

Washington Update June 22, 2018

Dear Colleagues:

It's been a week overshadowed by the chilling immigration policy separating children from families at the Mexico border. With election year dynamics fueling partisanship, the likelihood of major policy accomplishments before November looks slim.

1. Next Tuesday June 26: Big Day for Education on the Hill

- House Full Committee Marks Up Education Spending Bill: 10 AM

Last week the Labor/HHS/Education Appropriations Subcommittee marked up their bill and passed it on to the full committee for consideration. That was supposed to occur this week but was postponed. While many education advocates were pleased with funding for particular programs, overall concerns related to cuts and policy changes in HHS and Labor as well as the overall low funding level for the bill led all Democrats to oppose the bill in subcommittee. Look for Democrats to raise multiple issues Tuesday including: the immigration situation with children and parents, defunding of Obamacare and the overall low amount of money in the bill.

Watch the markup here:

<https://appropriations.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=395358>

- Senate Appropriations Subcommittee Marks up Education Spending Bill: 11 AM

This is the first step in the Senate's consideration of their bill (Labor/HHS/Education) which will serve as a companion to the House education spending bill noted above. The Senate has a larger funding pot for their bill, so there is hope that it will be more generous to education than the House version; however, additional funds for NIH are always a bipartisan priority. After the bill moves through the subcommittee, it will go to the full Committee on Thursday at 10:30. Congress hopes to leave for the July recess with the Labor/HHS/Education spending bills out of committees on both sides of the Capitol and ready to go to the floor in both the House and Senate when they return July 9.

Watch here: <https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/subcommittees/labor-health-and-human-services-education-and-related-agencies>

- Senate HELP Committee Marks up Career and Technical Education Bill: 2:30 PM

Last week the Senate HELP Committee postponed this markup and rescheduled it for this week. A draft bipartisan bill released today is under review by education organizations as I write. A key provision that is guaranteed to generate debate is authority for the Secretary of Education to withhold funds if programs fail to meet certain performance targets for two straight years. Congress last reauthorized this program in 2006, though the House passed its version of reauthorization last summer. The Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (HR 2353) has broad bipartisan support and easily passed the House. The Senate has been in disagreement over how much authority to give the Secretary in their version of the bill. The House legislation does not include the provision about withholding funds for not meeting performance targets.

Watch live here: <https://www.help.senate.gov/hearings/s3029-s1222-s808-s3039-s-a-bill-to-reauthorize-the-carl-d-perkins-career-and-technical-education-act-and-nominations>

2. Educators Weigh in on Immigration Policy Separating Parents and Children

Multiple education, civil rights and education organizations are weighing in on the policy of separating parents and children who cross the border with Mexico.

- The Council of the Great City Schools said:

“When families are fractured, dysfunctional, or absent, our schools often must serve as surrogate parents – a role that, while necessary, is a weak substitute for the real thing... whatever one thinks needs to be done about our borders, nothing justifies the separation of children for any period from their parents and caregivers...”

- The Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates said:

“...separation is occurring when the research is clear that such forced separation causes complex stress in these young victims. Such toxic stress results in psychological changes in the brain which can disable a child’s ability to learn, alter the physiology of a child’s developing brain, and inhibit the performance of daily activities such as thinking, reading and learning.”

- The American Association of Colleges of Education’s CEO Lynn Gangone stated:

“Future teachers learn trauma-informed instruction to support students in local classrooms, yet the long-lasting damages these children face as a result of their separation from their parents will require expanded services from health and mental health professionals to effectively meet their learning needs.

AACTE strongly urges Congress and the President to promptly reunite the separated children with their parents and to pass humane immigration legislation...”

3. Trump Proposes Merger of Departments of Education and Labor

As part of his initiative to streamline the federal government, President Trump put forward a proposal this week to merge the Departments of Education and Labor. The White House notes it is intended to address a “confusing set of signals sent to American students and workers” about how to succeed in the 21st Century. The new Department would be called “The Department of Education and the Workforce.” The proposal does not call for the elimination of particular programs; however, the Office of Management and Budget indicated that the merger is intended to eliminate duplicative programs and reduce administrative costs, including the federal workforce. The merger would need to be authorized by Congress, and therein lies the rub.

There was little encouragement from Congress. Chair of the House Education and the Workforce Committee Virginia Foxx (R-NC) appeared to be the most enthusiastic noting “the federal government is long overdue for a serious overhaul.” Her Senate counterpart, HELP Committee Chairman Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-TN), was more reserved noting “I think it’s always wise to look for greater efficiency in how our government operates and I will study the proposal carefully.” Ranking Member of the House Education and Workforce Committee, Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA) said the proposal was “hastily concocted” and a threat to program spending. Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA), ranking Democrat on the HELP Committee called the proposal “unrealistic, unhelpful and futile.” Hill staff are calling the proposal “dead on arrival.”

The conservative Heritage Foundation’s Lindsey Burke said “turning the Education Department into a career center is inappropriate.” Multiple education organizations registered objections to the proposal, including the NEA, the AFT, AASA and Educators for Excellence.

Moving programs from one agency to another has happened in the past, but it is always an uphill battle in the Congress. Merging entire cabinet departments will be a steep mountain to climb and given the limited ability of Congress to move on any legislation, this is not one I am putting any money on!

<https://mobile.edweek.org/c.jsp?cid=25920011&item=http%3A%2F%2Fapi.edweek.org%2Fv1%2Fblog%2F49%2Findex.html%3Fuuid%3D76726&M=58525919&U=1630084&cmp=eml-enl-eu-news2>

4. New Resources for Educators

- **The Third Way** is out with a new analysis “*What Can No Child Left Behind Teach Higher Education?*” See: <https://www.thirdway.org/report/what-can-no-child-left-behind-teach-higher-education>

- **The Network for Public Education** is out with *The Privatization Report Card* which grades each state on the degree of privatization of public education in the state and offers the following findings:
 - Twenty-eight states plus the District of Columbia have some form of voucher program—traditional, ESA or tax-credit scholarships. The vast majority have multiple programs—Wisconsin, Ohio and Arizona have five different programs each.
 - All but three states have either a voucher program, charter program or both.
 - Thirty-three states and the District of Columbia allow for-profit companies to manage their charter schools and four states also allow for-profit charter schools.See: <https://networkforpubliceducation.org/reports/privatization-report-card/>

- **The National Education Policy Center (NEPC)** has released a scathing assessment of the latest Teacher Prep Review by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ). The analysis for NEPC, conducted by Boston College’s Marilyn Cochran-Smith and other members of Project TEER (Teacher Education and Education Reform), finds a dearth of research undergirding NCTQ’s 2018 Review. See: http://nepc.colorado.edu/files/reviews/TTR%20Cochran-Smith%20Teacher%20Prep%202018_2.pdf and https://www.nctq.org/dmsView/2018_Teacher_Prep_Review_733174

I spent today on Capitol Hill with 15 education doctoral students from the University of Maryland who are learning about policy. We had rich conversations with Hill staff from both sides of the aisle. It is always encouraging to know there are so many professional and knowledgeable staff despite the swirl of chaos that appears to encircle the Capitol. I take heart in this knowledge as it refuels my optimism!

Have a great weekend,

Jane