

Good Saturday Morning. At the conclusion of this message is the Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Update for May 22, 2021. If you have any questions regarding this week's report, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Have a good weekend!

Best,

J.T.

## Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Update

May 22, 2021

### Congressional Update

#### Congress Continues to Mull Potential Infrastructure Investments

Congressional lawmakers spent much of the week considering the prospect of making significant new investments in the nation's infrastructure. Infrastructure proposals from President Biden earlier this year—the American [Families](#) and [Jobs](#) plans—outlined an ambitious set of investments in a number of critical areas, including \$100 billion for modernizing and expanding K-12 school facility infrastructure. While ~~Democratic lawmakers in Congress~~ have largely been supportive of these proposals, Republicans prefer a much narrower set of investments in the nation's infrastructure. More recently, House Republican leaders announced plans to introduce a \$400 billion infrastructure proposal focused exclusively on the nation's transportation sectors. However, this proposal has yet to materialize. Lacking formal movement on this critical priority, Congressional Democrats have become increasingly frustrated regarding the lack of forward progress on infrastructure.

As both parties struggle to find consensus, the likelihood of Democrats moving forward without Republican support increases—a pathway made possible by a legislative mechanism known as reconciliation allowing them to move certain legislation through the Senate via a simple majority.

In an attempt to negotiate, late Friday afternoon the White House responded to Senator Shelly Moore Capito's Senate Republican alternative on infrastructure with some changes to the President's proposal to try and reach consensus. The new proposal would reduce the overall size of the Jobs Plan proposal for negotiation purposes by about \$550 billion going from roughly \$2.25 trillion in additional investment down to about \$1.7 trillion. There was no mention of schools in the proposal, but they reduced broadband to \$65 billion which is what Senator Capito

suggested. If consensus is not reached and they decide to use budget reconciliation to pass a proposal, President Biden may go back to his original plan and numbers. As these discussions continue, NSBA will remain active advocates for robust investments in the nation's K-12 schools and related infrastructure needs.

### **Senate Committee Examines Children's Online Privacy**

On Tuesday, May 18, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation's Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, and Data Security held a hearing titled "Protecting Kids Online: Internet Privacy and Manipulative Marketing." The hearing explored issues related to children's online safety and privacy, especially considering the widespread transition to remote learning due to the pandemic. Lawmakers also explored potential areas of improvement related to the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), a key piece of legislation governing how operators of online services and websites collect and make use of personal information on children under the age of 13. Ahead of the hearing, Senators Markey (D-MA) and Cassidy (R-LA) introduced legislation ([S.1628](#)) that would expand COPPA to cover children ages 12-15. An archived webcast of the hearing, including witness testimony, can be found [here](#).

### **House Education Committee Holds Hearing on Students Experiencing Homelessness**

On Wednesday, May 19, the House Education and Labor Committee's Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education held a hearing exploring issues impacting students who are experiencing homelessness or are in foster care. Titled "Picking up the Pieces: Strengthening Connections with Students Experiencing Homelessness and Children in Foster Care," the hearing focused on issues impacting the nearly 1.3 million students experiencing homelessness in the most recent school year. In particular, lawmakers focused on how recently passed pandemic aid packages could better serve this population of learners. More information, including an archived webcast and witness testimony, can be found [here](#). NSBA supported a successful proposal that added \$800 billion in funding in the American Rescue Plan targeted to assist homeless students during the pandemic.

### **Administration Update**

### **House Republicans Call on USED to Change Grant Priorities**

A group of Republican lawmakers on the House Education and Labor Committee, led by Ranking Member Virginia Foxx (R-NC), sent a [letter](#) to U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona calling on his Department to reverse course on proposed [priorities](#) for American History and Civics programs authorized by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). At issue are proposals related to the teaching of systemic racism and culturally responsive teaching and learning. This group of Republican lawmakers oppose these proposals, arguing that they ". . . violate prohibitions against the federal government's involvement in local schools' curriculum, advance racist and divisive ideologies, and advocate for false history and misinformation." Comments on these proposed priorities were due Wednesday, May 19, and the Department is currently

reviewing feedback from the public.

### **New Legislation**

[H.R.3342](#) To establish a competitive grant program to support out-of-school-time youth workforce readiness programs, providing employability skills development, career exploration, employment readiness training, mentoring, work-based learning, and workforce opportunities for eligible youth. Sponsor: [Rep. Harder, Josh \[D-CA-10\]](#)

[H.R.1635](#) STOP II: Classrooms Over Conference Rooms Act Sponsor: [Rep. Hudson, Richard \[R-NC-8\]](#)

[H.R.3246](#) To award funds to States and local areas for subsidized employment programs for youth. Sponsor: [Rep. Garcia, Jesus G. "Chuy" \[D-IL-4\]](#)

[H.R.3230](#) To amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to establish a program for the procurement of domestically grown unprocessed fruits and vegetables to provide healthier school meals, and for other purposes. Sponsor: [Rep. Welch, Peter \[D-VT-At Large\]](#)

[S.1696](#) A bill to establish a competitive grant program to support out-of-school-time youth workforce readiness programs, providing employability skills development, career exploration, employment readiness training, mentoring, work-based learning, and workforce opportunities for eligible youth. Sponsor: [Sen. Smith, Tina \[D-MN\]](#)

[S.1668](#) A bill to establish a competitive grant program to support the development, implementation, and evaluation of successful educator and school leader professional development programs on family engagement that will increase the capacity of educators and school leaders to work with families to develop and support the social-emotional learning of children. Sponsor: [Sen. King, Angus \[I-ME\]](#)