Bond Case Briefs

Municipal Finance Law Since 1971

Trump Administration Hosts Forum on State-Federal Relations.

WASHINGTON — State officials from around the U.S. met here Wednesday with senior members of the Trump administration to discuss intergovernmental affairs.

Officials from 44 states and four territories attended the event—chiefs of staff, deputy chiefs of staff and policy directors among them. There were no governors at the meeting, which the White House dubbed a "forum on state and federal relations."

Doug Hoelscher, a deputy director of intergovernmental affairs for the Trump administration, served as a point person for the event.

Energy Secretary Rick Perry, Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price, Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney, and Linda McMahon, who leads the Small Business Administration, were on hand and spoke about White House initiatives and priorities.

Anna Davis, director of the Office of Government Relations at the National Governors Association, attended the event.

"They clearly talked about that the federal government does have a role, but really decisions need to be made at the state level to the extent possible," Davis said as she characterized the comments administration officials made at the forum.

"It was an opportunity for them to discuss how they think they have been successful in that and how they want to engage governors further," she added.

Some of the specific policy areas brought up at the meeting included hurricane response and infrastructure.

Davis wasn't aware of any significant new information that was shared yesterday about the Trump administration's pending infrastructure investment plan, or the timeline for releasing it.

But she did say DJ Gribbin, an assistant to the president who is helping spearhead the administration's infrastructure efforts, made clear in his remarks "rural infrastructure is different."

"He was saying how the money that can be saved from having P3s in appropriate urban settings…can be used to help in the rural areas," Davis said, using an abbreviation for public-private partnerships.

About two weeks ago, state and local leaders visited the nation's capital to discuss the still-emerging White House infrastructure investment plan with administration officials.

Davis said she did not hear the income tax exemption for interest earned on municipal bonds come up Wednesday. Many state and local leaders are concerned about preserving the exemption as

Republican members of Congress and Trump push to overhaul the U.S. tax code.

Staff members from the offices of House Speaker Paul Ryan, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and U.S. Rep. Rob Bishop also participated in the forum. Bishop, a Utah Republican, is currently leading a House task force on intergovernmental affairs.

White House press staff did not respond Thursday to requests for a list of the forum's attendees.

The meeting kicked off around noon and lasted until early evening. It was held at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, which is located just west of the White House.

"The people that were there on both sides," Davis said, "both Republican and Democratic governors' staff, I think, appreciated the thought and effort that went into pulling it together."

ROUTE FIFTY

by Bill Lucia

September 14, 2017

Bill Lucia is a Senior Reporter for Government Executive's Route Fifty and is based in Washington, D.C.

Copyright © 2026 Bond Case Briefs | bondcasebriefs.com