

Governmental Research Association

Annual Policy Conference

July 25-28 at CUNY Graduate Center
 365 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016

*The National Organization of
 Individuals Professionally
 Engaged in Government
 Research*

Proposed Agenda

Sunday, July 25

- Reception 6:00-7:30 pm
- Dinner on Your Own

Monday, July 26

- Breakfast & GRA Organizations Roundup (members only) *Steve Kroes, GRA President, moderator*

○ Morning: Focus on Urban Education

With over a million students, 1,600 schools, neighborhoods spanning 5th Avenue and the South Bronx, and 40% English-language learners, New York City has long been a “testbed” for new approaches to public education, particularly in an urban context. In multiple sessions, the GRA conference will use New York City to stimulate conversations about mayoral control, charter schools, teacher education and other critical issues.

Panel 1: Mayoral Control (Moderator: Sam Tyler, Boston Municipal Research Bureau)

- Dennis Walcott, Deputy Mayor for Education, NYC
- Joseph Viteritti, Ph.D., Hunter College of CUNY (ed., *When Mayors Take Charge: School Governance in the City*, Brookings Institution Press, 2009)
- Anneliese M. Dickman, J.D., Research Director, Public Policy Forum, Milwaukee

Panel 2: Improving Effectiveness in the Classroom (Moderator: Kirstin Pryor, Center for Governmental Research, Rochester, NY)

- David Steiner, Commissioner of Education, New York State
- Jean-Claude Brizard, Superintendent, Rochester, NY Public Schools
- Yutaka Tamura, COO, Teacher U at Hunter College (also founder of Excel Charter in Boston)



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Panel 3: Charter Schools as a Reform Model (moderator: Janet Howard, Bureau of Governmental Research, New Orleans)

- Tom Carroll, Foundation for Education Reform & Accountability
- Whitney Tilson, Tilson Funds

○ **Luncheon: Richard Ravitch, Lieutenant Governor, State of New York**

○ **Afternoon: Keeping the Fisc Afloat in States & Cities**

Many of America's largest states & cities are struggling to survive. Challenged in good times, the Great Recession eliminated any remaining financial cushion, cutting revenue and increasing need.

Panel 1: State Finances (Moderator: Jeffrey Guilfoyle, President, Citizens Research Council of Michigan, former Dir, Office of Revenue & Tax Analysis, State of Michigan)

- Robin Prunty, Standard & Poors
- Robert Megna, Director, Division of the Budget, State of New York
- Andrew Sidamon-Eristoff, Treasurer, State of New Jersey
- Robert Genuario, Secretary, Office of Policy and Management, State of Connecticut
- David Kline, VP of Communications and Research, California Taxpayers Association

Panel 2: City Finances (Moderator: Chuck Brecher, Citizens Budget Commission, NYC)

- Ronnie Lowenstein, Director, Independent Budget Office of NYC
- Stephen Agostini, Budget Director, City of Philadelphia
- Sam Tyler, President, Boston Municipal Research Bureau

Tuesday, July 27

○ **Morning: Politics & Policy in the States**

Whose state politics are the most dysfunctional? GRA members often engage in a bemused contest over such questions. Do you know which state has the most local governments per capita? Which state has sent the most governors to prison? Where are incumbent state legislators the most entrenched? Where do lobbyists have the best access? And where better to ask such questions than New York?

Tuesday morning will explore the root causes of political dysfunction, and explore strategies aimed at encouraging sound public policy in a political context.

Panel 1: Roots of dysfunction & solutions (Moderator: Lise Valentine, Civic Federation of Chicago)

- Marc Holzer, Dean, School of Public Affairs & Admin, Rutgers University
- E.J. McMahon, Director, Empire Center for State Policy
- Jennifer Pike, Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana

Panel 2: Promoting public policy through citizen action (Moderator: David Liebschutz, Center for Governmental Research, Albany, NY)

- Blair Horner, Legislative Director, NY Public Interest Research Group
- Dominic Calabro, President & CEO, Florida Tax Watch
- Steve Wray, Pennsylvania Economy League

○ Afternoon: Lunch and Activities on Your Own

With the diverse attractions of one of the world's great cities at your disposal, the only problem is choosing how to spend your time. Check out the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim, the Cloisters or many others. Further from the beaten path, consider the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, devoted to the immigrant experience, or the Museum of Sex, devoted to, well, sex. Bring the kids and visit the Bronx Zoo and the Statue of Liberty or take the Staten Island Ferry. (Maybe you'll have to come to the conference early or stay later—it's New York City!).

○ Awards Dinner 6:00-9:00 pm

Join your colleagues in honoring some of the great work done by our peers from around the country. Plan to be entertained and enlightened.

Speaker: Wayne Barrett, Village Voice

Wednesday, July 28

○ Morning: The Practice of Public Policy in GRA Organizations

Learn how to cope in difficult times by sharing your successes and failures with GRA colleagues.

○ Conference Adjourns noon

Conference Hotel

Affinia Shelburne, 303 Lexington Avenue at 37th Street (see <http://goo.gl/1yUn>)

The hotel is just a few blocks from the conference site at the City University of New York's Graduate Center (see <http://goo.gl/tH1f>)

NOTE: Not all speakers listed have confirmed their availability.

Happy Birthday!

A hearty Happy Birthday to the Center for Governmental Research in Rochester, New York, which turns 95 this year!

The Iowa Taxpayers Association and Oregon Tax Research are celebrating their diamond anniversaries! The Arizona Tax Research Association and the Taxpayers' Federation of Illinois are now septuagenarians, celebrating 70 years!

The Utah Foundation has reached the retirement age of 65, but has no plans to cease its good work now!

And the Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana celebrates its 60th birthday!

Join us in extending congratulations.

Things to Do in NYC

So, is there anything fun to do in New York? Are you kiddin' me? Fuggeddaboutit! There are a million and one exciting things to do in the Big Apple.

- **Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island**—Ferries depart regularly from Battery Park at the southern tip of Manhattan. The statue's crown has been reopened for the first time since September 11. Search passenger records for your ancestors for free at Ellis Island's American Family Immigration Center. Take the No. 5 subway downtown to South Ferry. (www.statueofliberty.org/)
- **Empire State Building**—The observatory is open from 8 am to 2 am. Reenact King Kong or Sleepless in Seattle. Look for Russia on a clear day. Approximately 6 blocks from the conference hotel. (www.esbnyc.com/)
- **Discovery Exposition Times Square**—The big ticket this summer is the return of the King Tut exhibit to NYC for the first time since the 1970s. About 10 blocks from the hotel. (www.discoverytsx.com/)
- **More parks than you can shake a stick at:**
 - Central Park, Manhattan has a zoo, carousel, boating on the lake, Shakespeare, and miles of paths for walking, biking, skating... Take the No. 6 train uptown to 59th Street and walk two blocks west. (www.centralpark.com/)
 - Prospect Park, Brooklyn has a zoo, carousel, lake, paths—no, this is not an accidental repeat—a botanical garden and Audubon Center. No. 4 or 5 train to Grand Army Plaza (www.prospectpark.org/)
 - Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, Queens—the World's Fair grounds, Citi Field, National Tennis Center...and a lake, paths, meadows, trees. The No. 7 to Mets-Willets Pt. station will get you to Citi Field. (www.nycgovparks.org/sub_your_park/vt_flushing_meadows/vt_flushing_meadows_park.html)
 - Van Cortlandt Park, Bronx—only the fourth largest city park, but still over 1,000 acres of forests, paths, golf course, horseback riding, bocce courts, cricket fields, and much more. Take the No. 4 uptown to Woodlawn. (www.nycgovparks.org/parks/VanCortlandtPark/)
- **World-famous museums:**
 - Metropolitan Museum of Art (www.metmuseum.org/), including the Cloisters in northern Manhattan—current exhibits include Italian drawings, Picasso, Tutankhamun's Funeral, and Big Bambu. No. 4 or 5 train uptown to 86th Street, then three blocks west.
 - Museum of Modern Art (www.moma.org/)—current exhibits include Picasso, Bern Porter, and woman photographers. No. 6 train uptown to 51st Street, then 2 blocks north and 4 blocks west.
 - American Museum of Natural History (www.amnh.org/) and the famous Hayden Planetarium—current exhibits include Race to the End of the Earth (Antarctic exploration), Lizards & Snakes: Alive!, and Journey to the Stars. B or C train to 81st Street/American Museum of Natural History station.
 - Museum of the City of New York (www.mcnyc.org/)—current exhibits include Samurai in New York: The First Japanese Delegation, the Timescapes multimedia history of NYC, and America's Mayor: John V. Lindsay. No. 6 train to 103rd Street, then three blocks west.
 - American Museum of the Moving Image (www.ammi.org/)—N or Q train to 36 Avenue (Astoria). Walk 1 block north to 35 Avenue. Turn right and walk to 36 Street
 - New York City Police Museum (nycpolicemuseum.org/)—No. 2 or 3 train to Wall Street station, then walk about 4 blocks down William Street

- The Guggenheim (www.guggenheim.org)—No. 5 or 6 train uptown to 86th Street, then three blocks west and two blocks north on 5th Avenue.
- **The Bronx Zoo**—one of the best in the world, featuring Madagascar, Tiger Mountain, Congo Gorilla Forest, and Wild Asia, plus over 600 species of animals. No. 5 train to East Tremont Ave/West Farms Square (www.bronxzoo.com/)
- **The United Nations Building**—About 8 blocks from the hotel sits the meeting place of world powers. (www.un.org/tours/)
- **Churches Galore**—New York has more places of worship than any city in the world. Among the more famous:
 - St. Patrick’s Cathedral—No. 6 train to 51st Street, then three blocks west (www.saintpatrickscathedral.org)
 - Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine—the largest gothic cathedral in the world. No. 1, B or C train to Cathedral Parkway station. (www.stjohndivine.org/)
 - Central Synagogue—a stunningly beautiful sanctuary that features (I kid you not) the Wiener Memorial Organ. No. 6 train uptown to 51st Street. (www.centralsynagogue.org/)
 - Trinity Church and St. Paul’s Chapel—Trinity sits at the head of Wall Street; the Chapel is just a few blocks up Broadway and was the site where George Washington prayed after his inauguration and one of the staging areas for rescue workers after September 11. No. 4 or 5 train to Wall Street station. (www.trinitywallstreet.org/)
- Mahayana Buddhist Temple—largest Buddhist temple in the city; No. 6 train downtown to Canal Street, then east on Canal. (nymag.com/listings/attraction/mahayana-buddhist-temple/)
- Riverside Church—famous home of Harry Emerson Fosdick and William Sloane Coffin and site of Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “Beyond Vietnam” speech. No. 1 train to 116th Street, then 4 blocks north and one block west. (www.theriversidechurchny.org/)
- Islamic Cultural Center of New York—the first mosque built in the city; No. 6 train uptown to 96th Street, then one block east.
- **Broadway shows**—the Great White Way features The Addams Family, American Idiot, Billy Elliott, Chicago, Driving Miss Daisy, Fela!, Jersey Boys, the Lion King, A Little Night Music, Memphis, Phantom of the Opera, Promises Promises, Rock of Ages, and dozens more plays and musicals (www.telecharge.com/)
- **Fun that is cheap or free**—in addition to the parks, there are lots of things to do in NYC on the cheap that are tons of fun, including tours of historic buildings, musical performances, and much more (see www.clubfreetime.com/free-events-things-to-do-in-new-york-city.asp or www.destination360.com/north-america/us/new-york/nyc/free-things-to-do-in-new-york-city)

Key Internet Resources for Visiting NYC

Here are some websites that should help you in planning your visit:

- MTA Subway Map: www.mta.nyc.ny.us/nyct/maps/submap.htm
- Transportation from JFK: gonyc.about.com/cs/airlinesairports/a/getto_jfk.htm
- Transportation from LGA: gonyc.about.com/cs/airlinesairports/a/getto_lga.htm
- New York City Convention and Visitors Bureau: www.nycgo.com/
- City Hall information for visitors: www.ci.nyc.ny.us/portal/site/nycgov/menuitem.e2a1b26d9be35ff6a62fa24601c789a0/
- Cheap eats: newyork.timeout.com/articles/restaurants-bars/9142/best-cheap-eats-in-new-york-city-everything-under-10
- NYC museums: www.ny.com/museums/all.museums.html
- How to talk like a New Yorker: www.wikihow.com/Talk-Like-a-New-Yorker
- Official New York State Tourism Site: www.iloveny.com/

Yeah, What *He/She* Said

The presidents of GRA organizations have been particularly pithy during the past month...

“If you’ve got a dollar, you can only spend it once.” — Michael Widmer, president of the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation

“There’s something in there for everybody to love and hate.” — Carole Vilaro, president of Nevada Taxpayers Association, referring to Nevada’s package of spending reforms

“[The Legislature is] probably going to have to find a pot of money somewhere, and even if they find a pot of money, there are a lot of people looking for pots of money right now.” — Dale Craymer, president of the Texas Taxpayers and Research Association

“You’re not there but you can collect overtime. That’s a better deal than the teacher rubber rooms. It’s rubber rooms plus!” — Carol Kellerman, president of the Citizens Budget Commission

“The state of Illinois grants pension benefits in the abstract. There is no compelling force to say, ‘If you provide this, you have to reduce salaries or reduce municipal services.’ Every legislative session is full of examples of different individual interest groups seeking to change or increase the benefits of their fund.” — Laurence Msall, president of The Civic Federation

“We have to be careful that we stick with policies that promote fair trade. If we want to tax sales to call centres in, say, Chennai or Mumbai in India, then we have to expect the Indians to tax sales of Kodak digital technology or Harris RF Communications equipment to India. Eventually we all lose.” — Kent Gardner, president of the Center for Governmental Research

GRA Organizations in the News

A sampling of recent press coverage of research and educational efforts by GRA organizations...

What does it say when the voice of moral authority on the Boston City Council belongs to a politician charged with bribery? The Boston City Council recently voted 12-1 to endorse a costly labor agreement that essentially pays firefighters not to show up drunk or stoned. Only Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner, who awaits trial on a bribery charge, voted “no.”... “There was no greater relieved group of people when Ed Kelly offered to postpone the raise and reduce it from 2.5 percent,” said **Samuel R. Tyler**, who heads the **Boston Municipal Research Bureau**, a public policy think tank that urged the Boston City Council to reject the arbitration award. “They saw that as the way out. They didn’t have to take the tough vote.”

A lone voice of sanity on the Council Boston Globe, 6-20-10

On Thursday, June 4, 2010, Mayor Mitch Landrieu signed Executive Orders that enact sweeping reforms of city contracting procedures. In doing so, the newly inaugurated Chief Executive attempts to weigh transparency reforms long advocated by good government groups like the **Bureau of Governmental Research** and critics in the African-American community that worry such changes might exclude minority contractors from the bidding process.

Landrieu revamps New Orleans DBE, contracting procedures The Louisiana Weekly, 6-7-10

Tuesday’s constitutional deadline for the Legislature to pass a budget will come and go without action, as it nearly always does. But the dawn of Tuesday will signal the moment that Californians begin to take note that their state, once again, is confronting a budget crisis that could drag into summer, forcing contractors to miss payments, investors to fret about the state’s credit-worthiness, and lawmakers and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to engage in political gamesmanship that could take California to the brink of insolvency...”It is unfortunate to hear the Assembly speaker portray his tax and borrow and spend plan

as a jobs bill,” said **California Taxpayers Association** President **Teresa Casazza**. “Adding even more of a burden on to job-creating businesses with new and higher taxes will prolong this painful recession.”

Budget cuts equal job losses, Assembly Democrats stress Ventura County Star, 6-13-10

The days of off-shore call centres in countries such as India may be numbered if legislation introduced in the United States congress succeeds. Senator Chuck Schumer has proposed a bill to impose a 25 cent tax on any US customer service inquiry that’s passed on to call centre personnel overseas...**Kent Gardner**, an economist with the **Center for Governmental Research** in Rochester, warns that Schumer’s plan could lead to the slippery slope of protectionism. “The Senator’s intent is certainly laudable - we all want to promote job creation in the United States,” says Gardner. “But we have to be careful that we stick with policies that promote fair trade. If we want to tax sales to call centres in, say, Chennai or Mumbai in India, then we have to expect the Indians to tax sales of Kodak digital technology or Harris RF Communications equipment to India. Eventually we all lose.”

US law could end overseas call centres THINQ.co.uk, 6-8-10

The Port Authority’s policy of allowing suspended police officers to collect overtime without working is worse than the city’s infamous “rubber rooms” — where bad teachers get paid to sit on their butts awaiting disciplinary action, government watchdog groups said yesterday. “That’s being creative. You’re not there but you can collect overtime,” said **Carol Kellerman**, head of the **Citizens Budget Commission**. “That’s a better deal than the teacher rubber rooms,” Kellerman said. “It’s rubber rooms plus!”

Cops ‘robbers’: Watchdog bites PA New York Post, 6-22-10

The Michigan Education Association continues to oppose reforms that would help a hard-pressed state government and school districts throughout Michigan balance their budgets. Michigan's largest teachers union is going to court in an effort to protect unaffordable retirement benefits that draw money away from the classroom. In a lawsuit announced last week, the MEA contends that it's illegal for lawmakers and Gov. Jennifer Granholm to require teachers to start contributing 3 percent of their pay toward their retirement benefits. That requirement is part of a state-adopted buyout plan designed to encourage as many as 28,000 veteran educators to take early retirement this year, saving schools and the state more than \$600 million in 2011... The required benefit contribution for teachers offers savings exceeding \$2 billion over a decade and seems warranted on at least two fronts: Legacy costs — pensions and retirement health coverage — eat up 16.5-percent of each school district's annual budget, or \$360 per pupil, and continue to rise steadily, according to the **Citizens Research Council of Michigan**.

Editorial: MEA's lawsuit is unwise
Detroit News, 6-23-10

Chicago School Board members Tuesday tackled their worst fiscal crisis since Mayor Daley's 1995 school takeover by granting school officials the power to raise class sizes to up to 35 students for the next two years. If Schools CEO Ron Huberman acts on that new power, he's sure to anger hundreds of teachers laid off in the process and potentially the parents whose children they serve... The veteran of the bunch, LaSalle Bank chairman emeritus Norm Bobins, said he was casting "the most difficult vote" of his 15 years on the board. Although the **Civic Federation** has questioned the board's decision to raise class size by five students to save \$125 million rather than take on the union over pay increases, Bobins said, "We signed a five-year contract three years ago... I believe we must honor it."

Chicago School Board opens door to 35 in a class
Chicago Sun-Times, 6-16-10

Soon, local governments will begin hearings on their fourth A.B. - after bubble - budgets. Will the new reality finally sink in? Will cities and counties in Florida start looking at their whole cost structure,

rather than keep trying to limp from year to year, as they have done since 2007? Will they realize that property values may not start to come back even next year? Will they understand that raising taxes must be a last resort?... Last year, **Florida TaxWatch** recommended that state government get pruned, starting with middle management. TaxWatch singled out "assistant division directors, assistant bureau chiefs, assistant directors, etc., because the state, like private-sector businesses, gets more 'bang for the buck' by reducing staff at this level, while minimizing the adverse effect on direct services provided to the taxpayer."

Schultz: Remake state governments
The Palm Beach Post, 6-11-10

Although Idaho residents don't like the property tax and think it's unfair, the state's largest city relies more heavily on that tax than others of similar size to pay for its police, parks, and other services... Idaho already has more than 950 property taxes districts, said **Randy Nelson**, the president of the **Associated Taxpayers of Idaho**. Those include 44 counties, 191 cities, 113 school districts, 76 highway districts, 177 cemetery districts, 151 fire districts, three community colleges, 54 library districts, 24 ambulance districts, and 116 other districts for things like mosquito abatement, sewer, water, and pest extermination. A local option tax "would add complexity to Idaho's tax system," Nelson said.

Property tax not popular, but Boise counts on it
Idaho Business Review, 6-14-10

Indiana Secretary of State Todd Rokita, in a renewed endorsement of vote centers, said Indiana's 3rd Congressional District could save more than \$300,000 in costs during a special election with that system for deciding the contest. The vote centers — centralized polling places that replace traditional precincts and can be used by any voter — have been piloted since 2007 in Wayne, Tippecanoe and Cass counties through the end of 2010... Rokita's office used data from the study, "Vote Centers and Election Costs," which was released earlier this year by the **Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute**. Data from the study estimated that a special election in the 3rd Congressional District — Allen, DeKalb, Elkhart, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben and Whitley

counties — would cost about \$850,000. The same election would cost \$500,000 using vote centers.

**Vote centers get voice of support
Richmond Palladium-Item, 6-13-10**

Throughout his campaign for governor, Republican Charles D. Baker has sought to minimize his involvement in the \$15 billion Big Dig. When he launched his candidacy last summer, Baker said he played a “small role in the Big Dig.” Days later, his campaign said that, as the state’s budget chief under governors William Weld and Paul Cellucci, he had a “limited role in the financing process.” ...”The administration kept denying the obvious,” **Michael Widmer**, president of the **Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation**, a business-backed watchdog group, said in a recent interview. “If you keep spending more on the Central Artery, you’re going to have less to spend on state highways. I learned that in second grade. If you’ve got a dollar, you can only spend it once.”

**Baker’s role in Big Dig financing process was anything but ‘small’
Boston Globe, 6-13-10**

Every candidate on Nevada’s ballot this fall, as well as anyone else who cares about the state’s budget, should read a 15-page document that has 62 specific, easy-to-understand spending reform proposals for Nevada. This must-read document is the work of **Carole Vilardo**, president of **Nevada Taxpayers Association**, and it’s available at www.nevadataxpayers.org if you click on “Publications,” then “Nevada Issues,” then “Spending Reforms for Nevada.” “There’s something in there for everybody to love and hate,” Vilardo said this past week.

**Taxpayers can find lots to like in list of 62 spending reforms
Las Vegas Review-Journal, 6-21-10**

As Luzerne borough starts its own part-time police force, a study by the **Pennsylvania Economy League** says boroughs and first-class townships in Luzerne County are hiring more part-time officers than ever before. The study released this month shows a significant decline in the number of full-

time officers employed by boroughs and first-class townships in the last 38 years.

**Study sees more part-time police
Wilkes-Barre Times Leader, 6-24-10**

The late, great Ron Casey, former editorial page editor of The News, had a saying: “If you want fine wine, go to France. If you want to write editorials, come to Alabama. This is the spot.”...If Casey’s saying was his First Law of Alabama Dynamics, here’s our suggestion for the second: “If you want fine wine, go to France. If you want to push for good government, come to Alabama. This is the spot.”...The state’s foremost good-government advocate, the **Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama** at Samford University, for years has done groundbreaking work on what it takes to improve state and local governments in Alabama. Its studies and quarterly reports point the way toward good government, even though many not-so-good government officials have no intention of heading in that direction.

**Our View: It would be nice if good-government advocates in Alabama had less to keep them busy
Birmingham News, 6-28-10**

While the sky was falling for a number of for-profit corporations last year, a new report on charitable giving in the U.S. points to only a few clouds in 2009’s philanthropic scene. The Glenview, Ill.-based Giving USA Foundation along with Indiana University’s Center on Philanthropy estimated charitable contributions from all individuals, corporations and foundations at \$303.8 billion last year. That’s down nearly 4 percent from \$315.1 billion in 2008 and down 3 percent when accounting for slight price deflation...In the Milwaukee area, 56 percent of nearly 200 nonprofits responding to a survey in July 2009 reported a drop in total revenue from donations over the first half of 2009, according to the Report Card on Charitable Giving survey conducted by the **Public Policy Forum** and published by the Greater Milwaukee Foundation each fall. The survey, which the Forum says offers a “real-time” impression of the industry, does not indicate the level of the decline.

**U.S. charitable giving takes modest hit
The Business Journal of Milwaukee, 6-10-10**

When Governor Carcieri recently signed into law a bill to implement the biggest overhaul of the state's personal income tax system in nearly 40 years, the emphasis was mainly on a historic reduction in the top tax rate. But Rhode Island's individual income tax system does not have just one rate — there are five of them. And what happened to those other rates will have a far-reaching impact on thousands of taxpayers when the new system takes effect on Jan. 1, 2011... The new top rate will help to make Rhode Island more competitive, from a tax standpoint, with other states—which, in turn, should help to attract and retain businesses—and promote job creation, said **John C. Simmons**, executive director of the **Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council (RIPEC)**, a business-backed group that monitors the state's finances.

New R.I. tax law will simplify most residents' returns
Providence Journal, 6-20-10

Replacing the nearly century-old water lines to Lookout Mountain this spring proved to be a steep challenge for Chattanooga's largest water utility... The **Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations** estimates the state had \$28.3 billion of infrastructure needs over five years for all types of water, roads and bridges.

Plugging the water gaps
Chattanooga Times Free Press, 6-7-10

Even with an exemption from having to pay the Texas business tax, times are tough for Darrin Forse's family-owned transportation firm. If the exemption expires, he said, it'll be one more blow for the Pasadena firm that has already downsized, taking several trucks off the road and opting against replacing two employees who left... It will be difficult for lawmakers to keep the exemption at \$1 million, predicted **Dale Craymer** of the business-based **Texas Taxpayers and Research Association**. "They're probably going to have to find a pot of money somewhere, and even if they find a pot of money, there are a lot of people looking for pots of money right now," Craymer said. "I wouldn't rule it out, but I think the odds are going to be long just because of the state's financial straits."

Small-business tax break expiring
San Antonio Express-News, 6-28-10

The state schools chief on Thursday launched a campaign to reform the way public education is paid for in Wisconsin, offering to guarantee a minimum level of state aid for every student, provide more money for poor districts and reallocate about \$900 million worth of property tax credits to general school aid. The collection of proposals from State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Evers will be included in his 2011-13 state budget proposal to the governor in September. The framework announced Thursday earned praise from state groups representing teachers and school boards, as well as some legislators who thought Evers was moving the needle in the right direction by prompting the discussion. But the **Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance** was more skeptical, saying that Evers' "Fair Funding for Our Future" plan has holes, and that it will most likely benefit poor districts only a little bit, at the expense of taxpayers in wealthier communities. The alliance also thinks that the real problem with school funding in Wisconsin lies with the way money is spent by districts that have experienced large drops in enrollment, including Milwaukee Public Schools. "The districts in the most trouble are in the most trouble because they're losing more kids and their revenue cap is getting tighter," said **Todd Berry**, president of the group, who also noted the rising cost of generous fringe benefits for public school employees.

State schools chief proposes revamp of funding system
Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, 6-24-10

Columbia University Educator, Economist and Advocate of Land Tax Reform Dies

C. Lowell Harriss (1912-2009), an economist whose groundbreaking theories on land tax reform led to a widening of public spaces and improved quality of life in domestic and international urban and rural areas, died on December 14, 2009 at his home in Bronxville, N.Y. He was 97. He died from natural causes.

An author of 16 books on economics and hundreds of articles, Professor Harriss was one of the last living economists to experience the Depression. He was known for his seminal work on taxation of land, property tax, finance reform, land values and planning land use. He was a professor emeritus of economics at Columbia University, where he taught for 43 years, from 1938 to 1981. He also taught at Stanford University, UC-Berkeley, Yale, Princeton, The Wharton School, the New School for Social Research and Pace University. He earned Fulbright professorships from the Netherlands School of Economics (now Erasmus University), Cambridge University, and the University of Strasbourg, France.

His professional interests beyond education were extensive, including: Executive Director of The Academy of Political Science; President, National Tax Association-Tax Institute of America; Vice President, International Institute of Public Finance; Chairman, Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, Inc.; Trustee, American Institute for Economic Research; Advisory Member, American Enterprise Institute; Academic Advisor, Center for the Study of the Presidency; and Advisor, Thomas Jefferson Research Center. He was a fellow at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, and a board member of the American Institute of Economic Research in Cambridge, both institutions that serve as leading resources for policy makers and practitioners including the use, regulation and taxation of land. He advised state, federal and foreign governments on tax policy including the U.S. Department of Treasury; the City of New York; New York State; the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico; the Federal District of Venezuela; the Ministry of Finance, Republic of China; the United Nations; and the Agency of International Development of the U.S. Department of State.

In addition to his academic and professional pursuits and achievements, Professor Harriss was well known for his great respect of the role that humor has in making daily life enjoyable and more civilized. He often said that “a smile costs nothing.” He was known for his frequent compilations of cartoons, which he distributed in his mailings to colleagues and friends. As he said, “they get people’s attention”.



Clement Lowell Harriss was born Aug. 2, 1912, in Fairbury, Nebraska. He attended Harvard College and graduated summa cum laude in 1934. Upon graduation, he received a Sheldon Fellowship which enabled him to travel for 13 months throughout Europe, the Balkans, Turkey and Northern Africa, before arriving in Berlin the day Hitler assumed the presidency. This experience was the beginning of a lifetime of travel that would take him around the world nine times and stimulate his academic and personal curiosity and inquiry. Professor Harriss met and married Agnes Bennett Murphy in 1936. While pursuing graduate studies at the University of Chicago and Columbia University, he began his teaching career in 1938 and received his Ph.D. in 1940 from Columbia University. Professor Harriss served as an officer in the Army Air Corps from 1943 to 1946, working on aircraft and manpower procurement, later on the economic problems of the shift of fighting to the Pacific, and finally, on the problems of economic demobilization and the postwar aircraft industry. He is the namesake of the C. Lowell Harriss Scholarship at Columbia College, the C. Lowell Harriss Chair of Economics at Columbia University, and the Professor C. Lowell Harriss Scholarship at the School of General Studies at Columbia University.

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