

Good Morning. Below you will find the November 11, 2019 Federal Advocacy and Policy Update.

A quick reminder that November is [VSBA Take Your Legislator to School Month](#). If your division is holding events with legislators, please let us know and share pictures from the event with me at jason@vsba.org. Thank you for all you do on behalf of public education. Have a good week!

Best,

J.T.

Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Update

November 11, 2019

Congressional Update

Congress Faces Fiscal Year 2020 Spending Deadline

Both the Senate and House will be in session next week, following a one-week House recess. At the top of congressional leaders' "to do" list is restarting discussions for the fiscal year 2020 federal appropriations process, including the U.S. Department of Education's budget, which has been at a standstill over the president's proposed border wall expansion and other controversial policy riders. Time is running short. Congressional leaders and the White House must act before temporary funding for the U.S. Department of Education and other agencies expires on November 21. NSBA does not expect Congress to be able to pass the Department of Education's budget – or providing funding for any other government agencies – before the deadline. Instead, we expect legislators to approve a second "continuing resolution" that will provide additional temporary funding at fiscal year 2019 levels. The length of this stopgap spending authority is uncertain. It could be as short as mid-to-late December or extend into in 2020. Regardless, NSBA plans to continue pressing appropriators to support increased funding for the major education formula programs and other key accounts.

Senate Education Committee to Hold Youth Vaping Hearing

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee will hold a hearing "Examining the Response to Lung Illnesses and Rising Youth Electronic Cigarette Use" on November 13 at 10:00 AM. Live video of the hearing will be available on the committee's [website](#). The committee has not invited education witnesses to testify at the hearing, but given this issue's importance to school districts, students, and students' families, we are closely monitoring Congress's work in this area.

Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement Act of 2019 (SECURE Act)

This week there was debate on the Senate floor concerning the SECURE Act, which overwhelmingly passed the House of Representatives in May in a bipartisan vote of 417-3. NSBA worked with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees to oppose the inclusion of an expansion of 529 plans for homeschooling and related voucher proposals and were successful in keeping those provisions out of the House passed version of the legislation. Despite the overwhelming vote in the House, the legislation has been stalled in the Senate due to holds preventing its passage via unanimous consent by Senators Pat Toomey (R-PA), Mike Lee (R-UT), and Ted Cruz (R-TX). Senator Cruz has been advocating for the homeschooling provisions to be reinserted which is what has caused him to hold the bill. There was an effort during the floor debate to revive that provision, but it failed. Despite widespread support to move forward with the House bill, it is unclear what will happen with the legislation. NSBA actively monitored the discussion this week and stayed in touch with Senate staffers during the debate. NSBA will continue to aggressively advocate for the House passed version of the bill

Administration Update

Secret Service Releases Targeted School Violence Report

The U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center released a report titled "[Protecting American's Schools: A U.S. Secret Service Analysis of Targeted School Violence](#)". The report analyzed data from 41 incidents between 2008 and 2017. The report noted that schools should have a comprehensive plan to avert violence along with physical security measures. The report also said that plan should create a threat assessment team, including faculty, staff, administrators, coaches and available school resource officers and that mental health professionals should be part of a collaborative process to prevent violence.

Notable New Legislation

[H.R.4989](#) To authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award a grant to a health care organization to promote student access to defibrillation in elementary and secondary schools, and for other purposes. Sponsor: [Rep. Lawson, Al, Jr. \[D-FL-5\]](#)

[S.2784](#) A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to provide grants to local educational agencies to establish "Family Friendly School" policies at 500 elementary schools that align the school day with the work day to better support working families and to disseminate the learnings from these model schools so that other local educational agency's may adopt these practices, and to establish a supplemental 21st century community learning centers grant program to support programs and activities during summer recess when school is not in session. Sponsor: [Sen. Harris, Kamala D. \[D-CA\]](#)

J.T. Kessler
Government Relations Specialist
Virginia School Boards Association
200 Hansen Road, Suite 2
Charlottesville, VA 22911
800-446-8722 or 434-295-8722 Office
434-295-8785 Fax
jason@vsba.org, www.vsba.org