

Good Morning,

Below you will find the April 22, 2019 Federal Advocacy & Policy Report with the latest news and information from Washington, D.C. Congress is in recess until April 29, 2019. If I can be of any assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I thank each of you for your continued support of public education. Have a very good week!

Kind Regards,

J.T.

Congressional Developments

Appropriations Committees Begin Drafting Education Department Spending Bill

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees finished taking initial input from members of each chamber about their fiscal year 2020 appropriations (FY20) priorities. With all member-level appropriations requests now submitted, the spending committees will begin writing appropriations bills to provide funding to government departments, including the Department of Education. This early committee work represents an important time for NSBA and other national education groups that are working to ensure that committee members understand the importance of major education formula programs, such as ESSA Title I and IDEA State Grants, while also championing other accounts that are vitally important to students and their families.

The House and Senate have not announced a firm schedule for completing work on the FY20 budget and NSBA does not expect legislators to finalize the spending bills by the beginning of the federal fiscal year on October 1. According to the senior Republican of the House Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee, Tom Cole (R-OK), however, the House subcommittee may vote on its FY20 appropriations bill on April 30, followed by full committee action on May 8. The Senate Appropriations Committee is not expected to take any formal action on the education spending bill until after the House spending committee completes this initial work. The appropriations process may be very difficult this year, because of rising deficits and the absence of an agreement between the House, Senate, and White House about the overall spending level Congress should follow for FY20. Ongoing negotiations over spending caps could cause the House subcommittee to delay its planned votes. NSBA plans to closely monitor the appropriations process and will provide updates each week.

Administration Developments

Secretary DeVos Continues Pitching Tax Credit Scholarships

Secretary DeVos appeared in Kentucky this week for a roundtable discussion alongside Governor Matt Bevin (R) to discuss school choice and to continue advocating for her proposal to create Education Freedom Scholarships. The secretary is proposing a \$5 billion tax credit for donors to organizations that fund scholarships for educational expenses associated with attending a private school. The Kentucky roundtable mirrors an event DeVos participated in last month in Iowa. So far, the Secretary's tax proposal has not generated much traction on Capitol Hill. A group of conservative members of both Houses have introduced legislation that would create the Secretary's desired program; however, the proposal has been dismissed by House Democrats, which means it is effectively dead. Nevertheless, the Secretary continues to hold advocacy events about the idea, and we expect it to be a major theme of her work throughout the year.

Reed D. Rubenstein Named Department of Education Acting General Counsel

Following the departure of the Department of Education's General Counsel, Carlos Muñiz, in January, the Department announced this week that it has appointed Reed D. Rubenstein to the position of Acting General Counsel. Rubenstein was previously deputy associate attorney general at the Department of Justice, and served in a senior position at the U.S Chamber of Commerce.

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