

Washington Update May 3, 2019

Dear Colleagues:

Congress is back from a two-week recess and education saw a lot of action this week!

1. House Subcommittee Marks Up FY 2020 Funding Bill with a 6% Increase for Education!

This week Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) began the FY 2020 appropriations process by moving the first of 12 appropriations bill out of the Subcommittee which she chairs, Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor/HHS and Education. Her first bill as chair of the subcommittee reveals an impressive high-water mark for education spending, raising the federal investment by 6% over last year (bringing the Department of Education total to \$75.9 billion) and resoundingly rejecting Pres. Trump's FY 2020 budget proposal which would have cut education spending to \$64 billion. Describing this funding bill as "the People's Bill," DeLauro noted:

"We fight to make sure every child gets a good education by increasing funding for early childhood education, childcare, public schools, and higher education programs like Pell Grants and the Federal Work Study program."

Lead Republican on the subcommittee, Rep. Tom Cole (R-OK), noted that he does not think the large increases in the bill will be supported by the Senate or the President and that at best this disagreement will lead to a year-long continuing resolution or at worst, another government shutdown. Nonetheless, the bill was passed out of subcommittee and will likely be marked up by the full House Committee on Appropriations next week. It is expected that Republicans will offer a number of amendments at that time.

We will not see the funding levels in the bill for every individual education program until the full committee markup, hopefully next week. However, some funding levels for specific programs have been revealed, including the following:

- Title I ESSA is increased by \$1 billion to \$16.9 billion
- IDEA Part B is increased by \$1 billion to \$13.4 billion
- Title II of ESSA is increased by \$500 million to \$2.6 billion
- A new investment of \$260 million is provided for a Social-Emotional Learning Initiative
- Student Financial Aid is increased by \$492 million to \$24.9 billion
- Higher Education Teacher Quality Partnership Grants are increased by \$10 million to \$53 million
- Increases of one-third for minority serving institutions, including:
 - Historically Black Colleges and Universities are increased by \$93 million to \$375 million
 - Hispanic-serving Institutions are increased by \$26 million to \$150 million
 - Tribal college and universities are increased by \$19 million to \$51 million

For more details see: <https://appropriations.house.gov/news/press-releases/appropriations-committee-releases-fiscal-year-2020-labor-hhs-education-funding>

2. House Education and Labor Committee Holds Hearing on Education Equity

This week the Committee on Education and Labor, chaired by Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA), held a hearing titled “Brown v. Board of Education at 65: A Promise Unfulfilled.”

Witnesses were:

- **Mr. John C. Brittain**
University of the District of Columbia Law School
- **Ms. Linda Darling-Hammond, Ed.D.**
Learning Policy Institute
- **Mr. Daniel J. Losen, M.ED, J.D.**
The Civil Rights Project at UCLA
- **Mr. Dion J. Pierre**
Ridgewood , NY
- **Ms. Maritza White**
Washington , D.C.
- **Mr. Richard A. Carranza**
New York City Schools Chancellor

Background for the hearing includes two key GAO reports on racial and socioeconomic segregation in public schools and discipline disparities for black students, boys and students with disabilities. (see below for links).

Chair Bobby Scott noted that the Trump Administration is not promoting diversity and equity in education holding that their policies are moving the country in the wrong direction while segregation grows. “How many adults have been impoverished just because we have failed to uphold a Supreme Court decision rendered 65 years ago?” he asked. Scott specifically criticized the administration’s attempt to delay implementation of a rule to address racial disparities in special education programs and the elimination of school discipline guidance intended to address racial disparities.

Ranking Republican Virginia Foxx (R-NC) defended Sec. DeVos noting that she was following the letter and spirit of the law and regulations. She also underscored her support for school choice noting the legacy of Brown should be “to empower parents with the ability to choose the right school for their child and eliminate the ability of the state to consign children to low-performing schools with no means of escape.”

See: <https://edlabor.house.gov/hearings/brown-v-board-of-education-at-65-a-promise-unfulfilled>

See: <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-345>

See: <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/690828.pdf>

3. **New National Teacher of the Year: Rodney Robinson of Virginia Meets with Pres. Trump After All**

The annual tradition of naming a National Teacher of the Year continued this week with Virginian Rodney Robinson being honored with that title. A teacher of youth in a detention center in Richmond, Robinson is a 19-year teaching veteran. He became a teacher to honor his mother, who struggled to receive an education after being denied an education as a child due to segregation and poverty in rural Virginia. Robinson received his BA from Virginia State University, an HBCU, and his Masters Degree from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Upon receiving the honor, Robinson said: “This year I hope to be the voice for my students and all students who feel unseen, unheard, unappreciated and undervalued in America.”

Traditionally every National Teacher of the Year has met with the President of the United States. Originally it was reported that President Trump would not meet with Robinson; however, that changed and the President did meet with him. Trump and Robinson met alone in the Oval office and were then joined by other state teachers of the year.

Sec. DeVos met with teachers of the year from every state and delivered the award to Robinson. However, two teachers of the year boycotted the event. Kentucky teacher of the year, Jessica Duenas, and Minnesota Teacher of the Year, Kelly Holstine, instead held a press conference at the American Federation of Teachers. They wanted to share their concerns about the Trump Administration’s policies related to immigrants and LGBTQ students.

See: https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/ntoy/VA_Robinson_Application.pdf

4. **New Resources for Educators**

- **Learning Policy Institute** is out with *Protecting Students’ Civil Rights: The Federal Role in School Discipline*. See: https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/student-civil-rights-school-discipline-report?utm_source=LPI+Master+List&utm_campaign=8604924af8-LPIMC_SchoolDisciplineReport_20190501&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_7e60dfa1d8-8604924af8-42314823
- **Gallup Poll** issued a report finding that most teachers are unprepared to handle school discipline issues: https://news.gallup.com/poll/249185/say-teachers-unprepared-handle-discipline.aspx?g_source=link_NEWSV9&g_medium=TOPIC&g_campaign=ite

[m_&g_content=In%2520U.S.%2C%252054%2525%2520Say%2520Teachers%2520Unprepared%2520to%2520Handle%2520Discipline](#)

- **The U.S. Department of Education** reported data this month on the results of **the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program** – a program which allows teachers and other public employees to have their federal student direct loans forgiven if they make appropriate payments for a ten-year period. The report reveals and explains why 99% of borrowers have had their applications rejected so far. <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/about/data-center/student/loan-forgiveness/pslf-data>

Wishing you a joyful spring weekend!

See you on twitter @janewestdc

Best,

Jane