service plays an essential role in supporting state
7 administration of accurate, accessible and secure elections; and

8 **WHEREAS**, reliable and consistent postal operations help state-run elections meet
9 legal requirements and voter expectations; and

10 **WHEREAS**, a fully funded postal service is a prerequisite to well-run elections; and

11 **WHEREAS**, many states require election mail to be postmarked by set deadlines to be
12 accepted; and

13 **WHEREAS**, recent changes in USPS operations to consolidate mail processing and
14 application of postmarks to regional centers rather than at local post offices will result in
15 delays in the postmarking of election mail, which could result in the rejection of timely
16 mailed voter registration forms and mail in ballots; and

17 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, NCSL urges Congress to appropriate
18 sufficient funds to the USPS to ensure the organization is fully operational and meets
19 the needs of all U.S. voters, including those in rural areas, underserved communities
20 and residing and serving the nation overseas.

21 **LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED**, NCSL supports the use of all available USPS
22 resources to ensure the delivery of all official election-related mail to and from voters
23 and urges that USPS take all necessary actions to ensure that valid cast ballots
24 entering the mail stream are delivered timely and expeditiously to the appropriate
25 election office for processing and counting.

26 **LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED**, NCSL urges USPS to promptly and regularly inform
27 customers of the lag time between mail drop off and postmarking and provide

28 reasonable estimates of mail timing to ensure voters know when they must drop off
29 election mail.

30 **LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED**, NCSL urges a post-election performance review to
31 determine the timeliness of mail delivery.

COMMITTEE: LABOR AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

POLICY: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TYPE: DIRECTIVE

- The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) strongly urges the federal government to better coordinate its economic development activities with the states.
- NCSL urges the U.S. Department of Commerce, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Labor and the Small Business Administration to each establish a designated liaison to coordinate economic development activities among the four agencies and with the states.

Arts, Culture and Economic Development

- NCSL encourages the federal government to support arts and culture through investments in State and Local programs that will promote economic development, job creation and community revitalization.
- NCSL encourages collaboration and coordination among the Federal Government's disparate arts, culture and economic development agencies as they consider State and local programs ensure that the policy and program outcomes meet the needs and goals identified by state policymakers.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Reauthorization & Funding

State legislatures play a primary role in setting their state's workforce development strategies and funding programs and initiatives to ensure education and training programs meet their state's workforce needs. State legislators, as members of state workforce boards, are key stakeholders in the success of federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs.

In order to train and maintain a highly skilled workforce NCSL believes that states should be given flexibility to meet the broad goals set out in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and that state discretion to establish and administer workforce development services should be maintained consistent with the statutory requirements of WIOA.

A reauthorized Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act should facilitate a stronger and more involved role for legislatures and legislators in all the states and territories to shape the implementation of authorized programs to ensure their alignment with state workforce strategies, especially those facilitated through complementary state legislation.

To better support statewide coordination, WIOA should support opportunities for states to coordinate and collaborate with higher education on workforce development, as well as promote coordination and alignment between related federal programs such as the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.

Funding and Programmatic Uses

NCSL believes that the components of an integrated WIOA system should be appropriately funded in appropriation and reauthorization.

A reauthorized Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act should grant flexibilities to states whenever possible to direct funding and develop programs in ways that advance state workforce priorities and legislative strategies, especially by recognizing the opportunities provided through work-based learning and registered apprenticeships.

As technological change, globalization, and industrial transitions reshape labor markets, WIOA program design must recognize the importance of worker-centered, non-discriminatory lifelong learning and support opportunities for workers to reskill and upskill throughout their career for high-demand, high quality, market-driven occupations, including through programs offered by their current employer or as part of effective reentry employment training programs.

WIOA program design should also recognize workers and learners face broader barriers to participation in training programs. WIOA should provide funding and flexibility to allow states to use funding for wraparound services to help workers overcome barriers to participation.

NCSL believes that administrative and technological funding for One-Stops should be central to WIOA appropriation and reauthorization.

Data and Reporting

Federal programs, especially Workforce Pell, increasingly require states to collect and coordinate an increasing array of data points across education and workforce systems, including enhanced wage records.

WIOA should support states in the development of integrated longitudinal data systems that enhance states' understanding of education and workforce outcomes, while protecting privacy and preventing misuse of data. Federal support for state data systems should be commensurate with expectations placed on states.

Congress should provide states with funding to support WIOA data and reporting to include: placement rates, wage outcomes (i.e. pre-displacement wages, post-training placement rates, wage replacement ratios), benefit provision rates, employment classification (full-time/part-time, permanent/temporary), and retention and advancement data.

Federal grant programs that support state data systems, such as the State Longitudinal Data Systems grant at the U.S. Department of Education and the Workforce Data Quality Initiative at the U.S. Department of Labor, should be designed and coordinated in a way that provides maximum flexibility for states to most effectively connect education and workforce data systems. This could include flexibility to develop the infrastructure for state or interstate talent marketplaces that utilize digital learning and employment records.

Additionally, workforce development reporting should be streamlined to ensure high-quality information while promoting program and administrative efficiencies.

Registered Apprenticeship

- NCSL supports federal funding for apprenticeship programs to provide opportunities for adults to earn a wage while they learn a trade or profession. NCSL supports federal grant funding to expand registered apprenticeship programs in new and emerging industries. This funding should eventually sunset to allow employers to assume responsibility for funding these apprenticeship programs.

- NCSL encourages opportunities to integrate registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships across federal programs, as appropriate.
- NCSL supports strengthening work-based learning opportunities established under the National Apprenticeship Act, maintaining high quality programs, and joint labor-management partnerships.
- NCSL supports a streamlined federal approval process that eliminates delays and ensures fair, timely access for all qualified program sponsors to help expand registered apprenticeship as a viable option for education and workforce training.
- The federal government should effectively communicate with state agencies on their role in program oversight.

Responsible Housing and Housing Finance

- NCSL encourages the Congress and the Administration to support flexibility and state discretion in housing programs and avoid unfunded mandates.
- NCSL encourages efforts to promote a greater state role in administering federal housing programs, subject to sufficient funding and flexibility.
- NCSL is encouraged and supportive of public private partnership programs and initiatives that increase the availability of financing for homeownership opportunities. NCSL supports first time home buyer tax credits to promote homeownership prospects, preserving the Mortgage Interest Deduction, and low-income housing tax credits that produce new, affordable housing.
- NCSL strongly urges the federal government to consult state legislators and other state officials as voucher program reforms are designed to ensure that they will meet state needs, provide the flexibility we desire, avoid cost shifts to states, and continue with ample federal funding for program and administrative costs.
- Additionally, we urge the Congress to sustain funding levels sufficient to maintain existing vouchers, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) programs and already committed project based Section 8 subsidies.
- NCSL urges the federal government to respect the primary role that states and localities play in zoning and land use policy. Federal guidance or incentives

related to state and local zoning reform must be informed by state feedback and facilitate, rather than mandate, state-led reforms.

- NCSL encourages the federal government to streamline regulations and modernize federal programs wherever possible to support states in expanding the supply of housing.

The Federal Role in Career and Technical Education (CTE)

The federal government should provide additional funding and support the authority of states for flexibility to allocate some funds through a competitive grant administered by the state in pursuit and support of innovative, high quality and effective programs.

- NCSL believes that CTE competitive grant programs should be used to incentivize and modernize state and local programs in order to meet the evolving needs of students. NCSL supports adequate funding for CTE competitive grant programs.
- These funding decisions can best be handled at the state level rather than by individual schools and/or districts.
- States should continue to have the authority to determine the split between secondary and postsecondary CTE programs.

The existing CTE funding formula for allocating federal funds to the state should be amended to include annual increases tied to core inflation.

- Each year under the Strengthening Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins V) and its predecessors, Congress appropriates approximately \$1.4 billion in State formula grant funds under Title I (Basic State Grants) to support students who enroll in career and technical education programs and programs of study.
- Because funding levels have not kept pace with inflation and there is a growing demand for CTE education and workforce programs across the country, it is essential that Congress provide increased support for Perkins Act-funded programs.
- Increased funding for programs that prepare students for highly skilled jobs aligns with the Workforce Pell provisions in HR 1 – One Big Beautiful Bill (OB BB), allowing students to receive Pell Grants to attend high-quality, short-

148 term career and technical education programs. Previously, Pell Grants could not
149 be used for short-term CTE programs.

1 **COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES, ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT**

2 **POLICY: PARAQUAT BAN**

3 **TYPE: DEBATE RESOLUTION**

4 **WHEREAS**, the pesticide paraquat is one of the most dangerous commercial pesticides
5 still available for use and purchase on the US market to treat weeds; and

6 **WHEREAS**, paraquat is highly linked to causing Parkinson's disease, with the
7 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finding that those exposed to paraquat face an
8 elevated risk of developing Parkinson's disease. Paraquat's harm to human health has
9 now led it to being banned in over 70 countries including the European Union, China,
10 and Brazil; while states such as Vermont are now banning its use domestically; and

11 **WHEREAS**, paraquat was classified as a restricted use pesticide in 1978 by the EPA
12 due to concerns over its high toxicity in humans. Despite being only available to certified
13 applicators, the EPA introduced additional use restrictions for paraquat in 2021 due to
14 new evidence of the harm applicators face. Yet, enforcement of restrictions and
15 penalties for misuse is limited due to capacity restraints.

16 **WHEREAS**, paraquat can persist in soil for up to seven years after application. Rainfall
17 then carries the herbicide into surrounding soils and freshwater systems where it
18 threatens non-target plants, freshwater fish, and aquatic invertebrates. Paraquat
19 contaminated vegetation can expose birds and mammals to reproductive harm, while
20 the loss of non-target flowering plants reduces food sources for bees and other
21 pollinators;

22 **WHEREAS**, the recent decision by the Supreme Court in Monsanto Co. v Durnell has
23 significantly limited legal remedies for our constituents to seek justice after being
24 harmed by the use of pesticide products. State action to restrict the overuse of
25 pesticides and ban the most dangerous pesticides such as paraquat is now more
26 essential than ever in our history; and

27 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Conference of State
28 Legislators urges the President of the United States and Member of Congress to

29 empower states to act with further authority to ensure their constituents are protected
30 from pesticide overuse, while ensuring state lands and waters remain free from
31 pesticide contamination; and

32 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that if state-level efforts to protect public health are
33 deemed ineffective or preempted, a federal ban on the production, sale, and use of
34 paraquat shall be necessary; and

35 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted
36 to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the
37 Speaker of the House of Representatives, and each member of Congress.

1 **COMMITTEE: NATURAL RESOURCES, ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT**

2 **POLICY: SUPPORTING FEDERAL LEGISLATION TO BAN THE**
3 **SALE AND TRADE OF EJIAO AND DONKEY HIDES**

4 **TYPE: DEBATE RESOLUTION**

5 **WHEREAS**, ejiao (also known as "gelatina nigra") is a gelatin derived from donkey
6 hides that is used for alternative medicine, beauty and cosmetic products, and other
7 luxury goods. However, the use of ejiao is unnecessary since gelatins from other meats,
8 fish, plants, or seaweed may be used instead.

9 **WHEREAS**, the domestic Chinese and international demand for ejiao requires
10 approximately 8–10 million donkey skins per year, but the annual supply in China is less
11 than 1.8 million. This demand has led to the slaughter of massive numbers of donkeys
12 across the globe, decimating donkey populations, most notably in Africa and Latin
13 America (particularly in Kenya, Ethiopia, Botswana, Brazil, and other nations in the
14 Global South).

15 **WHEREAS**, stakeholders estimate that between 2.3 million and 5.9 million donkeys are
16 slaughtered annually for their hides to support ejiao production. At the current rate, the
17 present global donkey population of 44 million could be halved over the next several
18 years.

19 **WHEREAS**, when not sold to ejiao companies – donkeys are regularly stolen and killed
20 illegally for their hides. This has had devastating effects on already
21 struggling/impooverished families who depend on donkeys for their livelihood. Among
22 other things, these donkeys are used for farming, construction, and carrying
23 water/goods for miles.

24 **WHEREAS**, the United States is the third-largest importer of ejiao behind Hong Kong
25 and Japan, with \$12 million in imports each year.

26 **WHEREAS**, the sale and trade of ejiao is completely unsustainable. Moreover,
27 increasing sales of ejiao in the U.S. deepens the crisis affecting donkeys and the poorer
28 communities who rely on them for their livelihoods.

29 **WHEREAS**, the bipartisan Ejiao Act (H.R. 5544) before Congress would ban the sale,
30 transport, or purchase of products containing ejiao, as well as donkeys and donkey
31 hides for the purpose of making ejiao. Like the Shark Fin Sales Elimination Act (enacted
32 in 2022), the Ejiao Act would ensure that the United States does not contribute to the
33 decimation of this animal species.

34 **WHEREAS**, the Ejiao Act is endorsed by the nation's leading animal and equine welfare
35 organizations, including the Brooke USA Foundation, Animal Welfare Institute, the
36 American Association of Equine Practitioners, the American Wild Horse Campaign,
37 ASPCA, Humane World for Animals (formerly the Humane Society), Species Unite, and
38 the EQUUS Foundation; and

39 **WHEREAS**, state legislatures have a strong interest in animal welfare, global
40 humanitarian concerns, and ensuring the United States does not contribute to the
41 decimation of the global donkey population; now, therefore, be it

42 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Conference of State
43 Legislatures supports federal legislation to ban the sale, transport, and purchase of
44 ejiao products and donkeys or donkey hides for the purpose of ejiao production.

1 **COMMITTEE: TRANSPORTATION**

2 **POLICY: CO-LOCATION OF INTERSTATE ELECTRIC**
3 **TRANSMISSION WITHIN HIGHWAY RIGHTS-OF-WAY**

4 **TYPE: DEBATE RESOLUTION**

5 **WHEREAS**, a modern, reliable, and resilient electric grid is essential to maintaining a
6 balanced and efficient national infrastructure and supporting economic growth, energy
7 affordability, and system reliability across all regions of the United States; and

8 **WHEREAS**, the development, expansion, and preservation of electric transmission
9 infrastructure are critical to meeting increasing energy demand and ensuring long-term
10 grid reliability; and

11 **WHEREAS**, energy and transportation systems are increasingly interconnected,
12 requiring coordinated planning across sectors to maximize infrastructure efficiency and
13 investment outcomes; and

14 **WHEREAS**, federal, state, and local governments share responsibility for planning,
15 siting, permitting, and deploying both transportation and energy infrastructure; and

16 **WHEREAS**, states must retain flexibility and authority to address infrastructure needs in
17 a manner consistent with regional priorities, economic conditions, and land use
18 considerations; and

19 **WHEREAS**, the use of existing highway rights-of-way as established linear
20 infrastructure corridors represents a practical and efficient approach to accelerating
21 transmission deployment and minimizing conflicts; and

22 **WHEREAS**, co-location of transmission infrastructure within highway rights-of-way can
23 reduce permitting complexity, minimize land acquisition needs, improve feasibility, lower
24 costs, and enhance public acceptance; and

25 **WHEREAS**, enhanced coordination among transportation and energy agencies can
26 streamline planning, reduce duplication, and improve infrastructure siting outcomes;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) supports policies that promote the co-location of electric transmission infrastructure within existing interstate and state highway rights-of-way where appropriate as a cost-effective, efficient, and environmentally responsible approach to infrastructure development; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCSL affirms the importance of preserving state authority and flexibility in transmission siting, permitting, and infrastructure planning and opposes federal preemption or one-size-fits-all mandates; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCSL urges Congress and the administration to actively engage state legislatures in the development and implementation of policies affecting transmission and transportation infrastructure; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCSL supports the following federal actions and programmatic alignments to facilitate transmission co-location within highway rights-of-way:

- **Expansion of Grant Programs:**

Expand and enhance funding through existing U.S. Department of Transportation programs, including the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grant Program, National Infrastructure Project Assistance (MEGA) Grants, and Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grants;

- **Formula and Block Grant Flexibility:**

Provide states greater flexibility under core Federal Highway Administration programs, including the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program, National Highway Performance Program (NHPP), and, where applicable, the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program;

- **IIJA Alignment:**

Clarify and expand eligibility within programs authorized under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), including the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Program,

the Carbon Reduction Program, and, where applicable, the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program;

- **Long-Term Funding Certainty:**

Provide multi-year authorizations and predictable funding mechanisms to enable states to effectively plan, finance, and deploy integrated infrastructure projects;

- **Cost-Sharing and Regional Projects:**

Expand federal cost-sharing mechanisms to support projects that deliver regional and national reliability benefits, particularly interregional transmission projects;

- **Innovative Financing Tools:**

Encourage the use of financing mechanisms such as the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program, Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF), state infrastructure banks, and public-private partnerships (P3s); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCSL encourages increased coordination among state departments of transportation, public utility commissions, state energy offices, and federal agencies to improve infrastructure planning, streamline permitting, and reduce administrative burdens.

1 **COMMITTEE: TRANSPORTATION**

2 **POLICY: CREATION OF A NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE**
3 **BANK**

4 **TYPE: DEBATE RESOLUTION**

5 **WHEREAS**, according to the Cato Institute, State and local governments own
6 approximately 87% of U.S. public non-defense infrastructure, including the vast majority
7 of roads, bridges, water systems, and schools, and according to the Congressional
8 Budget Office they also bear over 90% of the costs to operate and maintain these
9 assets; and

10 **WHEREAS**, according to the National Association of Counties, State governments own
11 approximately 40% of public roads, especially major arteries, including most Interstate
12 Highways, state-numbered route, and primary, high-traffic corridors; and

13 **WHEREAS**, state and local governments are responsible for planning, developing, and
14 maintaining this critical infrastructure, including transportation, water systems, energy,
15 and broadband networks; and

16 **WHEREAS**, there is a continued need for significant investment to modernize and
17 expand infrastructure systems that support economic growth, public safety, and quality
18 of life; and

19 **WHEREAS**, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) 2025 Report Card
20 estimates a \$3.7 trillion funding gap to bring U.S. infrastructure to a state of good repair
21 over the next decade; and

22 **WHEREAS**, states rely on a mix of funding and financing tools, including federal
23 formula programs, state infrastructure banks, and municipal bonds to meet these needs;
24 and

25 **WHEREAS**, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) contained approximately
26 \$1.2 trillion in infrastructure spending, including \$550 billion in new spending, and
27 included provisions for federal highway aid, transit, highway safety, rail programs, and
28 hazardous materials transportation and is expiring in 2026; and

29 **WHEREAS**, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) 2025 Report Card found
30 that the funding gap to bring U.S. infrastructure to a state of good repair had 40% in the
31 last four years to nearly \$4 trillion, including the \$1.2 trillion from the IIJA; and

32 **WHEREAS**, a National Infrastructure Bank (NIB) could complement any reauthorization
33 of the IIJA and fill the funding gap identified by ASCE; and

34 **WHEREAS**, an NIB would work closely with state governments to bring U.S
35 infrastructure up to a state of good repair by providing long-term, low-cost financing,
36 leveraging additional capital, and supporting large-scale or multi-state infrastructure
37 projects; and

38 **WHEREAS**, an NIB would require no new federal spending and no new federal taxes,
39 but instead would utilize the successful models developed by Alexander Hamilton,
40 Abraham Lincoln, and others; and

41 **WHEREAS**, according to data from the National Association of Manufacturers,
42 enhancing infrastructure spending could grow GDP by an additional 2.9% by 2030.
43 According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, every \$1 billion in public
44 infrastructure spending creates 13,000 living wage jobs; by financing new infrastructure
45 projects across the country, a National Infrastructure bank could then help create an
46 estimated 20 million well-paying new jobs and increase state tax revenue and help
47 address the affordability crisis; and

48 **WHEREAS**, an NIB will aim to keep public infrastructure in public hands and will not
49 finance privatization of public infrastructure; and

50 **WHEREAS**, over thirty state legislatures have introduced or passed resolutions in
51 support of an NIB, and many national state legislative caucuses have endorsed its
52 creation of an NIB.

53 **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Conference of State
54 Legislatures (NCSL) urges the Congress to collaborate with the states to create a
55 National Infrastructure Bank to address the urgent needs of public infrastructure
56 financing; and

57 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCSL supports consideration of an NIB as an
58 additional financing tool to complement existing federal, state and local infrastructure
59 funding mechanisms; and

60 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCSL emphasizes that any NIB should be designed
61 to preserve and strengthen the authority of state, regional and local governments to
62 identify, prioritize, and oversee infrastructure investments; and

63 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCSL supports a governance structure for any such
64 entity that includes meaningful state representation and input in project selection and
65 decision-making; and

66 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCSL affirms that an NIB should not replace or
67 reduce existing formula-based funding to the states or disrupt established financing
68 tools such as municipal bonds; and

69 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCSL supports policies ensuring equitable access
70 to financing for states of all sizes and regions, including rural and underserved
71 communities; and

72 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCSL encourages strong federal-state-local
73 coordination and consultation in the development and implementation of any NIB to
74 ensure it reflects the diverse needs and priorities of the states.