

Public Health and Disaster Response Task Force



Governor Josh Green
Co-Chair
Hawaii



Governor Phil Scott
Co-Chair
Vermont

OUR JURISDICTION

The Public Health and Disaster Response Task Force has organizational jurisdiction over a broad range of issues including Disaster and Emergency Public Health Response, Homeland Security, Cybersecurity, Healthcare, Human Services, Nutrition, and Immigration.

OUR PRIORITIES

Ensure the National Guard has the resources and authorities necessary to serve as an operational force to respond to domestic emergencies;

Secure appropriate resources for states and territories to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters;

Strengthen federal, state, territorial, local and private sector partnerships to enhance cybersecurity;

Advocate on behalf of states and territories for adequate resources and guidance during the unwinding of the COVID-19 emergency declarations;

Support PREVENT Pandemics Act implementation and Bipartisan Safer Communities Act implementation;

Improve supply chain infrastructure; and

Work with the U.S. Congress and the Administration on addressing telehealth, mental health, substance use, health care workforce, health care infrastructure, equity, human services issues, and nutrition.

OUR WORK

Preparing for Potential Energy Disruptions

In February 2023, the Task Force [hosted a policy discussion](#) on how Governors can prepare their states and territories for potential largescale, sustained energy disruptions, through leveraging federal resources available to build resiliency, establish best practices and strengthen response efforts.

The session featured conversations with: Jason Bordoff, Founding Director, Center for Global Energy Policy, Columbia University; Allison Clements, Commissioner, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; and Puesh Kumar, Director, Office of Cybersecurity, U.S. Department of Energy.

Preparing for and Responding to Concurrent Crises

In July 2023, the Task Force [hosted a policy discussion](#) on how Governors can prepare for and respond to concurrent crises. The session featured a conversation with Juliette Kayyem, Belfer Senior Lecturer in International Security at the Harvard Kennedy School, and author of *The Devil Never Sleeps: How We Live in an Age of Disasters*. Kayyem offered six tips for how Governors can play a significant role in effectively managing a crises:

- Maintain situational awareness;
- Maintain strong communication;
- Remain strategically oriented;
- Implement a state disaster recovery office;
- Conduct an after-action review; and
- Incentivize resilience and mitigation planning

During a question-and-answer session, Governors shared some of the challenges facing their states and territories and discussed potential solutions with Kayyem.

Funding Critical Needs

In May 2023, the Task Force [wrote to House and Senate Appropriators](#) requesting the inclusion of Governors' top priorities in the Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations bills. These requests included robust funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant, grants to support state strategic stockpiles, and more; increased National Guard personnel; continued support for preparedness grants; and robust funding to further cyber resilience and response capabilities.

The Task Force also previously advocated for the use of Title 32 in response to COVID-19 as well as the full funding for the National Guard and the FEMA Public Assistance Program. The Task Force [successfully advocated for a 3-month extension](#) of the authority to July 1, 2022, that provided states and territories additional time to prepare.

State And Local Leaders Urge Congress to Extend TANF Program

In September 2023, the National Governors Association, along with other state and local organizations, [sent a letter to Senate Finance Committee and House Ways and Means Committee leadership](#) urging a one- year extension to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The TANF program supports the economic mobility of families experiencing poverty by providing financial assistance and community services.

Congress last reauthorized TANF in 2005, and a series of short-term extensions has created significant uncertainty regarding the availability of funds. A one-year extension would support state and local agencies' implementation of recent changes authorized by the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023, while minimizing disruptions in service delivery.

Members

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American Samoa

Governor Gavin Newsom
California

Governor Ned Lamont
Connecticut

Governor Leon Guerrero
Guam

Governor Kim Reynolds
Iowa

Governor Tim Walz
Minnesota

Governor Chris Sununu
New Hampshire

Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham
New Mexico

Governor Kathy Hochul
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Governor Spencer Cox
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