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## Press Release



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### **In State of the State Address, Governor Hassan Calls for Bipartisanship to Combat Substance Abuse and Continue Innovative Economic Growth**

*Outlines Vision for Strengthening Comprehensive Approach to Heroin and Opioid Crisis, Including Reauthorizing Bipartisan Health Care Expansion Plan*

*Announces New "Gateway to Work" Initiative to Expand Workforce, Support Job-Creating Businesses and Close Opportunity Gap*

CONCORD – Calling for continued bipartisanship to combat the heroin and opioid crisis and to continue innovative economic growth, Governor Maggie Hassan delivered her State of the State address today, highlighting New Hampshire's economic progress and outlining her vision for strengthening the state's comprehensive approach to substance abuse, supporting job-creating businesses and expanding middle class opportunity.

"This week, as our country's focus turns toward New Hampshire and our First In The Nation primary, Americans will see that the state of our state is strong – and getting stronger." Governor Hassan said. "By partnering together over the past three years, and bringing the traditions of hard work, collaboration and bipartisan problem-solving back to Concord, we have come a long way since the depths of the recession."

While the state's economy continues to strengthen – with the lowest unemployment rate in nearly 15 years and a \$62 million surplus in Fiscal Year 2015 – Governor Hassan stressed that state leaders must continue working together to keep the economy moving forward and help Granite Staters adapt to a changing American economy.

"We have made real bipartisan progress to set the foundation for a new generation of innovative economic growth, but our work to keep New Hampshire moving forward must never cease," Governor Hassan said. "While our state's economy remains ahead of the curve, the American economy has fundamentally changed."

"It is critical that we equip our people to adapt to this changing economy so that we can build a future where everyone has the opportunity to get ahead and stay ahead," Governor Hassan said. "A future where New Hampshire's innovative companies can create more high-quality, 21st century jobs that will support a thriving middle class. And a future where our vibrant communities remain destinations for families, visitors and young people."

To continue building the foundation for innovative economic growth, Governor Hassan outlined today the need for continuing efforts to combat the heroin and opioid crisis; supported other measures critical to public safety; called for the reauthorization of the bipartisan New Hampshire Health Protection Program; highlighted workforce development efforts, including announcing a new initiative to expand the workforce and close the opportunity gap; and discussed how a strong transportation infrastructure, affordable energy, clean water and a small, responsive state government are critical to supporting innovative businesses.

Governor Hassan emphasized that public safety is government's first and foremost responsibility and that the heroin and opioid crisis remains the most urgent public health and public safety challenge facing New Hampshire. The Governor signed bipartisan expedited legislation in January that cracked down on fentanyl, streamlined access to treatment and strengthened the state's prescription drug monitoring program, and she urged members of both parties to continue working together to combat the crisis and help save lives.

"We all recognize the serious threat that substance abuse poses to our people and to our high quality of life, and we have been working together to strengthen our efforts to combat this crisis," Governor Hassan said. "But we

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know that this fight is far from over. We must be constant and focused in our work to strengthen these efforts, and to give patients, providers, families, educators and law enforcement better tools to combat this horrible epidemic."

In order to strengthen the state's comprehensive approach to substance abuse, Governor Hassan highlighted several of her proposals that have broad, bipartisan support. These include additional support for local law enforcement; prevention efforts such as youth prevention programs, improved provider training, updated prescribing practices and new technology for the prescription drug monitoring program; a statewide drug court plan; increasing access to treatment and treatment capacity; and ensuring a robust, long-term recovery system.

The Governor also continued her call to reauthorize the bipartisan New Hampshire Health Protection Program as critical to the health and well-being of New Hampshire's citizens, businesses and economy and essential to expanding substance abuse and behavioral health treatment capacity in New Hampshire. Through expansion, more than 46,000 hard-working Granite Staters have the health and financial security that comes with quality, affordable health coverage, and thousands have accessed substance abuse and behavioral health services.

"It's clear that the New Hampshire Health Protection Program is making a real difference for our people and boosting our economy, and we must re-authorize it now," Governor Hassan said.

Continuing her focus on helping innovative businesses grow and create jobs by building a strong workforce, the Governor discussed efforts to ensure a strong education at all levels, including a new "65 by 25" goal to ensure that 65 percent of New Hampshire's population holds a postsecondary credential or degree by 2025; stronger science standards, new options for math classes and a coding curriculum; fully funding the adequacy formula this year; and strengthening early childhood education.

"A strong workforce begins with a strong education at all levels – from early childhood, to our K-12 system, to higher education," Governor Hassan said. "A high school degree is rarely enough for jobs in the changing economy, and our people need access to affordable higher education in order to climb the ladder of opportunity."

The Governor also announced a new initiative, Gateway to Work, which complements the successful New Hampshire Working Program by repurposing existing federal funds to help those on public assistance programs move into high-quality jobs and sustainable careers. The initiative focuses on strengthening job training, creating new apprenticeship opportunities, removing barriers to the workforce, and preparing at-risk youth for the workplace.

"As we develop the highly skilled workforce of the future, innovative businesses looking to grow here in New Hampshire need more workers now," Governor Hassan said. "We have an opportunity to better use the talent of our own people right here in New Hampshire, helping our businesses thrive while closing the opportunity gap for New Hampshire's children and families."

"The successful New Hampshire Working program has helped people stay at work, return to work and get ready to work through the recession," Governor Hassan said. "And today I am announcing a new plan – Gateway to Work – that complements New Hampshire Working to help develop and expand our workforce as our economy continues to strengthen, while at the same time closing the opportunity gap for our families."

Gateway to Work will create a new partnership between innovative businesses and the community college system to create apprenticeship programs in high-need areas such as advanced manufacturing, information technology networking, and health care; provide case managers to all participants to help them overcome barriers to success in the workplace; provide employers with job-training grants and salary support for eligible workers for six weeks to three months; help individuals served by the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program overcome barriers to the workforce such as access to child care and transportation; expand in-home visitation; and expand access to after-school and summer youth employment programs, as well as create a pilot program for counselors to work with at-risk middle schoolers to develop career and education plans.

"Through Gateway to Work, we can provide more of the workers our businesses need to thrive," Governor Hassan said. "And we can help give more of our families the opportunity to work their way to self-sufficiency and into the middle class."

The Governor also addressed other economic priorities that are critical to supporting innovative businesses, including transportation, affordable energy and clean air and water.

To continue strengthening New Hampshire's transportation infrastructure, Governor Hassan called for support of her Ten-Year Transportation Plan proposal, which focuses on fixing and preserving bridges, begins the first phase of widening the portion of Route 106 critical for access to the New Hampshire Motor Speedway, completes the expansion of Interstate 93, advances and accelerates the Exit 4A project in Londonderry and Derry, and leverages federal funds to move forward with commuter rail from Boston through Nashua to Manchester.

"Each of these critical transportation projects will help set the foundation for long-term economic growth, and we must pass a Ten-Year Plan that supports these important priorities," Governor Hassan said.

On energy, the Governor touted the success of the state's clean energy economy, which is helping to create jobs, reduce costs and combat climate change and recently ranked New Hampshire as one of the top-five states for renewable energy. Because of that success, New Hampshire's solar industry is now at the statutory limit on net metering, and Governor Hassan reiterated her support for legislative efforts to lift the cap on net metering.

"We must strengthen our energy infrastructure and diversify our energy resources to reduce costs for our families and businesses, to create jobs, and to achieve a more reliable clean-energy future," Governor Hassan said. "And we must continue to be a leader in promoting clean air and combating climate change, which threatens our economic future and the health of our citizens."

After calling for continued bipartisan collaboration to ensure that New Hampshire's economic progress continues, the Governor closed with a reminder that the eyes of the nation will be on New Hampshire in the coming days for the First In The Nation Presidential primary, saying that Americans will "see a place where we make government work for our people and our businesses. A place where we embrace individualism and community like nowhere else. A place where we overcome our political differences, move past the inevitable arguments, and come together to make progress for our people, our communities and our economy. And a place where we are facing the challenges of a changing economy head on, keeping our communities safe and secure, and working together to help our families and businesses adapt and thrive."

**[Full text of Governor Hassan's State of the State address, as prepared for delivery](#)**

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