

Washington Update December 7, 2018

Dear Colleagues:

Because of the death of President George H.W. Bush and subsequent memorials, Washington was on hold this week.

1. Possible Government Shutdown Postponed

The original deadline for passage of the remaining 7 funding bills for FY 2019 was today, December 7. With President Trump's declaration of Weds. Dec. 5 as a national day of mourning for President H.W. Bush and the events in the Capitol and the National Cathedral, Congress all but recessed from its scheduled work for the week. With the agreement of President Trump, Congress extended the deadline for final funding decisions for two weeks, until Dec. 21. There is increasing talk of simply extending last year's funding levels through September 30, 2019 – a continuing resolution – at least for a portion of the 7 remaining funding bills. The big hold up remains funding for a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico – President Trump's top priority.

The closer it gets to the holidays, the less likely a shutdown becomes. Members of Congress, like everyone else, are eager to get on with the festivities. Another short term extension is possible – say through March – but unlikely since the Democrats will have more leverage next year as they take control of the House. So either they come to agreement about new bills or they simply extend the old ones with the same level of funds as last year and no funds for the wall or other priorities. They very well may develop new bills for a portion of the 7 and extend existing bills for another portion.

Education advocates continue to count their blessings, as the education funding bill was passed in September and holds through September 30, 2019. That is beginning to feel like an early Christmas present!

2. New Resources for Educators

- **The White House** has issued *Charting a Course for Success: America's Strategy for STEM Education* which, upon first quick read, has no mention of teachers! <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/STEM-Education-Strategic-Plan-2018.pdf>
- **Bellwether Education Partners** is out with a new report *Let the Research Show: Developing the Research to Improve Early Childhood Teacher Preparation*. <https://bellwethereducation.org/publication/let-research-show-developing-research-improve-early-childhood-teacher-preparation-0>

- **Ed Week** has a special edition focusing on special education. One of the articles addresses the special education teacher shortage, *Shortage of Special Educators Adds to Classroom Pressures*.
<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2018/12/05/shortage-of-special-educators-adds-to-classroom.html>
- **The National Education Policy Center** is out with *How School Privatization Opens the Door for Discrimination*. The report examines how voucher and charter programs open the door to discrimination even though federal dollars are involved. <https://nepc.colorado.edu/publication/privatization>

3. A Personal Reflection on President George H.W. Bush

I was so fortunate to be a part of the George H.W. Bush era – working with so many others on developing and passing the Americans with Disabilities Act. I worked mostly with the National Council on Disability, a small independent federal agency designed to be a think tank for disability policy. The Council was chaired at the time by a Bush appointee – Sandra Swift Parrino. She knew the Bush family and had a son with a significant disability. Many of the appointees on the Council were Republicans and had ties to Republicans in the Congress and the Administration. They also brought the lived experience of discrimination and a passion for disability rights.

It actually was under the auspices of the National Council where the first ADA was drafted. (For a great history of the creation of the law see: https://ncd.gov/publications/2010/equality_of_Opportunity_The_Making_of_the_Americans_with_Disabilities_Act.) The early drafts included equal access to health insurance! (See: <https://ncd.gov/publications/1988/Jan1988>) Unfortunately that was considered a deal breaker and was taken out before the bill was originally introduced – in the Senate by Lowell Weicker (R-CT) (for whom I had previously worked) and in the House by Rep. Tony Coelho (D-CA) in April, 1988.

I also was fortunate enough to work on the first Presidential Commission on the HIV Epidemic – another entity established by a Republican Administration. Led by Admiral James Watkins, this Commission issued a report in June 1988 calling for broad federal anti-discrimination coverage for people with HIV and AIDS. I am told that this report was quite influential in ensuring that people with HIV were in fact covered by the ADA.



I had the great honor of meeting President Bush 41 at a reception in the White House shortly after he was sworn in. I was invited by his personal physician Dr. Burton Lee, who was a member of the HIV Commission and who also became a good friend. As the ADA began to take effect, I edited a book, **The Americans with Disabilities Act: From Policy to Practice** <https://read.dukeupress.edu/jh ppl/article-abstract/17/3/583/76635/The-Americans-with-Disabilities-Act-From-Policy-to?redirectedFrom=fulltext> with articles by experts looking at the early implementation of the different aspects of the law. And shortly after that I received a letter from President Bush 41 thanking me for my work to help implement the law. I remain stunned to have received that letter.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 8, 1992

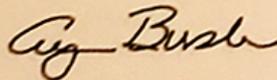
Dear Jane:

Now that the employment requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act have taken effect in law, I am writing to congratulate you on your efforts to promote full and harmonious compliance with this historic legislation.

By establishing partnerships in support of the ADA, we will further eliminate barriers that, in the past, have prevented many persons with disabilities from participating fully in our Nation's social and economic mainstream. As we open doors of opportunity and as millions of Americans with disabilities enter the work force, all of us will benefit from the contributions of their knowledge, talents, and skills.

Support of the ADA is vital because our goal is to make "equal opportunity for all" a cherished principle in the United States, as well as a matter of nationwide policy and practice. Achieving this goal will require the sustained cooperation of government, business, and persons with disabilities. I welcome your enthusiastic cooperation, and I reaffirm the Administration's commitment to complete, cost-effective implementation of the ADA. By working together, we will ensure that every member of our society is recognized as a full heir to the American Dream.

Sincerely,



Ms. Jane West
5104 42nd Avenue
Hyattsville, MD 20781

It is in this era that I came to understand what a powerful force for the good of all people our federal government can be. Being a small part of the intense bi-partisan work sustained over years that led to the ADA was one of the great privileges of my career. Knowing our government can, and has, worked so well always sustains me as we move forward.

As the great disability rights leader and pivotal force for the ADA, Justin Dart, always said, "Lead on colleagues, lead on."

Wishing you the best,

Jane