

Good Afternoon,

The latest Federal Policy & Advocacy Update for May 20, 2019 can be found below. I wish each of you a very good week. Thank you for all you do on behalf of public education in the Commonwealth.

Kind Regards,

J.T.

Congressional Update

House Energy and Commerce Committee Discusses E-Rate Program

Last Wednesday, the House Energy and Commerce Committee held an oversight hearing featuring testimony and discussion with the five commissioners of the Federal Communications Commission. The hearing focused on a range of topics but included important exchanges about the Republican Commissioners' plan to open a rule making that proposes to cap the Universal Service Fund and merge the program level caps for the E-rate and Rural Healthcare broadband connectivity programs. NSBA, and other Education and Libraries Networks Coalition members, are concerned that the new and combined caps could diminish the E-rate's effectiveness. During the hearing, Representative Dave Loebsack (D-IA) and Representative Marc Veasey (D-TX) noted their concern about the proposal to FCC Chairman Agit Pai and Commissioner Mike O'Reilly. NSBA plans to work closely with EdLiNC to oppose this change to the E-rate program, including filing formal comments responding to the notice of proposed rulemaking, when it is published in the Federal Register.

Funding Increase for School Safety Grants Proposed

Last week, the House Appropriations Subcommittee for Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies reported its Fiscal Year 2020 funding bill that would increase resources for school safety. The bill would provide \$125 million for competitive grants authorized by the STOP School Violence Act, which represents a \$25 million increase above the FY2019 funding allocation.

In a letter to House and Senate Appropriations Committees in support of this funding, NSBA, the Security Industry Association and other organizations stated that, "This increased funding will allow even more states, localities, and tribes to provide evidence-based violence prevention programming to students and teachers. We also urge continuance of the FY19 funding allotments and language, furthering the strong focus on evidence-based school violence prevention programs."

The Student, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence Program is administered by the U.S. Department of Justice's [Bureau of Justice Assistance](#) (BJA) that provides grants to states, units of local government, and Indian tribes to address several areas including: Training school personnel and educating students on preventing student violence against others and themselves; Developing and operating anonymous reporting systems for threats of school violence, including mobile telephone applications, hotlines, and internet websites; Developing and operating school threat assessment and intervention teams that may include coordination with law enforcement agencies and school personnel; and, Developing specialized training for school officials in responding to mental health crises.

President Trump Signals Openness to Budget Deal

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) met with President Trump last week to urge him to seek a bipartisan budget agreement. Senator McConnell has also spoken with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) about negotiating an increase to the caps. Meanwhile, the House continues to move ahead with approving its proposals for fiscal year 2020 funding increases, while there is uncertainty in the Senate about when the Appropriations Committee will be able to begin approving funding bills, given the absence of consensus about budgetary caps among the House, Senate, and the White House.

House Education and Labor Committee Approves Two Bills This Week

The [House Education and Labor Committee](#) approved two bills (26-20) last week just prior to the 65th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education. The two bills are the: Strength in Diversity Act of 2019, [H.R. 2639 \(116\)](#), which would extend incentives to voluntary community efforts to integrate schools; and the Equity and Inclusion Enforcement Act, [H.R. 2574 \(116\)](#), which would restore a private right of action to file disparate impact claims under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. The measure would also create a Title VI monitor at the Education Department responsible for investigating complaints of racial discrimination. The fact sheets on Strength in Diversity Act of 2019 and Equity and Inclusion Enforcement Act are [here](#) and [here](#).

Notable K12 Bills

[S.118](#) Innovators to Entrepreneurs Act of 2019 Sponsor: [Sen. Coons, Christopher A. \[D-DE\]](#)

[S.1466](#) A bill to establish a grant program within the Department of Labor to support the creation, implementation, and expansion of registered apprenticeship programs in cybersecurity. Sponsor: [Sen. Rosen, Jacky \[D-NV\]](#)

[S.1442](#) A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to strengthen school security. Sponsor: [Sen. Cruz, Ted \[R-TX\]](#)

[H.R.2818](#) To amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to improve the efficiency of summer meals. Sponsor: [Rep. Young, Don \[R-AK-At Large\]](#)

[H.R.2724](#) To clarify the requirements of authorized representatives under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, and for other purposes. Sponsor: [Rep. Luetkemeyer, Blaine \[R-MO-3\]](#)

[H.R.2721](#) To establish a grant program within the Department of Labor to support the creation, implementation, and expansion of registered apprenticeship programs in cybersecurity. Sponsor: [Rep. Lee, Susie \[D-NV-3\]](#)

[H.R.2706](#) To amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to clarify that charitable organization officials may receive food donations from schools under the food donation program, and for other purposes. Sponsor: [Rep. Castro, Joaquin \[D-TX-20\]](#)

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Have you registered for the VSBA School Law Conference yet?