

Good Afternoon,

Congress returned to Washington this week following their two-week district/state work period. You will find a report of their activities in the Federal Policy & Advocacy Update for May 3, 2019.

Have a great weekend!

Kind Regards,

J.T.

Congressional Update

House Appropriations Subcommittee Approves U.S. Ed Spending Bill

Earlier this week, the House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee approved the Department of Education's fiscal year 2020 budget. The House bill would provide an aggregate 6% spending increase for the Department of Education. Although the subcommittee will not publish a comprehensive list of education program spending levels until next week, when the full House Appropriations Committee considers the bill, committee leaders announced that the following key programs would receive increases under their proposal: IDEA Part B, ESSA-Title I, ESSA-Title II-A, ESSA-Title IV-A, and the Preschool Development Grants (HHS) program. Specifically, the Committee proposed a \$1 billion increase for special education and ESSA – Title I grants and a \$500 million increase for ESSA – Title II grants for effective instruction. The Senate Appropriation Committee has not yet taken any action on the Department of Education's fiscal year 2020 budget and it will likely be several months before the committees begin to negotiate final compromise spending levels. In the meantime, NSBA's advocacy team will continue to educate appropriators about school board members' federal spending priorities, including the need for much greater funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

House Education Committee Continuing Busy Hearing Schedule

This week, the House Education and Labor Committee held a hearing titled, "Brown v. Board of Education at 65: A Promise Unfulfilled." Chairman Bobby Scott (D-VA) noted in his opening statement that a 2016 GAO report found that public schools have grown more segregated by race and class than at any time since 1960. He said the report showed that segregation is increasing, rather than decreasing and added that "...desegregating schools is the most powerful tool we have to improve the lives of children of color and their families". He also noted that the purpose of the hearing was to discuss the benefits and trade-offs of various proposals for achieving educational equity making clear that the premise is not open to debate, that public education is a public good and the federal government is obligated to ensure that it is made available to all on equal terms. The witnesses' written testimony is available [here](#).

The House Education and Labor Committee also held a hearing titled, "Examining the Policies and Priorities of the U.S. Department of Labor." Chairman Bobby Scott (D-VA) began the hearing by noting that the president's budget request cuts programs and policies that are designed to serve the mission of the Department of Labor, noting that the 10% decrease does not support the American people. He went on to say that for too long, the government has acted as though what is "good for the economy is inherently good for all works, but evidence and experience demonstrate that the benefits of economic growth are not being shared by workers and their families". He noted that a strong economy only exists when everyone can succeed and is only achievable when the Department of Labor puts workers first. Secretary Acosta served as the only witness at the hearing and he said that the Department of Labor's proposed FY2020 budget reflects a "responsible and well-reasoned budget and that though the budget reflects a 10% decrease, it proposes greater investment in programs that work, eliminates programs that do not, and generally bolsters opportunities for working Americans through commonsense reforms." written testimony from the hearing is available [here](#).

Next Thursday, May 9, the House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Investment will hold the fourth in a five-part series of hearings focused on the Higher Education Act. The hearing title is, "The Cost of Non-Completion: Improving Student Outcomes in Higher Education". The committee's witness list is not yet available, but the hearing will be live-streamed and archived [here](#).

Administration Update

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Elementary and Secondary Education published a grant notice: "Notice Reopening the Application Period for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) Program" – The Secretary is reopening the FY 2019 SRSA application cycle (originally published in the Federal Register on March 12, 2019) for all eligible LEAs in order to allow small, rural LEAs, especially those impacted by recent flooding, additional time to submit their applications. Applications are now due by May 10, 2019 and further information is available [here](#).

Notable New Bills

[H.R.2437](#) To amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to provide parity for outlying areas, and for other purposes. Sponsor: [Rep. San Nicolas, Michael F. Q. \[D-GU-At Large\]](#)

[H.R.2494](#) To amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to improve nutrition in tribal areas, and for other purposes. Sponsor: [Rep. Haaland, Debra A. \[D-NM-1\]](#)

[H.Res.342](#) Supporting the goals and ideals of National Healthy Schools Day. Sponsor: [Rep. Evans, Dwight \[D-PA-3\]](#)

[S.1299](#) A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to provide grants to local educational agencies to encourage girls and underrepresented minorities to pursue studies and careers in STEM fields. Sponsor: [Sen. Harris, Kamala D. \[D-CA\]](#)

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Have you registered for the VSBA School Law Conference yet?