

PERSPECTIVES 2024-2025



Eastern Regional Conference

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

2024 was an incredible year in the Eastern Region of the Council of State Governments. In the office, we welcomed new staff, including Jacquie Odanga-Kegode – who is staffing the Eastern Trade Council, Canada-U.S. Relations Committee, and Territorial Relations Task Force – and Grace Policelli, who joined in November as an event coordinator. Around the region, we hosted popular in-person summits on PFAS policy and emerging ideas in housing policy, responded to pertinent research requests, made it to each state capitol between Annapolis and Augusta, and brought it all together for our 63rd Annual Meeting in Baltimore in August.

All of that work continues in 2025, as state leaders look to welcome in first-time legislators and new employees, navigate an uncertain budgeting season, and respond to the top issues of the day from tariffs to school funding, housing, healthcare, immigration, and more.

Throughout the year, you can expect CSG East staff to be in your capitol buildings and around the region meeting with members, providing nonpartisan policy analysis, hosting critically needed policy summits, delivering important leadership development opportunities, and putting on truly unique networking events (including this year's annual meeting in Providence, Rhode Island, August 17-20, 2025). Those working in state governments (and in CSG member territories and provinces) have a lot on their plates, and having a trusted partner operating at national and regional levels is something not easily replaced in-house.

We take our unique style of service to the states seriously. We are a membership organization, and all who work in the legislative branch, the executive branch, or the judicial branch — whether elected, appointed, or hired to serve on staff — are considered members. Whatever ways you may need support this year, our staff stands ready to collaborate with you on the policy priorities that matter most to the communities you serve, especially those that are unique to our region.

We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you in each of our 18 member jurisdictions this year. In addition to the ongoing programming planned for 2025, we hope you will reach out with questions, requests, and thoughts to keep the conversation going for many years to come.

Sincerely,
Your friends at CSG East

CSG East: Creating Policy Solutions

Since 1933, The Council of State Governments (CSG) has brought state leaders together to share ideas and collectively meet the many challenges of governing.

Headquartered in Lexington, Kentucky, CSG features four regional offices: East, Midwest, South, and West.

CSG's Eastern Regional Conference (CSG East) has been located in New York City since 1937. Our team of experienced policy staff supports legislative, judicial, and executive branch officials from our 18 member jurisdictions in areas relating to agriculture and rural affairs, Canada-U.S. relations, education and workforce development, energy and environment, fiscal affairs, health, housing, international trade, and transportation.

CSG East facilitates the exchange of ideas among its member states, provinces, and territories, offers members opportunities to forge relationships with peers working in neighboring states, and conducts fact-based research and analysis to help shape effective public policy.

CSG East also facilitates leadership training and professional development through the Eastern Leadership Academy, held in Philadelphia each August, and the EASTrain program, which brings trainings directly to capitol buildings and member retreats around the region.

CSG East is here for you. Call, email, or visit us online at www.csg-erc.org.

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Credit: Felix Lipov

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Eastern Regional Conference
THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

Recent disasters highlight need for quick thinking and regional collaboration in state government

BY DON HANNON



Francis Scott Key bridge collapse

Visit any city, town, or village in North America, and you will be standing at one extreme end of a long line of highways, roads, ports, runways, and railways that, together, form a continental transportation infrastructure. This complex network undergirds domestic and global commerce, shifting populations, daily commuters, and countless other relationships between people and places.

But these systems are not indestructible, as we are reminded during major storms and other disasters. As natural disasters, changing climate, and increased load grow steadily more threatening, state and local leaders find themselves more and more frequently tasked with addressing breakdowns in the network that strand communities, block deliveries, and snarl traffic. When these collapses — figurative or literal — occur, every hour of delay can be costly.

Navigating these crises is not easy, but each new challenge also presents opportunities to grow and learn from how others have gone about getting their networks repaired and their communities moving again.

In recent years, CSG East member states have had more than their usual share of transportation disasters, including a highway closure in Philadelphia and a bridge collapse in Baltimore. Leaders from Pennsylvania and Maryland attended the 2024 CSG East Annual Meeting — held just a

few miles from where the Francis Scott Key Bridge once stood — to discuss what they had learned from their own response efforts and what lessons regional peers could potentially take from each incident.

Pennsylvania Secretary of Transportation Michael Carroll spoke on his state's recovery from the 2023 Interstate 95 bridge destruction, and Maryland Transportation Authority Executive Director Bruce Gartner discussed the ongoing recovery efforts from the tragic collapse of a significant portion of the Francis Scott Key Bridge over the Patapsco River and outer Baltimore Harbor.

Philadelphia I-95 Highway/Bridge

On June 11, 2023, in Philadelphia, a fuel tanker carrying 8,500 gallons of gasoline crashed on an I-95 off-ramp. The accident forced closure on a critical stretch that carries 160,000 vehicles per day, disrupting commutes, plaguing truckers with long detours, and exacting an economic toll on communities scattered all around the Philadelphia area.

Speaking to the audience gathered in Baltimore this year, Secretary Carroll detailed how the state mobilized private contractors to demolish the collapsed ramp and build a temporary roadway. From his perspective, a pivotal ingredient in reopening I-95 to traffic was the seamless coordination among multiple state, city, and federal

agencies. Working around the clock with building trades and contractors, it took a mere 12 days after the bridge collapse to get temporary lanes built so traffic could flow again on I-95.

“Reopening I-95 in record time was the direct result of incredible collaboration and is a testament to what is possible when everyone is committed to taking action and finding solutions,” Carroll added.

Clear communication among all recovery partners was critical in preventing resource overlap and delays, according to Carroll. Just as important was keeping the local communities and the traveling public informed about the recovery progress, expected delays, and timely information on alternative routes.

Finally, Carroll noted that permanent repairs and enhanced traffic safety measures were made to the highway in time for the busy Memorial Day weekend in 2024, less than a year after the roadway collapsed.

Francis Scott Key Bridge Collapse in Baltimore

But the highway collapse in Philadelphia would be eclipsed months before those permanent repairs were completed.

On March 26, 2024, at 1:28 in the morning, the Singapore-registered container ship MV Dali struck one of the support piers beneath the Francis Scott Key Bridge, leading to a catastrophic failure of the structure.

The ship, carrying the equivalent of nearly 10,000 20-foot-long containers of cargo, had experienced a power blackout, which disabled its propulsion system as it drifted out of the shipping channel. Despite a mayday distress call and desperate attempts to regain control, the ship collided with the southwest support pier of the central truss arch span, causing it to collapse into the Patapsco River.

The disaster resulted in the deaths of six workers who were conducting routine maintenance on the bridge at the time. Two other workers were rescued, one surviving unscathed and the other critically injured. Due to the timely intervention of authorities halting traffic, no vehicles fell from the bridge, averting a greater tragedy.

The collapse severely affected the Port of Baltimore, one of the busiest on the East Coast. It halted almost all shipping operations in the area and caused significant economic disruptions.

During the CSG East Annual Meeting, Director Gartner stressed the importance of close communication and collaboration among all government officials, private salvage contractors, shippers, the trucking industry, the traveling public, and those communities and their citizens



Gov. Josh Shapiro and Sec. Michael Carroll tour I-95 Reconstruction

who depended on the bridge to connect them to their jobs, families, and essential services.

Maryland’s ongoing recovery efforts and subsequent rebuilding of the bridge are targeted for completion in four years at an estimated cost of nearly \$2 billion.

With a longer-duration event like the bridge replacement, Gartner noted that community involvement will be critical to the project’s ultimate success. He also noted that, shortly after the bridge collapsed, the state launched the Rebuilding the Key Bridge website (keybridgerebuild.com) to share information on the project, offer real-time updates, provide alternate travel guidance, and promote engagement opportunities.

Both Gartner and Carroll spoke about the importance of documenting recovery efforts and analyzing what worked well and what failed during disaster and recovery processes. As these and other similar efforts come to pass in the region, CSG East will continue to convene interested leaders to share lessons learned, prepare and adjust disaster response plans, and improve readiness for future infrastructure disruptions. ■

As Climate Change Intensifies, Demands on Legislators of Color Will Increase

BY CHARLES ELLISON



Credit: Charles Ellison

Del. Smith and Rev. Dr. Robinson at Prosperity Summit 2024

What were once described as “once-in-a-century” hurricanes and floods are striking communities with increasing — and alarming — regularity. Heat waves and droughts are more frequent, longer, and breaking long-standing records. Wildfires rage out of control, sending smoke high into the atmosphere and across thousands of miles to regions not accustomed to dealing with heavy smoke clogging the air.

What were once theoretical, academic discussions on climate change are now very real, tangible, dollars-and-cents conversations about policy, emergency response, and disaster relief. These realities have made the issue less partisan in some cases, more by force of fact than by individual will. As climate disasters grow more frequent and intense, financial markets, investors, insurance companies, and banks have started ringing the alarm through changes to lending rates and premiums, while insurance deserts expand in the highest-risk areas.

What is often left out of conversations about climate change impacts is the tremendously disproportionate impact on marginalized, economically distressed, and mostly Black and Brown communities — exactly the groups most ill-equipped to withstand or absorb them.

Elevating and addressing the needs of these communities now will be key to harm reduction in the future, a task that weighs heavily on the shoulders of legislators of color.

Communities of color in harm's way

As a November 2023 study by McKinsey noted, nearly half the Black population in the United States lives in the Southeast, concentrated in states such as Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, and Virginia. These are the states “where exposure to extreme heat, hurricanes, and flooding is particularly high.”

The McKinsey report offers a troubling assessment of how specific, long-distressed population groups are much more vulnerable than others.

“Impacts of climate change — such as property value damage, loss of labor productivity, health problems due to prolonged exposure to heat or lack of clean water and air, and temporary or permanent displacement when a residence becomes uninhabitable — can put the prospect of Black socioeconomic mobility in the United States at greater risk. Black populations are particularly vulnerable to physical-hazard exposure, since they are concentrated in areas especially susceptible to extreme weather. As people and businesses attempt to adjust to a low-carbon economy, they must also further contend with second-order transition risks — such as the loss of jobs in impacted industries — resulting from market changes.”

These impacts, according to many experts, haven’t been happening in a vacuum or on their own. They are the result of centuries of biased policymaking that targeted Black and Brown communities, leading to worse health outcomes, even in the best of conditions, for decades.

“What’s been happening environmentally is we have groups of folks who have, for generations, been redlined into communities near or on flood plains, that have been receiving inadequate infrastructure investment,” says Rev. Jon Robinson, Smart Surfaces senior program director at Metropolitan AME Church in Washington, D.C.

Robinson explains these disproportionate impacts in detail, pointing to what he’s termed “ecological apartheid.” He describes communities long cut off from needed investments and resources.

“Keep in mind these populations have had the federal highway system railroaded through their communities; they have had manufacturing facilities spewing poisonous emissions into their air; or they’ve had their water completely poisoned by lead, as we saw happen in Flint, Michigan. So, here we are in 2024. This started generations ago from deliberate public policy decisions, and it’s still ongoing with climate change making it worse.”

Leaders of color at the forefront

Sorely needed investments in perpetually deprived communities are already on the table at the local, state, and federal levels, but whether these investments can make a difference before more climate disasters remains to be seen.

As climate and environmental impacts worsen, the pressure on state legislators will intensify, particularly for those representing major climate impact zones in heavily populated urban centers. It also places extraordinary burdens on Black, Latino, and other legislators of color, who are most likely to serve districts facing serious climate and environmental risk. States in the south, southeast, and mid-Atlantic don’t just house the largest Black legislative caucuses in the country, they also feature some of the lowest-lying coastal communities and cities built along bays, beaches, and rivers prone to flooding.

What is often left out of conversations about climate change impacts is the tremendously disproportionate impact on marginalized, economically distressed, and mostly Black and Brown communities – exactly the groups most ill-equipped to withstand or absorb them.



Reverend William H. Lamar IV (right) and Rev. Dr. Jon Robinson at a 2025 CCC panel

“Baltimore is one of the top 10 hottest cities from urban heat island effect,” Maryland Delegate Stephanie Smith explains. “Every level of the government is working to not only provide funding, but practical tools around how to address climate change. Federal Inflation Reduction Act dollars have been very useful, especially. And then take how we passed the Maryland Climate Solutions Act back in 2022, with a plan for implementation by the Maryland Department of the Environment in 2023, including a plan to plant 5 million trees to increase tree canopy and decrease heat.”

The level of response to climate pressures depends on the level of legislative influence those Black and Brown legislators can exercise in their respective state. For a state like Maryland, for example, it can be less difficult: it has its first Black governor (Wes Moore), and its state house speaker is a Black woman (Adrienne Jones). Pennsylvania might find it harder with its split legislature, despite also having a Black woman as speaker (Joanna McClinton). Many of these state legislatures house large Black caucuses or unified Black-Latino-Asian caucuses that can combine votes on urgent climate and environmental response when the resources are needed.

However these leaders will respond, there is no longer a question of whether action is necessary. As always, the CSG East Council on Communities of Color will be active in connecting Black, Indigenous, and people of color legislators, staff, and state leaders throughout the region and nation to catalyze the flow of information and promote best practices in meeting these challenges. ■

Rethinking the Future of Learning and Work: Opportunities and Challenges of AI

BY ANDREW JOHNSON



Credit: Shutterstock

The rapid development of artificial intelligence in recent years raises many questions about the effects of emerging technology in every sector, but perhaps most immediately in the education and workforce sectors.

Policy leaders are assessing the impact of AI and taking action to put up guardrails where warranted. Between 2019 and the end of 2023, 17 states enacted 29 bills regulating the use and development of AI. At the federal level, the Biden Administration released an executive order in October of 2023 directing federal agencies to develop strategies and resources for incorporating AI safely and effectively — including in classrooms and the workplace.

To explore some of the emerging policy ideas on AI, the CSG East Education and Workforce Development Committee hosted a session at the Annual Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland. The session, *Navigating the Future of How We Learn and Work: The Impact of Artificial Intelligence in Education and Workforce*, included a variety of state policy experts, including Senator James Maroney of Connecticut and Senator Katie Fry Hester of Maryland. The session also included insights on the impact of AI on schools and the workplace from Alyson Klein and Ethan Pollack, both of whom frequently write about the topic.

AI in education

“AI in the classroom can transform how students learn,” said Hester.

She pointed to a few potential benefits for students, including new ways that AI could provide individualized instruction and assistive technology for students. In one

example, an intelligent tutoring system helped students navigate lessons and develop skills at their own pace.

Already, new AI programs are emerging with a goal to enhance personalized learning. Google’s NotebookLM can generate study material and respond to research questions based on a student’s notes and classroom material.

Similarly, AI programs can serve as a tutor providing customized lessons and feedback to students. One, Khan Academy’s AI program, “Khanmigo,” can provide personalized feedback to students to support areas of growth.

In 2023, Sal Khan, founder of Khan Academy, spoke on the National Constitution Center’s *We the People* podcast. Discussing the state of civics in America and how AI programs like Khanmigo can play a role in improving civic knowledge and discourse, Khan noted that civics is “one of the places where it’s most powerful,” highlighting that “you can debate the AI about issues of the Constitution, the Second Amendment, the First Amendment, it can take both sides.”

To examine how schools are adapting to AI in the classroom, Alyson Klein, an assistant editor at *Education Week*, presented survey data from schools and teachers. She said the conversation has been binary so far — that is, to ban or not to ban. According to a December 2023 survey from EdWeek, one in five districts has banned AI use, with some policies even prohibiting employee use. Klein pointed out that most districts that banned AI quickly reversed course.

New York City Public Schools serve as a prominent example. The district restricted access to ChatGPT on school networks in early 2023, citing the negative effects on

learning and concerns over safety and content accuracy. The district, however, changed their position a few months later, looking ahead to support educators in successful AI implementation, and to explore the “technology’s power and risks.”

Even as some districts seek to limit AI use, most districts don’t have a clear policy, according to Klein. She attributed the difficulty of establishing policies around AI to the different paces technology develops and education policy. “Technology moves fast, while K-12 policy moves slowly and deliberately,” she added.

In the 2023 survey Klein highlighted, the majority of educators expected the use of AI tools to increase in the coming year. In her presentation, Hester pointed out the benefits of using AI tools for teachers. Using AI can help automate mundane tasks, and even speed up curriculum design and lesson planning. In addition, by using AI to assist in student personalized learning, districts can ensure more students receive individualized coaching and improve the accessibility services one person can provide.

AI in the workforce

AI tools are also being deployed the wider economy, with huge implications for how working people in all sectors go about their work, said Ethan Pollack, senior director at Jobs for the Future (JFF).

Pollack shared his organization’s research on this topic. In the fall of 2023, JFF released *The AI-Ready Workforce Framework*. This framework evaluated AI’s impact on tasks and skills occurring throughout in-demand jobs. Pollack highlighted that every occupation they studied will benefit from doubling down on the human skills that will be elevated or augmented by AI.

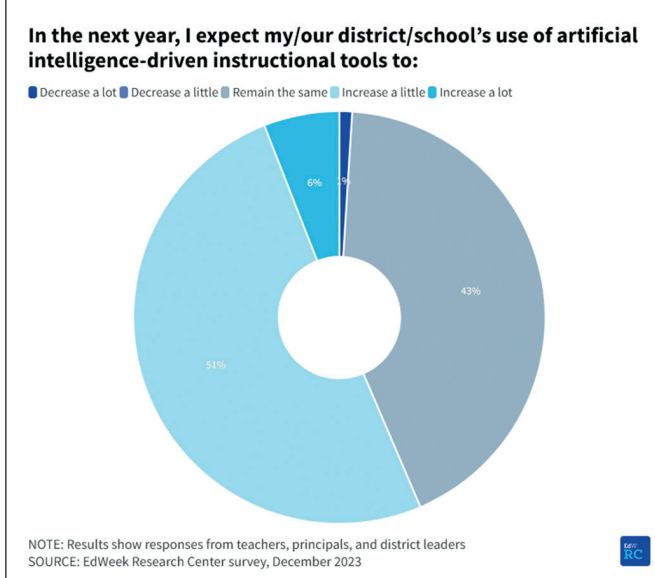
“AI won’t impact jobs in a single direction, but rather different parts of the job will be impacted by AI in different ways,” said Pollack.

According to Pollack, 80 percent of the U.S. workforce could have at least a tenth of their work tasks affected by large language models. He stressed that, since jobs will more likely shift over time rather than overnight, planning deliberately is key.

He also cited data showing 58 percent of workers feel AI will require them to gain new skills. Maroney shared similar data, pointing out that 66 percent of companies won’t hire someone without generative AI skills.

This data represents another commonality between their presentations: the need for training and upskilling in AI.

“Technology is not destiny,” Pollack said. “The impact of innovation on the American worker is mediated by



Will AI Use in Schools Increase Next Year? 57 Percent of Educators Say Yes

policy choices and how institutions, such as employers, worker organizations, nonprofits, and philanthropies respond to these challenges.”

Maroney shared how Connecticut is responding to the challenges of limited training in AI. The state recently developed a free online AI academy. Believed to be the county’s first “Citizens AI Academy,” this online resource provides free classes on topics from the basics of digital literacy and AI use to more advanced skills leading to employment certificates.

Concerns for the future

Still, while AI presents benefits in the classroom and workplace, it brings a variety of challenges, and presenters all shared similar concerns.

Data privacy and security, especially for students, was discussed by both Hester and Maroney. Maroney pointed out that, before the week of the Annual Meeting, the federal government hadn’t voted on major children’s privacy legislation since 1998. With federal responses moving so slowly and new technology rolling out seemingly every year, he hoped states would take on the challenge of moving faster to protect privacy.

Another shared concern was the potential for baked-in biases and discrimination posed by AI. When asked how states could mitigate potential damages from AI in the workforce, Pollack emphasized the importance of creating AI specifically in the context of employment. Maroney offered similar advice, noting the importance of regulatory and statutory review amid AI transformation.

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Offshore Wind and the Once and Future Sparrows Point

BY CHRIS KELLEHER



Credit: Shutterstock

The current picture

For the offshore wind industry, the past few years have been anything but breezy. Fierce economic headwinds in the form of rising costs, snarled supply chains, and logistical problems continue to batter developers everywhere, frustrating states' plans to decarbonize their energy sectors. On the East Coast, they recently blew several major projects completely off course.

In New Jersey, shifting economic winds led Ørsted to abandon their ambitious Ocean Wind 1 and 2 projects in October of 2023. The Danish developer then settled with the state for \$125 million. In Massachusetts, SouthCoast Wind faced similar setbacks when developers canceled their power purchase agreements in 2023, citing costs as a factor. Revolution Wind in Rhode Island and Connecticut has seen multiple delays owing to concerns over financing. So have Maryland's Skipjack 1 and 2 projects.

This year, the industry added flagging public support to its list of woes after a misinformation campaign linking whale deaths to offshore wind development ignited a public row that prompted a federal response. Public support fell even further in July, when a broken turbine blade at Massachusetts' Vineyard Wind farm scattered debris into the ocean and across Nantucket's southern beaches during peak season. That incident also drew the attention of federal officials, who called for a halt to operations while they investigated. Cleanup efforts are ongoing.

In view of these developments, one might suppose that offshore wind's future in the East appears, at best, uncertain. Yet, despite the many challenges, all is not lost. Wind

remains critical to the region's future energy portfolio, experts insist, as well as its economy.

Experts say: Take the long view

Patience is key, and long-sighted investments will still pay dividends, says Jonathan Kennedy, the chief development officer of Clean Energy Terminals.

"I think both governments and private investors understand that offshore wind is a long-term opportunity," he explained at a recent conference in Maine. "So, you don't build a wind port for the next four years; you're building a wind port for 50, 100 years...and you're investing in these assets for 50-100 years. You really have to take a longer view."

But whether the answers are obvious to energy analysts or not doesn't change much for policymakers tasked with approving and managing these projects. Leaders at all levels of government still want to know: How does offshore wind get over the hump? And is it the best choice for their communities?

Policy, from Sparrows Point of view

These questions were high on the agenda for the CSG East Energy and Environmental Committee at the 63rd Annual Meeting and Regional Policy Forum in Baltimore this year. Leaders in labor, industry, and government shared insights into the issue around the committee table and during an off-site tour.

First came the tour. On a sweltering summer afternoon, midway through the conference, a group of 30 legislators

decided to brave the heat, trading suits for safety vests and heels for steel-toed boots to visit the industrial waterfront at Sparrows Point.

At its height during the mid-twentieth century, Sparrows Point was home to the largest steel manufacturing plant in the world. Bethlehem Steel, as it was known then, made the beams that built New York's City's skyline and the ships that won the Second World War, employing tens of thousands of laborers.

Today, the park sits largely abandoned along the shores of the Patapsco River. But new plans have been drafted for the site, with multiple projects vying for funding and a chance to bring Sparrows Point back to life.

One such project promises to turn Sparrows Point into a major manufacturing site of specialized wind turbine components. As currently envisioned by a new partnership between US Wind and the Haizea Wind Group, the project will create "one of the premier offshore wind industrial facilities in the world," the partners say.

For Tim Mack, foundation and localization manager for US Wind, it's not just about manufacturing clean energy solutions domestically, but also about bringing jobs back to the area.

"Sparrows Point has a special historical relevance to the United Steelworkers and the greater Baltimore community, which thrived when Bethlehem Steel was still in operation," he said. "US Wind will bring steel back to Sparrows Point, and we will do so in strong partnership with the United Steelworkers to reinvest in family-sustaining manufacturing jobs that supply the entire U.S. offshore wind industry."

"I think both governments and private investors understand that offshore wind is a long-term opportunity,"

– Jonathan Kennedy, chief development officer of Clean Energy Terminals

To give policymakers a glimpse of the site's potential, US Wind hosted members of CSG East's Energy and Environment Committee on a tour led by Mack. Despite the 90°F (32.2°C) heat, Maryland Delegate Lorig Charkoudian said the thrilling possibility for Sparrows Point's transformation into an energy and economic powerhouse gave her "chills."

Speaking at the conference panel the day after, Charkoudian concluded that, in addition to pursuing difficult policies like regional grid and transmission planning to



2024 Annual Meeting attendees are briefed before heading out to the future site of a wind turbine facility along the Patapsco River in Baltimore.

help states facilitate the buildout of capacity, we should recall Sparrows Point's past, which serves as a reminder that we can and have accomplished difficult things before:

"At Sparrows Point, Baltimore built the ships that helped win the Second World War. The good union jobs also built a strong middle class. The closure of Bethlehem Steel and manufacturing has been devastating for the economy and for thousands of families. Now, we have a chance to re-use many of the structures and rebuild the manufacturing at Sparrows Point for the construction of offshore wind — a crucial component of our fight against climate change. In the last century, Sparrows Point faced down one existential threat and won. This century, we will face down the existential threat of climate change and we will win. And, once again, we will do it with good union jobs that build a strong middle class."

Summary

As states rush to meet emissions reduction targets, diversify their energy portfolios, and build out their grid capacity to meet the power demands of the 21st century, policymakers must carefully consider what works best for their respective workforces and communities. CSG East will continue to facilitate states' efforts to learn from each other during this transformative time. Ultimately, whatever role that offshore wind winds up playing in the region's energy economy, one thing is certain: As the winds of change blow through the old mill at Sparrows Point, the future of energy in the East has never looked so bright. ■

The U.S. Health System is Failing: CSG East Responds

BY SHIRLEY GIROUARD, PHD, RN, FAAN



Credit: Shutterstock

In a study of 10 health care systems (*Mirror Mirror, 2024: A Portrait of the Failing Healthcare System*, September 19, 2024), the Commonwealth Fund found that the U.S. ranked last on health measures and Canada ranked 7th.

Dr. Joseph Betancourt, president of the Commonwealth Fund, stated that the U.S. spends more than any other country, yet Americans are “sicker, die younger, and struggle to afford essential health care.”

When looking at the situation in the U.S., CSG East states fare better than other states and the District of Columbia on health performance (*The Commonwealth Fund 2023 Scorecard on State Health System Performance: Americans’ Health Declines and Access to Reproductive Care Shrinks, But States Have Options*, Commonwealth Fund, June 2023). As shown in Figure 1, all of CSG East members rank in the top 25, with Massachusetts leading and New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Connecticut in the top 6.

Among the “daunting health challenges” highlighted in the Commonwealth Fund report were two issues that concerned state leaders when discussed at the 2024 CSG East Annual Meeting:

Inequitable health care outcomes for women, mothers, and infants — as reflected in poor maternal and infant outcomes — especially among Black, Indigenous, and people of color women.

Worsening health care access and affordability as pandemic insurance policies that closed many gaps phase out and disappear, with state budgets struggling to fill those gaps

In a roundtable discussion, CSG East participants heard from national experts and state, provincial, and territorial colleagues about innovative statewide and community programs, state policies, state funding, and Medicaid enhancement employed to improve maternal and child health outcomes.

During a site visit to Baltimore Healthy Start, participants learned how state and community collaboration resulted in a comprehensive, family-oriented approach that effectively improved health outcomes in an inner-city neighborhood. Another insight came from a Canadian elected official sharing that elected officials in her province were allotted funds they could use in their communities to support non-profit organizations like Baltimore Healthy Start, an idea fellow attendees were eager to take home for their next budget sessions.

Not intimidated by overwhelming changes in the organization and delivery of health care services and rising health costs impacting access and affordability, CSG East health policy committee attendees dove right into the top issues. During a Health Committee round table, chaired by New York Senator Gustavo Rivera, states shared policies related to prior authorization, consolidation, hospital

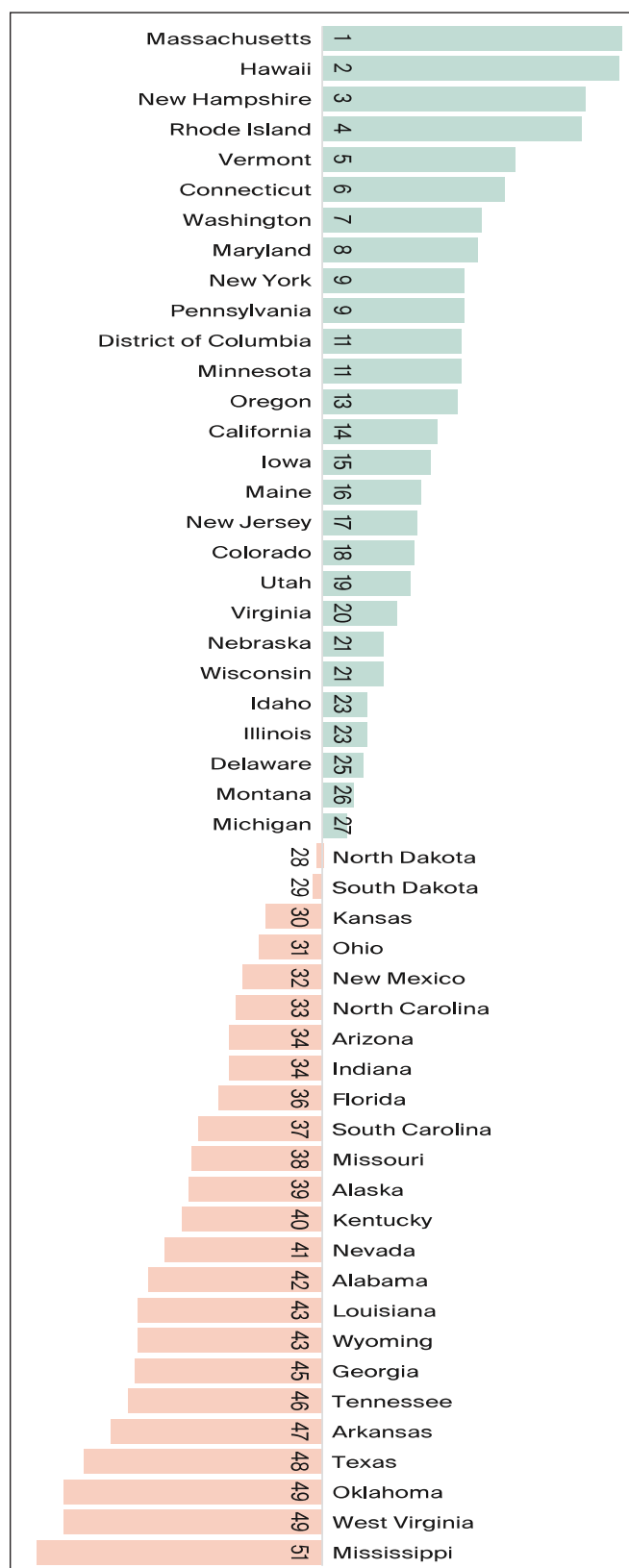
closures, service reductions, mediation costs, Medicaid coverage, and other initiatives states were moving forward to tackle a broad range of health and health system concerns. Speakers included Maryland Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk, the University of Maryland's Cynthia Baur, and April Ashe, director of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus.

States have increasingly sought ways to fix the complicated health care financing system, with growing numbers of states exploring single-payer approaches.

A session on single-payer and other innovations in state health care financing, moderated by Jeanette Ortiz from Johns Hopkins University, provided participants with a brief overview of U.S. and Canadian health care financing approaches. Speakers presented information about the problem, successful innovations such as Maryland's global hospital budget system and Massachusetts's mandated health insurance law, state attempts at single-payer systems, and opportunities for future efforts to reform health care financing through state policy. Other states, territories, and provinces shared what was happening in their jurisdictions. Participants explored the possibility of regional state collaborations and cooperative efforts to address mutual challenges.

Most CSG East members are struggling with the access, cost, and quality implications of horizontal and vertical health care system consolidation. In a session moderated by Senator Rivera, participants heard about models for state market oversight, cost, and transparency [?], facility fees, modification of certificate of need programs, and the roles of attorneys general and other policymakers. Sharing their expertise on these topics were Maryland Secretary of Health Laura Herrera Scott, New Jersey Assemblyman Sterley Stanley, and Harvard University Professor John McDonough. Session participants shared their experiences, outcomes, frustrations, and hopes for using policy levers to address access, cost, and quality problems, ultimately resolving that broader-reaching policy changes may be needed.

CSG members take their role in assuring the health and well-being of their residents seriously. As costs rise, access becomes more difficult, and health care systems grow ever more complex, CSG East will continue to work with leaders to explore, innovate, and collaborate. A new working group dedicated to exploring interstate collaborations will supplement future conversations and summits, as will a 2025 program looking at special issues in rural communities. To get involved, email us at Health-East@csg.org. ■



Health Performance by State. Source: David C. Radley et al., The Commonwealth Fund 2023 Scorecard on State Health System Performance: Americans' Health Declines and Access to Reproductive Care Shrinks, But States Have Options (Commonwealth Fund, June 2023). <https://doi.org/10.26099/fcas-cd24> • https://images.jifo.co/2547186_1685654945366.svg

Expanding Housing Options in Single-Family Zones

BY JOSEPH SHIOVITZ



Rhode Island Speaker Joseph Shekarchi speaks at a 2024 housing tour press event

The rate of new housing production plummeted during the 2008 financial crash, and has not yet fully recovered. Since then, what started as a housing shortage has grown into a housing crisis in the United States, Canada, and much of the developed world.

Approximately 2.2 million units of housing were authorized for construction in 2005, according to U.S. Census Bureau data. But things changed quickly in 2008, and fewer units were approved in the three years spanning 2008 – 2010 than in 2005 alone. The collapse in residential construction continued after 2010, with fewer new homes authorized between 2010 and 2019 than in any of the previous five decades.

In New York City, “permits for middle density buildings were reduced by almost 70% in the post-recession period,” writes Marcel Negret in a report for the Regional Plan Association. The deficit, he says, “represents almost the entire decline in housing production overall between the pre- and post-recession periods.”

Following that dismal decade for home builders, things got even worse: The 2020 pandemic caused further problems by disrupting supply chains and elevating the costs for materials and labor.

Now, nearly halfway through a second straight decade of drastically reduced housing supply, the issue has emerged as one of the great challenges facing the country today, and leaders are eager to unwind the previous 15-plus

years of damage. How they go about it will matter almost as much as how aggressively they opt to pursue their chosen policy responses.

The slow return of missing-middle housing

Although various forms of medium-density housing such as duplexes, fourplexes, and townhouses were incredibly common in the first half of the 20th century, limited new construction has effectively split the market into single-family homes and multifamily apartments. Zoning and land use regulations have transformed to match that evolution, too. Not only do today’s zoning and land use laws favor single-family and multifamily housing, they have also become increasingly rigid and widespread, resulting in both the explicit and implicit exclusion of mid-sized housing options. In many towns and cities, explicit exclusions dictate which types of housing can be permitted by right within a particular zone, meaning — in most cases — only some types of housing can be built without undergoing an environmental review process. Development projects that are not “by right” are subject to public hearings during which proposals can be rejected, postponed, or required to complete costly studies.

The significance of single-family zoning is not that it allows for single-family homes, but that other more naturally affordable housing types are often excluded. In Connecticut, a full 70% of the state’s residential areas are

zoned exclusively for by-right single-family housing, according to Sara Bronin, founder of the National Zoning Atlas, who spoke at CSG East's housing policy summit in 2024. Similarly, analysis by Housing Works RI found that 87% of the state is zoned for by-right single-family housing, while by-right zoning for multiunit options is much lower: 20% for two-family, 9% for three-family, and 8% for four-family.

In the Northeast, some legislators are pushing for new policies to expand the types of housing that can be built. At all levels of government, these proposals aim to revive some of the older multifamily styles and to get more creative in meeting today's housing needs by loosening zoning and land use regulations.

In 2024, Connecticut passed H.B. 5474, which offers incentives to municipalities that adopt zoning regulations allowing by-right "middle housing" development on any lot that allows for residential, commercial, or mixed-use development. Similarly, in 2021, the state passed H.B. 6107 to allow the by-right development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in designated zones and on lots

"All of the things that challenge us to build housing: high interest rates, high construction material costs, the availability of land and parcels that you could assemble to create developable zones are still there. We're just saying we're removing one factor from the barriers to housing production, which is zoning."

– Ed Augustus, Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities



Maryland Housing Secretary Jake Day speaks at a 2024 CSG East panel in Baltimore

permitting single-family homes, although municipalities can opt out with a large enough majority. In Rhode Island, Speaker Joseph Shekarchi and others steered a package of 14 housing bills through the legislature in 2024, including H.B. 7062, providing statewide rights to develop ADUs, and H.B. 7980, which allows manufactured housing development by right wherever single-family housing is allowed.

These major advances follow in the footsteps of some notable examples from around the country. In 2019, Oregon passed H.B. 2001, becoming the first state to eliminate exclusive single-family zoning, thus allowing a range of middle housing types anywhere that single-family homes are also permissible. Only a handful of states have passed similar legislation, including California, Washington, and two northeastern states: Maine with L.D. 2003 in 2022 and Vermont with 2023's S.100, or the HOME Act, both of which expand the variety of housing options wherever single-family homes are allowed.

"If that kind of legislation is introduced, you're allowed to build middle housing in a single-family neighborhood, which means that single-family will exist along with the middle housing development," said Samar Jha, government affairs director for AARP, who spoke at CSG East's 63rd Annual Meeting in Baltimore.

Undoing implicit exclusions

Zoning regulations can also result in the implicit exclusion of various housing options by imposing mandates and various types of cost burdens on developers looking to build medium-density or affordable housing. The most

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EASTERN LEADERSHIP

Sharpen Your Skills

The Robert J. Thompson Eastern Leadership Academy (ELA) offers officials and staff from all three branches of state and provincial government a unique opportunity to hone their leadership and communication skills and network with colleagues from the Eastern Region.

Held annually in Philadelphia, and working in cooperation with the University of Pennsylvania's Fels Institute of Government, the unique five-day program includes workshops and hands-on training with experts from academia as well as the public and private sectors. ELA offers strategies tailored to the challenges facing public officials every day in areas including resolving conflicts, fostering civil discourse, and mastering social media and branding, in a focused setting that promotes experiential learning.

ELA is designed to help members:

- **Develop leadership skills.** Through a series of hands-on group workshops ranging from consensus building to media relations, ELA provides training to sharpen and develop the skills needed to become an effective leader.
- **Improve understanding of key regional issues.** ELA is the only leadership academy designed exclusively for Eastern regional officials from all three branches. Scholars from the Fels Institute of Government and outside experts provide a context for participants to effectively evaluate information, communicate successfully with constituents and colleagues, and develop strategies for relating to the media and the public.
- **Network with the best and brightest.** ELA convenes some of the most promising state officials from across the region to share knowledge and to learn from one another's experiences.



2024 Eastern Leadership Academy fellows at closing reception.

Here is what recent graduates are saying about ELA:

"At ELA, we acquired tools that cover every aspect of what it takes to do our work as legislators and leaders."

– MNA Marie-Belle Gendron, Quebec

"ELA reminded me of my worth and value as a part of state government. I am so honored to have been selected to participate in a program with some of the most inspiring and ambitious professionals in the region."

– Juliann Villecco, Delaware

"The personal connections I have made with members of my class are among my most valuable takeaways."

– Ashley Miller, New Hampshire

"I had heard from other ELA Fellows how wonderful it was to spend time and meet their peers from other states but it's impossible to really understand it until you go through the program."

– Jon Patterson, Policy Analyst, House Majority Caucus, Delaware

Introducing Daykia: 2024 Class President of CSG East

"Are you for real?" That was my first response when the Delaware State Senate's chief of staff offered me the position of legislative assistant to the majority whip. I had no political background and no idea how to navigate the complexities of legislative work. It felt like I had been thrown into a world far beyond my understanding, and imposter syndrome hit me hard. The doubts were immediate: "Do I belong here? Am I good enough for this?"

Despite the fear, I decided to move forward. I learned everything I could from seasoned staffers and legislators, and I wasn't afraid to ask questions, even when it made me feel out of place. Mentors saw potential in me, even when I struggled to see it in myself. Slowly, I began to find my footing.

This year marked a big step up in my career in public service. In the summer, I got notice that I had been selected to join 31 other state and provincial officials from across the CSG Eastern Region in Philadelphia for the Robert J. Thompson Eastern Leadership Academy (ELA). I was honored to be part of this group of incredible individuals. Although I knew I had the skills to thrive in the program, self-doubt still crept in. But if I've learned anything, it's to push through the doubts and insecurities and keep chasing my goals no matter what.

I'm glad I did. My time at ELA was transformative. Philadelphia — with its rich history and vibrant, diverse community — provided the perfect setting for reflection and growth. The program didn't just sharpen my leadership skills, it also deepened my belief in the power of collaboration. Engaging with peers from across our region reminded me that the issues we face — whether housing insecurity, education reform, public health, or child welfare — require solutions that go beyond state borders.

I came into the program with a deep understanding of many of those challenges. Growing up in the foster care system, I saw firsthand how government policies and programs can make a difference in support-



Daykia with PA Rep. Greg Scott and NJ Asw. Shama Haider

ing individuals, families, and communities in need. It became clear to me that people make better decisions when they know more, and what you don't know can truly affect your life. This personal background fuels my passion for public service and drives my commitment to ensuring that all voices, especially those often overlooked, are heard. I'm dedicated to bridging the gap between state government assistance and community involvement.

Just as important, it gave me another chance to push myself out of my comfort zone while I pursue my own growth and leadership goals. During the program, I was nominated to run for class president, a unique opportunity for a staff member like me. Not only were my fellow nominees and I able to step forward with our own beliefs and initiatives in a way we don't always get to back home, but we also got to put the program's lessons in public speaking, networking, connecting across the political divide, and other key skills to immediate use. After the speeches were over and the ballots were cast, I was chosen to represent our class as the 2024 ELA class president.

It's a big responsibility. The individuals I had the privilege of meeting at ELA 2024

were truly remarkable and passionate about public service. In just a few days, I gained more knowledge and perspective from them than I could have ever imagined on my own.

I would say the biggest takeaway from this program is the importance of integrity and what it means to live a life with integrity versus a life without it. ELA challenges you to either start or deepen that journey, and I believe that by spreading this message, we can strengthen not only our political structures but also the individuals that make up our institutions and communities. A future during which we work together for meaningful change starts by improving each person involved and creating lasting relationships between them.

Being elected as 2024 class president is a true honor, and I look forward to continuing the work of building bridges and fostering collaboration across our region with you and all of those who call the Eastern Region home.

Warm regards,
Daykia Hunter-McKnight
2024 class president, CSG East

THE 2024 CSG EAST ANNUAL MEETING

Leaders and policy experts from the East gathered in Baltimore for the 63rd Annual Meeting of CSG east in late July 2024. The busy agenda offered attendees the chance to discuss pressing issues ranging from artificial intelligence in education to emerging ideas in housing policy, healthcare financing, election security, and more.

2024 co-chairs Speaker Adrienne Jones and Senate President Bill Ferguson guided attendees through a busy schedule of committee meetings and policy roundtables. Taking center stage at the Baltimore meeting were a series of “field trips” that offered members a chance to get out into the city of Baltimore to see state-funded affordable

housing units, new school construction, agricultural facilities, Amazon distribution infrastructure, and a future wind power manufacturing site.

Ten years after the previous CSG East annual meeting in Baltimore, we want to extend special thanks to all of our hosts in Maryland for putting on a great meeting in 2024. Thanks also to this year’s sponsors, panelists, and all those who traveled from the more distant parts of the region to make sure each community and jurisdiction in CSG East was represented at the 2024 meeting. We look forward to seeing you in Providence in 2025!



Maryland Speaker Adrienne Jones



Senate President Bill Ferguson at 2024 Annual Meeting



Geoffrey Canada and Gov. Wes Moore



Pennsylvania Speaker Joanna McCClinton

THE 2024 CSG EAST ANNUAL MEETING



New York legislators at the 2024 CSG East Annual Meeting



Pennsylvania Rep. Chris Rabb



CSG Executive Director David Adkins



Vermont Senator Pat Brennan and recently retired CSG East Transportation Analyst Don Hannon

Artificial Intelligence and Education, continued from page 9

Specific to the workplace, there are plenty of concerns about automation and worker replacement, particularly among “knowledge-based jobs.” Reports of displacement after the release of ChatGPT, specifically writing and content development, drew attention to the negative impact AI can have on skills once believed to be safe from automation or displacement.

Presenters in this session, however, had different thoughts. There was shared concern about the future of the workforce, but they shared optimism that it could be done proactively, and even result in more positive outcomes. Pollack stressed that creating systems and supports for workers can help limit the negative effects.

“By helping workers take advantage of new opportunities and assisting workers who are acutely impacted by automation return to stable work, we can promote greater opportu-

nity and broadly shared prosperity for all,” said Pollack.

Hester shares this optimism, particularly around the concern about equity. Both she and Maroney addressed the concern highlighted in a McKinsey report showing how inequitable access to AI could increase the racial economic gap in the United States by \$43 billion annually.

Hester sees another path forward. She sees a possibility that technology is used to “dismantle the existing barriers to economic mobility.”

“How?” Hester posed, “we start with public schools.” She sees AI as a tool that can be used to break down these barriers. Establishing rigorous AI guidance, investing in educator professional development, and updating academic standards for AI literacy are part of that foundation, opening up new opportunities for students graduating into the economy of tomorrow.

“It won’t be easy,” she said, “but it will be worth it.” ■

Zoning and Single Family Housing, continued from page 14

common types of burdens that dissuade developers include parking requirements, minimum lot sizes, and building height restrictions. All such requirements, even when projects do go ahead, can affect the cost of housing.

Maine and Vermont each found ways to reduce these burdens in recent years. To reduce the costs of an affordable housing development, Maine’s L.D. 2003 limits the parking requirements to two spaces per three units. For ADUs, the law prevents the conditional requirement of any new parking spaces. Vermont’s HOME Act limits parking requirements to one space per unit in areas served by sewer and water.

New Hampshire has also taken strides to curtail exclusionary zoning. In 2016, the state legalized ADUs statewide with the passage of S.B. 146. Just this year, Granite State legislators passed H.B. 1400, which reduces residential parking requirements to two spaces per unit. In 2021, New York proposed but ultimately failed to pass S. 7574, which would have reduced minimum lot sizes, prohibited off-street parking as a requirement, and legalized middle housing on any residential lot with additional density permitted near transit.

Other states have found incremental ways to cut the red tape around the development of ADUs, middle housing types, and manufactured housing to expand the availability of housing options in single-family zones.

Maryland passed the governor’s three-bill package of housing legislation in 2024, including H.B. 538, or the Housing Expansion and Affordability Act of 2024.

“On all single-family zoned property in the state, now, in every county and every jurisdiction, modular and manufactured housing is allowed by right,” said Jake Day, the secretary of Maryland’s Department of Housing and Community Development, at CSG East’s 2024 Annual Meeting.

Massachusetts also legalized ADUs in 2024 with the passage of its historic \$5.16 billion Affordable Homes Act, H. 4977. At a panel discussion at this year’s Annual Meeting, Secretary Ed Augustus, who leads the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, described some of their initiatives and outlined the realistic challenges still imposed by the housing crisis.

“All of the things that challenge us to build housing: high interest rates, high construction material costs, the availability of land and parcels that you could assemble to create developable zones are still there,” he said. “We’re just saying we’re removing one factor from the barriers to housing production, which is zoning.”

States are continuing to explore zoning reforms that would accelerate the production of new housing and allow for a wider variety of housing options to be available at lower costs, and dozens of new ideas are sure to be introduced — or reintroduced — in 2025.

Building on an in-person summit, multiple panels at the Annual Meeting, and a fall webinar series, CSG East will follow along and continue to bring leaders together to share their best ideas and biggest challenges along the way. ■



CSG EAST

64th Annual Meeting & Regional Policy Forum

Providence, Rhode Island ★ August 17-20, 2025

We **hope** to see you there!





EAST

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