The 2018 Legislative Session Makes Way for Fresh Journeys in the Coming Year
Victory on legislative turf can take many forms. Governments constantly seek to resolve matters through rulemaking or rewriting, after all. From introduction in the committee of jurisdiction to its eventual outcome, opportunities to shape a bill’s course along the way are ever-changing. Long-time advocates know that the path for future policies is sometimes measured and clear—while the opposite is true in other cases. Ultimately, the SEMA Action Network’s (SAN) goal throughout each session is constant: support pro-hobby initiatives into approval while thwarting any threats.

Despite the best efforts of the car-loving community, many proposals never reach a definitive finish line—for better and for worse. It’s true that enactment into law or death are common fates. But make no mistake: the end of a bill’s life does not always conclude once the legislature adjourns. History has proven that an idea does not always conclude once the legislature adjourns. The bill had already been approved by the New Mexico House of Representatives and was awaiting consideration by the Senate. The bill may be reintroduced in the 2019 session.

In the meantime, the following summary of the 2018 session offers the highlights from coast to coast. Many topics facing the automotive community this year were familiar. In a refreshing twist, most new rules being considered by legislatures were intended to benefit cars and trucks. Perhaps most interestingly, a surge of proposals arose in state houses aimed at redefining the rules applied to vintage military surplus vehicles—some were even passed. Take a look:

**STATE UPDATE**

**California Combustion Engines:** Legislation introduced in the California Assembly would have required a transition to fully-electric vehicles in the state by the year 2040. Due to an outpouring of negative responses to the proposal, the bill was never considered by its committee and was pulled by the sponsor.

**Idaho Military Vehicles:** Governor Butch Otter signed into law legislation that allows a vehicle built for the U.S. Armed Forces to be registered and operated on public highways in Idaho, even if such vehicle does not meet federal motor vehicle safety standards. Many military surplus vehicles were not designed to meet those standards and previously could not be registered.

**Louisiana Military Vehicles:** Legislation was signed into law to allow for the registration and titling of military vehicles in the state of Louisiana.

**Maryland Off-Highway Vehicles:** Governor Hogan signed pro-hobby legislation into law that establishes the OHV Trail Fund as a special, non-lapsing fund. It also specifies that the purpose of the Fund is to maintain and construct trails for off-highway recreational vehicles on land that is owned or leased by the Department of Natural Resources. Currently, there is no specific fund related to OHV trails.

**Michigan Removal of Towing Restriction:** Governor Rick Snyder signed into law a bill to allow for the attachment of a tow ball, bicycle rack, removable hitch or any other device designed to carry an object on the rear of a vehicle, even if it obstructs the rear license plate.

**Nebraska Titling and Registration:** Governor Pete Ricketts signed into law a bill to ease the process by which replica, assembled, kit and reconstructed cars are titled and registered. The legislation is based on a SEMA-model bill and provides registration categories for replica vehicles, assembled vehicles, kits and reconstructed vehicles.

**New Mexico License Plates:** Legislation requiring plates on the front and back of all motor vehicles died when the legislature adjourned. The bill had already been approved by the New Mexico House of Representatives and was awaiting consideration by the Senate. The bill may be reintroduced in the 2019 session.

**Rhode Island Specialty License Plates:** Courtesy license plate bills for antique vehicles and street rods/customs were signed into law by Governor Gina Raimondo. The bills provide antique vehicles with courtesy year-of-manufacture plates. Under the current law, “Antique” plates are available for vehicles that are at least 25 years old and used only for exhibitions, parades, and car club activities. Vehicles currently registered as “Antique” may purchase and display replica year-of-manufacture plates with DMV approval. S.B. 2484 provides a courtesy plate for “Street Rods” and “Custom” vehicles. Under current law, a street rod is defined as a ‘48 or older vehicle or a vehicle manufactured after ’48 to resemble a vehicle manufactured before ’49. Custom vehicles are defined as any motor vehicle at least 25 or more years old (or replicas that resemble a vehicle that is at least 25 years old) and of a model year after ’48 that has either been altered from the manufacturer’s original design or has a body constructed from non-original materials.

**South Carolina Motorsports Complexes:** Governor Henry McMaster signed into law legislation aiding and incentivizing the construction of motorsports complexes in the state. The bill recognizes the important economic and civic value that additional motorsports can provide. The new law will help pave the way for new racing facilities in the state. A motorsports tourism incentive fund will be created to award grants or loans to attract and expand tourism and hospitality projects related to events at such

Cont. on p. 4
Political Pendulum Backswing

Colby Martin

“For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.”
—Newton’s Third Law of Motion

With November’s midterm election now behind us, the American people have one again shifted the balance of power in a different direction. While 2016 proved to be one of the most contentious United States elections in recent memory, the resulting legislative landscape over the past two years has generally been helpful to car and truck enthusiasts. While there are important long-term efforts needing resolve, pro-hobby proposals have outnumbered threats—particularly at the state level. A complete summary of the state and federal triumphs achieved by the SAN over the past year appears in the cover feature of this issue. However, don’t count on things remaining the same. As we await the New Year to see what the next session will bring, here is a look at some key takeaways from election night 2018.

Not surprisingly, the electorate’s recent movement toward a shift in leadership continues. The nation is clearly more fed up with the status quo in Washington, D.C., and the statehouses from coast to coast. Reports indicate that the number of Americans who voted—114 million—was a record high for a midterm election. In comparison, about 81 million Americans voted in the 2014 midterms. A history-making number of victorious female candidates created a so-called “Women’s Wave.” Even regional ballot initiatives were not immune to surprising results.

Perhaps the most exciting news for the automotive community was the nod to one of our own in Congress: Meyer Distributing President and CEO Mike Braun. Braun was elected by a wide-margin to represent Indiana in the U.S. Senate. His contest with incumbent U.S. Senator Joe Donnelly was one of the most closely watched races of the 2018 cycle. Senator Braun is the first SEMA member-company official to be elected to the office. Braun began working for Meyer Body Co. in 1981 and transitioned its business from manufacturing to distribution, forming Meyer Distributing. Over the following decades, Senator Braun grew the business into a national distribution company with 65 locations in 38 states. As one who uniquely understands the hobby’s importance, Braun’s election is a game-changer—working with him to protect the rights of enthusiasts will be a welcome opportunity.

Many fresh faces will join Senator Braun at the nation’s capital in January, 2019—where both major political parties achieved new seats. As many insiders expected, voters returned power in the U.S. House of Representatives to the Democratic Party for the first time since 2010. At the time of publication, 38 seats had switched hands—with many others still too close to call. Republicans fared better in the U.S. Senate and grew their majority by two seats. While many assume that a Congressional split between Republican and Democrat control will lead to more gridlock on Capitol Hill, the hope is that good old-fashioned compromise will triumph in the end.

The state level looks strikingly different as well—where the most direct impact of the November ballots might be felt by the auto hobby. Democrats previously had a 10-year electoral slump in most legislatures. They flipped several hundred seats and regained control of five legislative chambers: the Colorado Senate, New Hampshire House, Minnesota House, Maine Senate and New York Senate. The party also made significant inroads in Pennsylvania, North Carolina and Arizona. Many governorships also changed hands. Keep in mind that lawmakers within these ranks will be responsible for proposals affecting the majority of issues with the biggest impact on automotive enthusiasts. The areas of titling and emissions requirements for collector vehicles, vehicle property taxes, backyard restoration projects, registration plate options, specialty parts usage, mileage fees and others all fall under state or local jurisdiction rather than federal.

Ultimately, what will the upcoming transition mean for our beloved cars and trucks? The saying, “It’s not who you know but who knows you” rings no truer. Today’s 24-hour news cycle likely won’t reveal that automotive fans exist throughout the government on all sides of the aisle. Thankfully for us, four-wheeled topics usually don’t fall along party lines or platforms. Personal politics can be set aside when it comes to engine displacement, performance upgrades, rare factory options and the rest. In fact, hundreds of state and federal representatives are affiliated with the hobby-friendly, SEMA-supported caucuses. Find out if your lawmakers are listed at www.semaSAN.com/statecaucus and www.semaSAN.com/federalcaucus. Locate your elected officials at www.semaSAN.com under the “Legislators” tab.

With a slew of unfamiliar faces reporting for duty in Washington and in state capitols nationwide, rest assured that SEMA and our automotive allies will be forging new relationships across the country. But the task can’t be done alone. You and your friends will play a critical role in educating newly-elected leaders about the bliss our machines bring.

—IGNITED WE STAND!
complexes. The new law exempts certain building materials for a complex from sales tax and to provides the process by which a qualified company may claim the exemption.

South Dakota Historic Vehicles: Governor Dennis Daugaard signed into law a bill allowing historic vehicles to display a single license plate for certain vehicle model years. Currently, a “historic car” is a motor vehicle more than 30 years old and is not used for daily transportation. The new law also sets the mileage limit for vehicles with historic plates at 4,000 miles per year.

South Dakota Special Interest Vehicles: Governor Daugaard signed into law legislation increasing the mileage limitation from 6,000 to 7,500 miles per year for special-interest vehicles and allowing the option of personalized plates for these vehicles. A “special-interest vehicle” is a motor vehicle that is collected, preserved, restored or maintained by the owner as a leisure pursuit and is not used for general or commercial transportation.

Utah Emissions Inspection: Governor Gary Hebert signed into law a bill to extend the emissions inspection exemption to vehicles that are model-year ’67 or older as well as diesel vehicles ’97 or older. Under the previous law, all gasoline and diesel vehicles six model years or older were tested biennially, and all vehicles ’67 or older were tested annually.

Utah Off-Highway Vehicles: Governor Herbert signed into law pro-hobby legislation increasing funding for OHV infrastructure. Utah residents now have a public fund solely devoted to OHV trail expansion and maintenance. Previously, there was no specific fund dedicated to off-roading.

Virginia Military Vehicles: Governor Ralph Northam signed into law a bill that allows qualifying military vehicles to be registered and operated on public roadways as antiques. In Virginia, a “military surplus off-road motor vehicle” is defined as a high-mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicle (Humvee) that was manufactured by or under the direction of the U.S. Armed Forces and subsequently authorized for sale to civilians. Additionally, a favorable amendment was made to allow currently registered military vehicles to retain registration without the antique designation.

Utah Off-Highway Vehicles: Governor Herbert signed into law pro-hobby legislation increasing funding for OHV infrastructure. Utah residents now have a public fund solely devoted to OHV trail expansion and maintenance. Previously, there was no specific fund dedicated to off-roading.

Virginia Military Vehicles: Governor Ralph Northam signed into law a bill that allows qualifying military vehicles to be registered and operated on public roadways as antiques. In Virginia, a “military surplus off-road motor vehicle” is defined as a high-mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicle (Humvee) that was manufactured by or under the direction of the U.S. Armed Forces and subsequently authorized for sale to civilians. Additionally, a favorable amendment was made to allow currently registered military vehicles to retain registration without the antique designation.

Virginia Military Vehicles: Governor Ralph Northam signed into law a bill that allows qualifying military vehicles to be registered and operated on public roadways as antiques. In Virginia, a “military surplus off-road motor vehicle” is defined as a high-mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicle (Humvee) that was manufactured by or under the direction of the U.S. Armed Forces and subsequently authorized for sale to civilians. Additionally, a favorable amendment was made to allow currently registered military vehicles to retain registration without the antique designation.

West Virginia License Plates: Legislation sponsored by State Caucus member Senator Mark Maynard was signed into law. The bill creates a two-year pilot program allowing all-terrain and recreational vehicles in Cabwaylingo State Forest, which currently has no all-terrain or recreational vehicle access.

FEDERAL UPDATE

RPM Act: More than 190 members of Congress have co-sponsored the bipartisan “Recognizing the Protection of Motorsports (RPM) Act.” The RPM Act clarifies that the Clean Air Act allows motor vehicles to be converted into dedicated race cars and that it is legal to produce, sell and install race parts for these vehicles. Passage of the RPM Act will protect sales beyond emissions-related parts, including racing tires, wheels, brakes, suspension equipment and roll cages. Customers won’t be buying and installing these products if a car or motorcycle cannot be converted into a dedicated race vehicle. The House Energy and Commerce Committee has approved the bill, and the Senate Clean Air Subcommittee has held a hearing, setting up potential votes by the full House and the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. While significant progress has been achieved, racers, fans and the industry must keep the pressure on their members of Congress to get
Replica Vehicle Law: A SEMA-supported law enacted in 2015 will allow small auto manufacturers to sell completed replica cars. These vehicles resemble cars manufactured at least 25 years ago. Companies will be able to produce up to 325 turnkey replica vehicles (per company) in the United States and 5,000 worldwide under a simplified regulatory system. Until now, the federal government’s regulatory system did not differentiate between a company producing millions of vehicles and a business producing a few custom cars. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and California Air Resources Board are finalizing regulations to implement the law. Industry and enthusiasts are challenging the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to move forward so that the program can take effect in 2019.

E15/Ethanol Gasoline: SEMA-supported legislation has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives that would expand the current warning label required on gas pumps dispensing E15 (gasoline containing 15% ethanol). The new label would include the words “Warning” and “Check Your Owner’s Manual,” be 5x7 in. or larger, and include pictograms depicting a boat, lawnmower, chainsaw, motorcycle and snowmobile. The current label is about 3½x3 in. and does not include the words “Warning,” “Owner’s Manual” or pictograms. Ethanol, especially in higher concentrations such as E15, can cause metal corrosion and dissolve certain plastics and rubbers in automobiles that were not constructed with ethanol-resistant materials. In 2011, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency made it illegal to use E15 fuel in motor vehicles made before 2001 as well as motorcycles, boats and gasoline-powered equipment.

Bonneville Salt Flats (BSF): The salt flats have significantly decreased in size over many decades as salt brine was channeled away from the area. SEMA, along with other organizations and companies comprising the Save the Salt Coalition, is working closely with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which manages the salt flats, in addition to federal and state lawmakers, on ways to restore the BSF and its 13-mile speedway. The coalition has proposed a comprehensive plan which includes increasing the amount of salt being pumped onto the salt flats during the winter. The coalition is working with the adjoining potash mine owner on plans to dramatically increase the amount of salt being pumped onto the salt flats and with lawmakers to fund the program. For more information, visit www.savethesalt.org.

National Monuments Legislative Reform: The U.S. House Natural Resources Committee passed SEMA-supported legislation that would limit the president’s authority to unilaterally designate national monuments. The bill would limit the size of future national monument designations, require approval of state and local government bodies for larger monument designations, cap the size of designations at 85,000 acres, and narrow the criteria used to determine national monuments. The bill would specifically require a National Environmental Policy Act review for smaller monuments, along with an environmental assessment for larger sizes. The county, state and governor would need to approve even larger sizes. The issue is consequential since national monuments automatically prohibit new roads or trails for motorized vehicles and require a new land management plan be drafted that could lead to more road closures.

National Monuments Regulatory Reform: The Trump Administration reviewed nearly 40 national monument designations dating back to 1996 to determine whether any should be rescinded, resized or modified. The review resulted in the reduction of size of several monuments including Bears Ears National Monument (reduced from 1.35 million acres to 202,000 acres) and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (reduced from 1.9 million acres to just over 1 million acres) in Utah.

Outdoor Recreation: The U.S. House Natural Resources Committee passed a bill intended to promote access to outdoor recreation opportunities, streamline the permitting process for guides and recreation enthusiasts, make federal agencies accountable for prioritizing outdoor recreation, and address the maintenance backlog on America’s public lands through increased volunteerism. The Recreation Not Red-Tape Act is supported by the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, which is comprised of 25 top industry associations, including SEMA, representing off-roading, camping, fishing, boating, hiking, archery and other sports. The outdoor recreation industry generates about $887 billion per year in economic activity and provides an estimated 7.6 million direct jobs. The bill was sent for House floor consideration. Action on a Senate bill was pending in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

Federal Recreation Advisory Committee: The U.S. Department of the Interior created a Recreation Advisory Committee to help improve visitor experiences on public lands. The committee is “dedicated to looking at public-private partnerships, with the goal of expanding access to and improving the infrastructure on public lands.”

Endangered Species Act: The U.S. House of Representatives passed five bills to reform the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The 40-year-old law has produced few tangible results beyond road and trail closures, restrictive land-use designations and lawsuits. While millions of acres of land have been set aside to protect threatened and endangered animals and plants, more money has been spent on lawyers and court expenses than wildlife management. Among other changes, the legislation would require the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to consider the economic impact of adding a species as endangered or threatened when the agency makes listing decisions. The FWS would also have to make all data that is used as the basis for an ESA determination to be made available to impacted states. Billing rates awarded to lawyers and expert witnesses in ESA lawsuits would also be limited to $125 an hour. Hearings have been held in the Senate, but no other action has been scheduled.

Cont. on p. 6

WINTER 2018 | semaSAN.com
The power of grabbing attention is often found in one’s hand. A slew of enthusiast-focused magazines, printed classifieds and catalogs of parts have served as trusted sources for hobbyists dating back generations. However, the Internet has reshaped modern life and opened vast new possibilities. Automotive aficionados are now relying less and less on physical publications for valuable insight. Instead, a hand-held solution is gaining favor fast for its ultra-convenient access to nearly anything imaginable—mobile smartphones. While the tactile feel of objects may hold a sacred place, car and truck enthusiasts-to-be appear more enamored with compact screens at the moment.

Arming the SAN with every advantage to influence tomorrow’s laws is job number one. Attracting additional voices to help strengthen our efforts plays a vital supporting role. To better align with the practices of present and future advocates of our hobby, the SAN’s online hub has been completely overhauled. Visit the newly revitalized website on your preferred device: www.semaSAN.com. For the first time, the platform is now fully searchable and mobile-friendly. The overall visual look and function have been refreshed to enhance a visitor’s experience. Social media reach has also expanded into one of the most popularly emerging digital communities—check out the latest posts on the SAN Instagram: @SEMAActionNetwork.

As with any long-term project making its debut, the journey is just beginning. Plenty of items will undoubtedly need attention. Behind the scenes, reconnecting all 20+ years of SAN history has been an ongoing work in progress. Please pardon any ‘dust’ as this fresh machine hits the information superhighway for the first time. And of course, look for further improvements to come!

Embracing evolving technology in a changing world can be uncomfortable and difficult, no question. But missing the chance to invite those next in line to defend our hobby might prove disastrous. Perhaps one day the masses will steadily set down portable computers and return to enjoying the majesty of dyed paper. Until then, let’s attempt to meet them on their own ground and welcome them into the cause. Better yet, encourage anyone you meet with an automotive interest to get involved and stay informed by signing up—free of any hassles and cost: www.semaSAN.com.

Southern California OHV Recreation Areas: The U.S. House of Representatives passed SEMA-supported legislation from Rep. Paul Cook (R-CA) that would permanently designate six existing OHV areas comprising 300,000 acres in San Bernardino County: Johnson Valley (expanded by 11,000 acres), Spangler Hills, El Mirage, Rasor, Dumont Dunes and Stoddard Valley. While the so-called California Off-Road Recreation and Conservation Act expands wilderness designations in the California desert, the bill prohibits the Secretary of the Interior from closing any roads or trails that are currently open for motorized recreational access. The U.S. House Natural Resources Committee passed SEMA-supported legislation to create the Apple Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area. The Desert Community Lands Act would transfer 4,630 acres of federal land from the U.S. Department of the Interior to the town of Apple Valley, California, and provide the public with opportunities for OHV recreation. The bill also provides 80 acres of federal lands to the City of Twentynine Palms, making race events at 29 Palms Motorsports Arena more accessible to the public.

Oceano Dunes ORV Access: The number of ORV riding areas at Oceano Dunes in California will be reduced under a settlement agreement reached between the California State Parks Department and the San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District. The agreement is intended to decrease fine particulate matter (PM10) emissions by about 30% by 2023. Under the agreement, about 100 acres of riding area would be immediately fenced off, including some within the popular La Grande Tract. The program includes reintroduction of native vegetation within fenced-off areas, deployment of wind fences and installation of grooved concrete to help remove sand from vehicles as they exit the park.
Current and former members of the State Automotive Enthusiast Leadership Caucus gathered again this past November to meet with SAN staff and enjoy the 2018 SEMA Show in Las Vegas. The Caucus, comprised of approximately 750 legislators in all 50 states, is serving to further raise the automotive hobby's profile in the state capitols.

In attendance were (back row, left to right) Representative Patrick Brennan (VT), Delegate Kevin Hornberger (MD), Representative Stan Blake (WY), Delegate Danny Hamrick (WV), Representative Roger Bruce (GA), Representative Chip Campbell (SD); (center row, left to right) Senator Jim Patrick (ID), Senator Randall Hardy (KS), former Senator Josh Newman (CA), Senator Dave Sypolt (WV); (near row, left to right) Caucus Chairman Delegate Gary Howell (WV), Assemblyman Tim Grayson (CA), Representative Steven Howitt (MA), Delegate Terri Sypolt (WV), Senator Elaine Bowers (KS), and Representative Howard Mosby (GA).
SAN announced that the next Collector Car Appreciation Day (CCAD) will be celebrated on July 12, 2019. The date will mark the tenth consecutive commemoration in what is now an annual event to raise awareness of the vital role automotive restoration and collection plays in American society.

Intended to celebrate the classics of the past and the future, the U.S. Congress helped launch CCAD by passing Resolutions each year since 2010 at the SAN’s request. The previous resolutions were sponsored by co-chairs of the SEMA-supported Congressional Automotive Performance and Motorsports Caucus. These Congressional leaders are strong advocates for the automotive hobby in Washington, D.C., and recognize the integral role collector cars have played in fostering our nation’s appreciation for the automobile’s unique historical place in our history.

In preparation for the tenth celebration of the nation’s automotive heritage, enthusiasts and related businesses are already planning open houses, car cruises, club gatherings and educational events to commemorate the day. The SAN will again maintain and publicize a list of scheduled events to commemorate America’s time-tested love affair with the automobile at www.semaSAN.com.

Individuals, car clubs and business owners interested in publicizing events can submit the details of their celebration. For questions, contact SAN Director Colby Martin at 909-978-6721 or san@sema.org. If you are unable to celebrate on July 12, the SAN encourages events to be scheduled throughout the month of July 2019.