

Good Afternoon,

Congress returned from their summer work period this past Monday with a flurry of activity underway regarding budgetary matters leading up to the end of the federal fiscal year. Below is a summary of legislative and policy activities transpiring across Washington, D.C.

If there is anything I can do to assist you in your advocacy efforts, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Have a safe and enjoyable weekend!

Kind Regards,

J.T. Kessler

Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Update

September 13, 2019

Congressional Update

Congress Nears New Fiscal Year Without Budget in Place

The beginning of the next fiscal year is only two weeks away, but Congress has not completed work on the annual spending bills that fund government agencies, including the U.S. Department of Education. Compounding this problem, the Senate Appropriations Committee abruptly cancelled work that was planned for this week on the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and related Agencies spending bill, after a dispute arose over controversial policy “riders” or “poison pills” as they are often referred to in the media. To provide additional time for legislators to negotiate, congressional leaders are working to pass a “continuing resolution” to complete the fiscal year 2020 spending process. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) suggested that this temporary extension of fiscal year 2019 funding levels will last until November 21, but no official statement about the stopgap spending bill has been publicly released by House or Senate leaders. NSBA is continuing to work independently and with our national partners to champion funding for the major education formula programs, including ESSA, Title I and II, IDEA Part B, and other key funding streams for school districts.

Senate Appropriation Committee Releases Proposed Fiscal Year 2020 Spending Levels

The Senate Appropriations Committee adopted fiscal year 2020 proposed spending levels for all 12 annual spending bills this week:

- Agriculture-FDA: \$23.1 billion
- Financial Services: \$24.2 billion
- Commerce-Justice-Science: \$78.9 billion
- Defense: \$693 billion
- Labor-HHS-Education: \$187.7 billion (a 1.04% increase compared to FY'19)
- Homeland Security: \$53.4 billion
- Energy-Water: \$48.9 billion
- Interior-Environment: \$35.8 billion
- State-Foreign Operations: \$55 billion
- Transportation-HUD: \$74.3 billion
- Military Construction-VA: \$105.5 billion
- Legislative Branch: \$5.1 billion

The amount allocated for the Labor-HHS-Education bill is approximately 5% below the total provided in the similar House-passed bill. This significant gap will set the stage for difficult House-Senate negotiations later in the appropriations process. NSBA will be fighting hard for the House approved level.

House Education and Labor Committee Democrats Publish Equity Report

Democrats of the House Education and Labor Committee, led by Chairman Bobby Scott, published a report this week titled "[Investing in Economic Mobility: The Important Role of HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs in Closing Racial and Wealth Gaps in Higher Education](#)" focusing on funding levels. The report notes that funding levels have consistently fallen short of what is needed to fulfill the promise of the Higher Education Act (HEA) to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), and Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs). The report notes that Congress "must provide the resources and support necessary to ensure historically underserved students access and complete college."

Appropriations Subcommittees Plan Children's Mental Health and STEM Hearings

The House Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee will hold a hearing on September 18 titled "Mental Health Needs of Children in HHS Custody." Witnesses will include Jonathan Hayes (Director, Office of Refugee Resettlement, Department of Health and Human Services), Ann Maxwell (Assistant Inspector General, Office of Inspector General, Department of Health and Human Services), and Jonathan White (Commander, Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, Department of Health and Human Services). Watch the livestream [here](#).

The House Appropriations Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Subcommittee will hold a hearing on September 19 titled "Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Engagement". Witnesses will include Michael Kincaid (Associate Administrator for STEM Engagement, National Aeronautics and Space Administration) and Dr. Karen Marrongelle (Assistant Director of the National Science Foundation for Education and Human Resources). Watch the livestream [here](#).

Administration Update

Department of Education Announces Title IX Agreement with Chicago Public Schools

Earlier this week, the U.S. Department of Education announced a [resolution agreement](#) with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) that will "require significant structural and procedural changes within the District in order to protect students from sexual assault and abuse." The Department's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) initiated a district wide investigation following sexual assault and sexual harassment complaints that were filed in May 2015 and November 2016. A Department of Education press release said that "OCR found that CPS failed to respond promptly and equitably to complaints, did not provide services and remedies to the complainants, did not notify the complainants of investigation outcomes, and did not take effective action to provide a safe environment for all students." The resolution agreement outlines the plans CPS will take to ensure Title IX compliance.

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