

Washington Update June 14, 2019

Dear Colleagues:

Happy Friday! I started my week in NYC visiting a fabulous early childhood program called Beekman House in the south Bronx. They have a partnership with Bank Street College. I was once again rendered speechless (hard to do 😊) by the incredible teaching I saw. It made me want a do-over for pre-k! This is part of EdPrepLab – a new initiative by Learning Policy Institute. Check it out: <https://edpreplab.org/> Shout out to AACTE for giving me this opportunity!

1. House Completes Portion of Massive Spending Bill...To Be Continued Next Week

Members of the House hightailed it out of town Thursday leaving a portion of the \$982 billion spending bill completed -- but more to come next week. The portion of the bill completed is the Labor/HHS/Education part which includes \$75.9 billion for the Department of Education. The House was in session all night Weds. finally adjourning at 4 AM Thursday, only to return again later Thursday morning.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) wins the prize for no sleep, as she was there shepherding her bill through every minute of the process and the over 100 amendments offered. She reported getting only an hour of sleep noting “You know, you’re so wired!”

The House will return to the other portions of the bill on Tuesday and anticipates over 300 amendments on the docket. A final vote on passage of the massive minibus spending bill may occur next week or it may well spill into the following week. Meanwhile President Trump threatened to veto the bill with the administration noting it would drive up the national debt and that it does not reflect a bipartisan, bicameral agreement on spending levels.

Several amendments to the education portion of the bill were adopted; considering the scope of the bill, most amendments would be considered tweaks. In several cases funding was cut from the Department of Education’s administration and management budget to fund programs.

- Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) was successful in adding an amendment intended to prevent the Department of Education from limiting the functions of the Office of Civil Rights. Forty two Republicans joined Democrats in support of the amendment.
- Rep. Andy Levin (D-MI) was successful in having his amendment adopted which increases funding for the Department’s Office of Inspector General by \$4 million.

See: <https://thehill.com/policy/finance/446711-house-to-vote-on-first-minibus-spending-bill-next-week>

2. Department of Education Issues Notice of Proposed Rulemaking Changing Higher Education Accreditation

The Department of Education has released a draft regulation related to accreditation for institutions of higher education. The release follows a successful negotiated rulemaking session where there was agreement among participants about what should be included in the rule. The 89-page draft addresses online education and faith-based schools, in addition to accreditation.

According to the Department, the intention of the regulation is to ease some of the requirements accreditors must meet in order to be recognized by the federal government, a requirement that enables colleges which are accredited to be eligible for student financial aid. Sec. DeVos has noted that the existing system is too costly and burdensome and the new rules should spur innovation.

The Department estimates that the new regulation will cost \$3.8 billion over the next decade because of increases in Pell Grants and student loans. Since it will be easier for colleges to keep their accreditation, more students will utilize student financial aid. DeVos noted that she expects the proposals to “afford a lot more opportunities for creativity in higher education.”

The public is invited to comment on the proposed regulation for 30 days, until July 12. See link below.

For NPRM see: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/public-inspection.federalregister.gov/2019-12371.pdf>

3. New Resources for Educators

- **Sen. Chris Murphy (D-CT)**, member of the HELP Committee, has issued a policy paper titled *Are You Getting What You Pay For? A New Proposal for Accountability in Higher Education*

https://www.murphy.senate.gov/download/hea-white-paper-?_cldee=bGdhbmdvbmVAYWFjdGUub3Jn&recipientid=contact-f9cf81a4cf1ae511ac970050569e5b20-f04295a1376f4f3b83ec1daecbcbfd64&utm_source=ClickDimensions&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=P2P%202019&esid=defed961-ed8d-e911-8113-005056866fb1

- **The Southern Poverty Law Center and the Center for Civil Rights Remedies at the University of California at Los Angeles' Civil Rights Project** are out with a report finding that at least one in every 20 children attending schools that practice corporal punishment were struck in 2013-14 and 2015-16. See:

https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/com_corporal_punishment_final_web.pdf

- **An American Enterprise Institute** report says young people are spending more time in school but not getting "a commensurate increase in their highest credentials." See: <http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Red-White-and-Gray.pdf>
- The **GradNation** campaign reports a new analysis of high school graduation rates. See: <https://www.americaspromise.org/sites/default/files/d8/2019-06/New.pdf>
- Preliminary findings of a **GAO study into sexual harassment in STEM fields** indicate that four of five federal agencies that provide grants to colleges for scientific research received three or fewer sexual harassment complaints from 2015 through 2019. Changes to agency policies could soon change that. See: <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-19-583T>

Wishing you a great almost-summer weekend!

See you on twitter @janewestdc

Best,

Jane