



BILL HASLAM
GOVERNOR
STATE OF TENNESSEE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Monday, January 29, 2018

CONTACT: Jennifer Donnals
OFFICE: (615) 741-3763

HASLAM: TENNESSEE WILL LEAD THE NATION IN JOBS, EDUCATION AND GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

Governor Challenges Tennesseans to Be the Best in Final State of the State Address

NASHVILLE – In his final State of the State address to the General Assembly, Gov. Bill Haslam this evening challenged all Tennesseans to lead the nation in creating high-quality jobs, improving the education of our students, and providing the most efficient and effective state government services.

“Seven years ago we raised our expectations. We became the kind of leaders who didn’t just talk about cutting taxes and enhancing services, we actually did lower taxes while growing our economy and providing access to high quality education. We cannot lose the momentum we have worked so hard to build,” Haslam said.

Haslam reflected on the past seven years, working with the General Assembly to create a strong commitment to jobs, education and conservative fiscal policy that has resulted in significant accomplishments:

- Lowest unemployment rates in the state’s history and a job growth rate greater than 17 percent, with nearly 400,000 net new private sector jobs created;
- The fastest-improving students in the nation, across math, reading and science, and the highest high school graduation rates the state has ever seen;
- With the proposed Fiscal Year 2018-19 budget, nearly \$1.5 billion invested into K-12 education, with \$500 million going to teacher salaries;
- More than \$500 million in tax cuts to Tennesseans, including a 30 percent cut on groceries;
- A cut in year-to-year spending by more than a half billion dollars; and
- Tripling the state’s Rainy Day Fund.

All Tennesseans have access to college free of tuition and mandatory fees through Tennessee Promise and Tennessee Reconnect, the landmark programs Haslam launched in 2014 and 2017, respectively. To help ensure those students complete college and enter the workforce with degrees or certificates, Haslam this evening announced the Complete to Compete initiative, which includes the [Complete College Tennessee Act of 2018](#), restructuring financial aid requirements for Promise and HOPE scholarships to keep students on track for on-time



BILL HASLAM
GOVERNOR
STATE OF TENNESSEE

completion, and requiring community colleges to implement structured, ready-made schedules for all incoming full-time students based on their academic program.

Haslam also announced plans to bring needed [reforms to Tennessee's juvenile justice system](#) that will strengthen families and communities while promoting public safety and ensuring a responsible and effective use of limited resources. The governor's legislation follows recommendations from a task force on juvenile justice led by House Speaker Beth Harwell and Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris.

Last week, Haslam announced [TN Together](#), a comprehensive plan to end the opioid crisis that focuses on prevention, treatment and law enforcement. The governor's FY 2018-19 budget includes nearly \$15 million in new state funds (\$30 million total) for TN Together.

The governor's proposed \$37.5 billion budget continues his focus on jobs, education, and efficient and effective government.

Notable budget highlights investments include:

- More than \$200 million in new state funding for K-12 education, including additional funds for teacher compensation;
- Nearly \$100 million for higher education initiatives;
- \$128 million for job growth investments, including programs that target rural communities; and
- Increases to bring the state's Rainy Day Fund to \$850 million.

The governor's budget proposal reduces state spending overall by more than \$200 million, continuing Haslam's focus on efficient and effective government. Over Haslam's tenure, annual state budget growth is only 2 percent, by far the lowest growth rate of any administration over the past 40 years.

The governor's address and budget documents will be available after 6:00 p.m. CST at tn.gov/governor.

###