



NCSL NEWS

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES

WILLIAM T. POUND, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Date: July 21, 2009

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Mountain State Lawmaker Reaches Summit

West Virginia's Senate president is honored with national top legislative award.

DENVER – Known for his down-to-Earth demeanor, the West Virginia Senate president often goes only by Earl Ray. It's that connectedness with his constituents that has earned Senator Earl Ray Tomblin the nation's top state legislative honor.

Tomblin will receive the 2009 Excellence in State Legislative Leadership Award at the 35th Annual National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) [Legislative Summit](#) in Philadelphia on Tuesday, July 21, 2009, as part of the meeting's opening general session.

“Senator Tomblin has a deep loyalty to the legislative institution and exemplifies the highest of legislative leadership that we have in this country,” said NCSL Executive Director William T. Pound. “His personality, coupled with the longevity and variety of his public service, has combined to develop one of the state's foremost political leaders who possesses a great ability to face and overcome the state's continuing financial and economic struggles.”

The William M. Bulger Excellence in State Legislative Leadership Award is presented annually to a leader who has worked to preserve and build public trust in the institution of the state legislature and whose career embodies the highest principles of leadership—integrity, compassion, vision and courage.

“I could not be more pleased with the committee's selection of Senate President Earl Ray Tomblin as this year's winner of the WMB Excellence in state legislative leadership award,” said Stephen Lakis, president of the State Legislative Leaders Foundation. “Throughout his long and distinguished career, Senator Tomblin has set many examples of what an exceptional leader can accomplish. He has the respect and admiration of his peers for his fairness, honesty, and willingness to put aside partisan differences and do what's right for the people of West Virginia. And in the bargain, he has elevated the stature of the institution of the state legislature. Earl Ray Tomblin is an example for all aspiring leaders.”

Tomblin served in the West Virginia House of Delegates from 1974-1978 and then in the Senate from 1980-2004. During that time, he served as the Senate majority whip and chairman and later as president of the Senate. In fact, Tomblin is the longest serving Senate president in West Virginia's history. In addition to be involved in various committee, he has also served on the executive committee for the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).

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The William M. Bulger Excellence in State Legislative Leadership Award was founded in 1996. The State Legislative Leaders Foundation (SLLF) first honored William M. Bulger, former president of the Massachusetts State Senate, for his distinguished career in public service and particularly for his commitment to protecting and strengthening the institution of the state legislature. That event was the catalyst for the annual Excellence in State Legislative Leadership Award.

The William M. Bulger Excellence in State Legislative Leadership Award winner is selected by an independent, nonpartisan selection committee of legislators, former legislators, scholars and representatives of the two sponsoring organizations. The award is presented at the Legislative Summit of the National Conference of State Legislatures each year. Last year's recipients were Senate President Richard Codey of New Jersey and former Minnesota Speaker of the House Steve Sviggum.

[The State Legislative Leaders Foundation](#) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization established in 1972 to serve America's state legislative leaders: Senate presidents, House speakers, majority leaders, minority leaders and pro tempores. It conducts national educational programs and provides research on public policy issues, leadership behavior, and state legislatures specifically for state legislative leaders.

NCSL is the bipartisan organization that serves the legislators and staff of the states, commonwealths and territories. It provides research, technical assistance and opportunities for policymakers to exchange ideas on the most pressing state issues and is an effective and respected advocate for the interests of the states in the American federal system.

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Filename: ELA Press Release - winner announcement (July 2009).doc
Directory: C:\Documents and Settings\Ken Morton\My
Documents\3.1 SLLF
Template: G:\OfficeXP\templates\workgroup\NCSL Letter-Fax-
Memo\Press Release.dot
Title: NCSL Press Release
Subject:
Author: Michelle Blackston
Keywords: NCSL
Comments:
Creation Date: 7/7/2009 9:22:00 AM
Change Number: 2
Last Saved On: 7/7/2009 9:22:00 AM
Last Saved By: Ken Morton
Total Editing Time: 4 Minutes
Last Printed On: 7/7/2009 9:23:00 AM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 2
Number of Words: 667 (approx.)
Number of Characters: 3,807 (approx.)