



The 2015 Gubernatorial State of the State Addresses and Higher Education

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Alabama

Gov. Robert Bentley (R)

[*State of the State Address*](#) March 3, 2015

- Emphasized the role of college and career readiness in economic development and the role of the Alabama Workforce Council in creating partnerships between the private sector, education, and job training institutions
- Said that he wants to reallocate some currently earmarked funds toward a \$250 million to \$300 million trust fund for K-12 and postsecondary education
- Stated that he will introduce legislation providing tuition scholarships for foster children to attend a state two-year college

Alaska

Gov. Bill Walker (I)

[*State of the State Address*](#) January 21, 2015

- Called for increasing career and technical college opportunities, such as those provided by Fairbanks Pipeline Training Center
- Said that students are “fortunate to have great universities across our state”
- Stated that instead of seeking consultants from elsewhere, the state should draw upon expertise from its university system or the private sector
- Lauded the expertise and research at the University of Alaska Fairbanks on Arctic-related issues and its role in the seafood industry and in addressing state workforce needs

Arizona

Gov. Doug Ducey (R)

[State of the State Address](#) January 12, 2015

- Gov. Ducey did not mention higher education in his remarks

Arkansas

Gov. Asa Hutchinson (R)

[Inaugural Address](#) January 13, 2015

- Said that the state will be more competitive through job skill training in high schools and two-year colleges
- Lauded the world-class quality of the state's academic institutions, such as the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

California

Gov. Jerry Brown (D)

[Inaugural Address](#) January 5, 2015

- Said the state will repay a billion dollars borrowed from schools and community colleges
- Praised the state's "rich and diverse system" of education beyond high school
- Stated that college affordability and timely completion is essential
- Pledged not to make students the "default financiers" of the state's colleges and universities
- Said that in order to increase educational attainment, the state, students, and professors need to do their part and the three public higher education segments must cooperate

Colorado

Gov. John Hickenlooper (D)

[State of the State Address](#) January 15, 2015

- Stated that reducing the cost of higher education is a priority for his administration
- Reiterated the state's commitment to have 66 percent of state residents ages 25-34 with a post-high school credential by 2025; the state should target 55 percent by 2020
- Asked for a \$107 million funding increase for higher education in state budget with a 6 percent undergraduate tuition cap
- Said part of the funding increase will be used to provide stability as the state transitions to a new funding formula
- Cautioned that the state's ability to fund higher education at this level "may not last longer" and the state must "identify and develop creative solutions" for higher education financing
- Mentioned the new "Colorado Opportunity Scholarship Initiative" of state-matched scholarship programs around the state and funding for the initiative

Connecticut

Gov. Dannel Malloy (D)

State of the State Address January 7, 2015

- Lauded efforts by lawmakers to keep college affordable

Delaware

Gov. Jack Markell (D)

State of the State Address January 22, 2015

- Said that “every college-ready senior applied and was admitted”
- Stated that manufacturing jobs today require higher skill levels and at least 65 percent of the state’s future jobs will require education and training beyond high schools; however, only 40 percent of state workers have education and training beyond high school today
- Unveiled the “Delaware Promise,” a state attainment goal that 65 percent of the state’s workforce will earn a college degree or certificate by 2025 and everyone will have a high school diploma
- Described the SEED and INSPIRE scholarships, which allow the state’s high school graduates to earn a two-year degree at little or no cost
- Noted an effort that one hundred Delaware companies are providing training, mentoring, and workforce experience through the SPARC initiative
- Outlined plans to create Pathways to Prosperity, which will create partnerships between state employers, universities, and the K-12 system that allows high school students to take hundreds of hours of specialized instruction and hands-on training; students will graduate with industry-recognized credentials and college credits
- Stated that Delaware Tech will partner with consulting firm McKinsey to speed up training of entry-level health-care workers
- Said that employers have created internships for young people through the Delaware Graduates program
- Called for creating a new pipeline of state residents with IT skills
- Noted the increase in the number of high school students taking college credits
- Mentioned business incubators at the University of Delaware and Delaware State University

Florida

Gov. Rick Scott (R)

State of the State Address March 3, 2015

- Lauded the state’s \$10,000 degree programs, tuition freeze, and drop in price of Florida Prepaid Plan
- Called for ending the state sales tax on college textbooks
- Stated that increases in college prices limit access to college and college should not require decades of debt

- Said he wants to work with the legislature to pass a college affordability bill to cap graduate school tuition and bring transparency to university costs
- Reiterated his commitment to not increasing tuition and does not see a need to keep pace with tuition prices in other states
- Outlined new investments in workforce training, advanced workforce training at tech colleges, incentives to create \$10,000 STEM degrees, and summer programs for STEM teachers

Georgia

Gov. Nathan Deal (R)

[*State of the State Address*](#) January 14, 2015

- Argued that key reforms need to be made to K-12 education in order to increase the state's college-going rate

Hawaii

Gov. David Ige (D)

[*State of State Address*](#) January 26, 2015

- Said that a strong university system is key to innovation, original thinking, technology, and state leadership
- Challenged university leaders to “focus on execution, accountability, and delivery in all that they do”
- Praised a state high school for its model of leadership and high expectations, which increased the number of students going to college

Idaho

Gov. Butch Otter (R)

[*State of State Address*](#) January 12, 2015

- Stated that his budget includes more funding for college and career counseling
- Said that the Idaho Education Network will provide more college-level courses to the state's high school students
- Argued that the state colleges and universities have been spending too much time, money, and energy on remedial education
- Described a shortage of skilled workers in a variety of professions, including STEM and trade fields
- Reiterated the state's educational attainment goal--60 percent of Idaho citizens between the ages of 25 and 34 holding a post-secondary degree or certificate by 2020
- Outlined targeted investments in computer science initiatives, an employee readiness initiative, career path internships, and the Complete College Idaho program
- Described energy research initiatives at the state's universities
- Praised the success of the College of Western Idaho

- Called on state residents to explore the possibilities of building a community college in their area

Illinois

Gov. Bruce Rauner (R)

[*State of the State Address*](#) February 4, 2015

- Stressed the need to invest in technical and vocational training

Indiana

Gov. Mike Pence (R)

[*State of the State Address*](#) January 13, 2015

- Called for having more students ready for college or careers

Iowa

Gov. Terry Branstad (R)

[*Condition of the State Address*](#) January 13, 2015

- Praised state colleges for being welcoming environments for veterans
- Noted the state's apprenticeship and job training program, skills initiative, and career readiness certificate
- Lauded the tuition freeze at the state's public universities
- Called upon the Board of Regents to make a set of degrees that only cost \$10,000
- Said that his budget will allowed tuition to be frozen for a third straight year
- Sought more state assistance for students attending independent colleges and universities
- Championed investments in community colleges and training
- Discussed the Center for Human Capital Enrichment in an effort to align education and training
- Introduced the Iowa Student Debt Reorganization Tax Credit, which allows any student who volunteers for "worthy causes" to have payments made toward their student debt

Kansas

Gov. Sam Brownback (R)

[*State of the State Address*](#) January 15, 2015

- Touted the record number of state residents enrolled in technical colleges
- Praised the state's higher education institutions as global leaders in a variety of research endeavors

Kentucky

Gov. Steve Beshear (D)

[*State of the Commonwealth*](#) January 7, 2015

- Noted increases in college and career readiness
- Praised efforts to smooth the transition from two- to four-year colleges
- Stated that Kentucky has made career and technical education programs more rigorous and applicable to jobs
- Lauded the state's modern apprenticeship program
- Called on the state to implement the recommendations of the Dual Credit Task Force
- Mentioned the public-private partnership in new residence halls at the University of Kentucky

Louisiana

Gov. Bobby Jindal (R)

State of the State Address April 13, 2015

Maine

Gov. Paul LePage (R)

[*State of the State Address*](#) February 3, 2015

- Higher education was not mentioned in Gov. LePage's remarks

Maryland

Gov. Larry Hogan (R)

[*State of the State Address*](#) February 4, 2015

- Stated that Maryland has some of the best universities in the country
- Said that his budget will increase the higher education funding

Massachusetts

Gov. Charlie Baker (R)

[*Inaugural Address*](#) January 8, 2015

- Gov. Baker did not mention higher education in his remarks

Michigan

Gov. Rick Snyder (R)

[*State of the State Address*](#) January 20, 2015

- Stated that he wants to make Michigan the top state for skilled trades

- Applauded the Skilled Trades training fund and investments in community colleges that do jobs training
- Described a robotics program and the involvement of a state independent college in the program
- Lauded a tuition assistance program for members of the National Guard
- Said that there is a need to improve career counseling
- Called for partnerships between school districts and community colleges on career and technical education
- Emphasized the need to get students through college faster and wants to reduce college costs through dual enrollment
- Highlighted a “middle college” program between the private sector and higher education that allows students to earn a high school diploma and technical certificate, credits toward an associate degree, or an associate degree in five years

Minnesota

Gov. Mark Dayton (D)

State of the State Address April 9, 2015

Mississippi

Gov. Phil Bryant (R)

[*State of the State Address*](#) January 21, 2015

- Said that the state needs to do more in skill training at community colleges
- Included \$3 million in the state budget for the Mississippi Works Scholarships fund, which will give a full scholarship at a state community college for any student who takes a career readiness curriculum and maintains a C or better grade point average
- Praised a program that offers full scholarships to students who have high ACT scores and want to become teachers
- Lauded the increased rigor for education programs at state universities
- Noted successes in the state’s collegiate sports programs over the last year

Missouri

Gov. Jay Nixon (D)

[*State of the State Address*](#) January 21, 2015

- Praised a strategic bond issuance to fund improvements at the state’s college campuses
- Lamented that while the fastest-growing and highest-paying jobs are in the STEM fields, only 20 percent of undergraduates at the state’s public universities are in STEM majors
- Stated that the state’s higher education policies are “guided by the core principles of quality, affordability — and accountability”
- Lauded the state for having the lowest tuition increases since 2009

- Proposed an extra \$25 million for state colleges and universities that improve performance
- Said that the state is working on improving higher education facilities
- Stated that students deserve to enter the workplace without a mountain of debt

Montana

Gov. Steve Bullock (D)

[*State of the State Address*](#) January 28, 2015

- Said Montana is leading the nation in rewarding veterans for their training and expertise with college credit or credentials
- Praised the increase in the number of high school students taking college credits
- Described a partnership between the university system, local officials, and 100 businesses for education and training in advanced manufacturing, health care, and energy
- Discussed worker training in high-need, high-skilled fields at two-year, four-year, and tribal colleges
- Called on lawmakers to invest in research conducted on the state's college campuses
- Lauded the two-year tuition freeze at the University of Montana and called for another freeze
- Praised the value and educational experience offered by the Montana University System

Nebraska

Gov. Pete Ricketts (R)

[*State of the State Address*](#) January 22, 2015

- Praised University of Nebraska officials for their role in addressing the Ebola outbreak
- Stated that the budget includes increased funding for tuition assistance for members of the Nebraska National Guard
- Said that the state budget includes funding for a pilot program to build a public-private partnership to create a career and vocational education program

Nevada

Gov. Brian Sandoval (R)

[*State of the State Address*](#) January 15, 2015

- Praised the state's performance-based funding system for colleges and universities
- Said that the state budget includes grants to ensure college and career readiness, along with an expansion of career and technical education and STEM education
- Stated that the budget includes \$76 million in new money for higher education, plus \$24 million in bonding for capital construction
- Said the state's higher education system is projected to grow 8 percent over the next budget cycle

- Noted that his budget includes \$10 million in new funding for graduate medical education in order to attract and retain the best doctors

New Hampshire

Gov. Maggie Hassan (D)

Budget Address February 12, 2015

- Stated that the budget restores funding for higher education, freezes tuition at universities, and lowers tuition at community colleges
- Said that young people and businesses are looking for affordable higher education
- Said the state budget will increase funding for higher education by \$13 million over the biennium and \$6.5 million at community colleges
- Called on the leadership of the state's public colleges and universities to contain tuition costs
- Noted that the state funding increase will allow community colleges to lower in-state tuition in 2016 and 2017
- Discussed a pilot program that will allow adults to receive remedial education before they get to the community college system in order to avoid spending their Pell Grant allocation; the governor plans to expand the program to all community colleges by the end of the biennium
- Stressed the importance of STEM education in today's economy

New Jersey

Gov. Chris Christie (R)

State of the State Address January 13, 2015

- Outlined that the state is trying to help non-violent offenders get access to college through the NJ-STEP program
- Said that investments made by Rutgers are bringing new people to Camden's neighborhoods
- Said the state needs to have the wisdom to invest in schools, colleges, and universities

New Mexico

Gov. Susana Martinez (R)

State of the State Address January 20, 2015

- Praised state investments in job training
- Lauded the quality of the state's universities and their role in making the state a high-tech jobs leader
- Called for taking ideas from labs and universities into the marketplace
- Stressed the role of education in workforce preparation

New York

Gov. Andrew Cuomo (D)

State of the State Address January 21, 2015

- Stated that his administration wants to help make the State University of New York (SUNY) and City University of New York (CUNY) into engines of commercialization and job creation
- Called on the state to invest in SUNY 2020 and CUNY 2020 to help the state's economy
- Proposed an additional \$50 million in higher education investment
- Called for "significant reform" in the community college system due to tuition that is too high, too much student debt, and education and training for jobs that do not exist
- Called for linking community colleges to employers in the regions and training for specific jobs
- Proposed a plan to help students with high debt and jobs paying less than \$50,000 to pay off their debt for the first two years after college
- Proposed a plan in which the state would pay full tuition for SUNY and CUNY for top graduates if they commit to teaching in a New York school for five years
- Called for the state to support the New York DREAM Act
- Urged extending the sexual assault policy adopted by SUNY last year to all higher education institutions in the state

North Carolina

Gov. Pat McCrory (R)

State of the State Address February 4, 2015

- Outlined "NC Competes," an economic plan that leverages university research capacity
- Noted investments in community college job training
- Said that costs at community colleges is an issue, and said the state must examine investments in community colleges to ensure that these investments are aligned to programs that close the skills gap
- Touted an initiative to facilitate commercialization of university research
- Lauded an effort to convert military training into college credits

North Dakota

Gov. Jack Dalrymple (R)

State of the State Address January 6, 2015

- Said that strong revenues will allow the state to continue to make strategic investments in higher education and praised investments in higher education in the previous legislative session, as well as changes the funding formula and funding for university infrastructure
- Stated that college affordability remains a concern
- Noted the key role of universities in personal success and state economic growth through research and development

Ohio

Gov. John Kasich (R)

State of the State Address February 24, 2015

- Called the state's colleges and universities "heroic"
- Noted the strong relationship between college presidents and the governor
- Discussed the capitol construction bill
- Praised the outcomes-based funding formula
- Stated that they will create a task force to study the cost of higher education
- Discussed the state's two year colleges offering four-year degrees
- Lauded efforts to award college credits for military training
- Praised university efforts in online education
- Stated that the state will work toward lowering college costs and freezing tuition
- Discussed that the state has \$120 million for student debt relief for those taking in-demand jobs and who stay in the state for five years
- Described College Credit Plus, a state dual enrollment program

Oklahoma

Gov. Mary Fallin (R)

State of the State Address February 3, 2015

- Noted a "skills gap," as 49 percent of jobs in Oklahoma will require a workforce credential or associate degree five years from now, but only 31 percent of working Oklahomans have such credentials
- Described "Mid-America Delivers," a partnership between K-12, higher education, and business that exposes students to career opportunities and K-12 and postsecondary educational pathways tied to opportunities
- Discussed "Oklahoma Works," a public-private plan to build a talent pipeline between K-12 education, career technology centers, higher education institutions, and business
- Mentioned the state performance dashboard and progress made on state goals, such as lowering the rate of remediation for incoming college freshman from 40 percent in 2015 to 30 percent in 2025 and boosting the number of degrees, credentials, and certificates aligned to the state's top five industry groups
- Stated that she would like to put more money into higher education and link the money to performance and outcomes
- Said that she would like to have more students graduating from college in a timely manner
- Noted partnerships between a K-12 system and institutions of post-secondary institutions in order to take courses that count toward a college degree as well as high school graduation

Oregon

Gov. John Kitzhaber (D)

[State of the State Address](#) January 12, 2015 (resigned 2/18/2015)

- Gov. Kitzhaber did not discuss higher education policy in his remarks

Pennsylvania

Gov. Tom Wolf (D)

[State of the State Address](#) March 3, 2015

- Proposed a funding increase of \$15 million for community colleges
- Called for restoring 50 percent of the cuts to the state's higher education system
- Argued that investments in higher education and community colleges will prepare students for the workforce
- Stated his intention to restore job training and apprenticeship programs at community colleges

Rhode Island

Gov. Gina Raimondo (D)

[Budget Address](#) March 12, 2015

- Proposed "Prepare RI" to allow high school students to take college courses while in high school
- Noted the link between higher education and securing high-wage, high-skill jobs
- Lamented the high cost of college
- Put forth a "last dollar" scholarship to cover unmet financial need for students with demonstrable academic performance
- Outlined a plan to create a competitive student loan forgiveness program for college graduates pursuing careers in technology, engineering, and design; the program will cover four years of student debt for 100 high-achieving students annually
- Said that she will announce a new employer-centered workforce training program

South Carolina

Gov. Nikki Haley (R)

[State of the State Address](#) January 21, 2015

- Described a partnership between Clemson University and Rayat-Bahra University to share educational opportunities
- Proposed that if a student is graduating from high school is willing to spend eight years teaching in their underserved home district after college, the state will pay up to four years of tuition at a state school
- Said that if a student who has graduated from college and is burdened by student debt commits to teaching in a rural district, the state will contribute to student loan repayment

- Called for covering the cost of graduate education at a state college or university if the individual commits to teaching in a rural or underserved district

South Dakota

Gov. Dennis Daugaard (R)

[State of the State Address](#) January 13, 2015

- Outlined the “Build Dakota” scholarship program, in which the state will match a \$25 million private donation that will cover tuition costs for students entering high-need programs at in-state technical institutions and work in the state for three years
- Praised a dual enrollment program approved last year that allows students to take courses for \$40 per credit and described dual enrollment as a “win-win-win-win”
- Said that the state is in the process of expanding the health care workforce, with incentives for health care professionals to work in rural communities

Tennessee

Gov. Bill Haslam (R)

[State of the State Address](#) February 9, 2015

- Said that Tennessee was the first state ever to promise that high school seniors could go to community colleges without paying tuition or fees (the “Tennessee Promise”)
- Discussed American decline in educational attainment relative to other nations
- Highlighted the Drive to 55, a state attainment goal to increase the number of individuals with degrees from 32 percent to 55 percent by 2025
- Referred to the Tennessee Promise as a “game changer” and noted the number of students who applied for the program and the number of individuals who signed up to be mentors
- Outlined the Tennessee Promise Bridge program, which will receive \$400,000 in state funding with the goal of bringing first-generation students to campus prior to fall enrollment
- Talked about the SAILS program, which gives students extra help in math during their senior year in high school in order to avoid remediation and spoke of the program’s results in the number of students who avoided remediation and the amount of money their families saved
- Said that his budget plan includes \$1.5 million to help adults with some post-secondary credentials attend community colleges
- Stated any adult will be able to attend a Tennessee College of Applied Technology for free starting this fall
- Mentioned that his budget includes funding for outreach to adult students, technical assistance to local communities findings ways to help adult learners, and a one-stop portal for adults
- Described a \$1 million proposed program to establish competitive grants to 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education for initiatives aimed at student success for veterans
- Said that he wants to keep tuition costs under control and expenses low, and provide education leading to jobs; the state will be investing \$25 million in the Complete College

Act, \$10 million for need-based scholarships, and \$260 million for higher education capital

Texas

Gov. Greg Abbott (R)

[State of the State Address](#) February 17, 2015

- Said that he wants to see more high school graduates go on to college and for the state to make college more affordable and accessible
- Stated that he wants to restrain the cost of higher education, and said that higher education “is not a one-size-fits all approach”
- Stressed the economic returns of two-year degrees and high salaries in some trades
- Stated that not everyone needs a four-year degree, and wants to expand and support the state’s community colleges
- Said that he wants to elevate the research standing of the state’s universities and “attract nationally-recognized researchers and Nobel Laureates to Texas universities”
- Declared higher education research initiatives to be an emergency item
- Noted that higher education is not included in spending cuts

Utah

Gov. Gary Herbert (R)

[State of the State Address](#) January 28, 2015

- Gov. Herbert did not mention higher education in his remarks

Vermont

Gov. Peter Shumlin (D)

[Budget Address](#) January 15, 2015

- Noted the participation levels of the state’s dual enrollment and early college programs, as well as first-generation students in GEAR UP and Talent Search programs
- Described a partnership between Vermont Tech and businesses to create a free Associate Degree in Engineering Technology
- Mentioned the expansion of job training programs

Virginia

Gov. Terry McAuliffe (D)

[State of the Commonwealth Address](#) January 14, 2015

- Called on requiring Virginia Community College System to award greater credit for the skills and training veterans acquired from their service

- Said that his budget calls for no additional cuts to higher education and increases financial aid by \$2.5 million
- Urged the legislature to pass the Virginia DREAM Act
- Praised the work of the state's task force on sexual violence on college campuses, which will deliver recommendations by June
- Called on the State Board of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) to craft a unified sexual misconduct policy for public colleges and universities by July 31
- Proposed notations on academic transcripts for individuals that are dismissed from institutions for violations of the school's sexual misconduct policy, student code of conduct, or university's honor code
- Mentioned that the state convened a bioscience summit with state universities and leading researchers in order to better coordinate the academic and private sector

Washington

Gov. Jay Inslee (D)

[State of the State Address](#) January 13, 2015

- Said that his budget freezes tuition and increases financial aid so more students can receive scholarships
- Noted the increase in tuition rates due to state budget cuts

West Virginia

Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin (D)

[State of the State Address](#) January 14, 2015

- Stated that nearly 60 percent of new jobs created by 2018 will require at least a two-year degree
- Said the state's community and technical colleges have developed 133 new programs tied to workforce development and training
- Noted a partnership between Pierpont and West Virginia Northern Community College to address the skills gap and the relationship between community/technical colleges and the private sector
- Praised the growing number of individuals earning certificates and two-year degrees
- Lauded efforts to provide job training to veterans
- Said that he plans to explore how to get subject-matter experts with an interest in teaching but without a teaching background into the classroom
- Called for a review of STEM-related initiatives in the state because of business demands for qualified workers
- Discussed the ChalleNGe Academy for at-risk students, and the number of students in the program seeking post-secondary education or military careers

Wisconsin

Gov. Scott Walker (R)

State of the State Address January 13, 2015

- Lauded the 5,000 student enrollment increase at the state's technical college system

Wyoming

Gov. Matt Mead (R)

State of the State Address January 14, 2015

- Applauded the creation of the UW College of Engineering
- Praised increasing awards for the Hathaway scholarship program, a scholarship program for resident students
- Mentioned the creation of the Enzi STEM facility at the University of Wyoming, funding for UW science programs and facilities, and STEM summits
- Stated that Wyoming joined Complete College America
- Said that the state budget “strengthens UW and community college systems” and that the University of Wyoming “will not play second fiddle to anyone” in key areas
- Mentioned that his budget includes funding for a High Altitude Sports Performance Training Center, unconventional oil & gas reservoirs research, an entrepreneurship initiative, literacy programs & athletic competitiveness; these programs will be matched with private support
- Said that he values top-tier academic and athletic programs at UW
- Lauded a state college leader, and praised the state postsecondary education community, including career and technical education