

Washington Update November 15, 2019

Dear Colleagues:

Washington is all about the impeachment hearings these days. You should know that many bars are opening in the morning and featuring Impeachment Drinks to sip as TV's blast the hearings. Here are a few you might like to try at home:

- Quid Bro, Go
- Insane in the Ukraine
- James and the Giant Impeach
- I Got 99 Problems but Impeachment Ain't One
- Subpoena Colada

1. Congress Still Working to Avoid that Government Shutdown

The current continuing resolution – a bill that keeps the government temporarily funded – expires next week, on November 21. Congressional leaders have been scrambling this week to find a way to keep government funding extended beyond that time, and thus avoid a government shutdown. They appear to be closing in on another temporary funding extension – through December 20 – predicated on progress on the big obstacle – which is agreeing on top line totals for each of the 12 funding bills. Since the House and Senate did not agree on those totals before they wrote their bills, there are significant discrepancies which can only be resolved by a House/Senate agreement on one figure for each bill. This is critical for the bill that funds education, as the House bill is about \$5 billion more generous for education than the Senate draft bill.

Appropriations Chair Nita Lowey (D-NY) reported that she is optimistic that the top line numbers will be resolved and that all of the 12 funding bills for FY 2020 (which would run through October 1, 2020) could be completed by December 20. The big obstacle remains where to find the \$5 billion for the border wall with Mexico which is President Trump's top priority; it is opposed by Democrats. There is speculation that if the President's priority is not accommodated, he may refuse to sign the bill and a government shutdown might ensue. Of course, this would also be quite a distraction from the ongoing impeachment hearings, which many have speculated may be his strategy.

Sen. Roy Blunt (R-MO), chair of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor/HHS/Education has indicated that when the Subcommittees are provided with the top line number for each bill, he and Rep. Rosa DeLauro -- his House counterpart – could finish their bill within a week. What a Christmas present this would be for educators!

See: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/us-policy/2019/11/12/congress-prepares-avert-shutdown-nov-with-another-short-term-spending-bill/>

2. Congressional Timeline: What Can We Expect for the Rest of the Year?

The Congressional calendar becomes a driving force this time of year as legislators are forced to finalize the agenda before year's end. Here is what it is looking like:

Week of November 18:	Congress in session
Week of November 25 (Thanksgiving):	Congress in recess
Weeks of December 2, 9 and 16:	Congress in session
December 20:	Congress plans to recess until January

Recall that December 20 is the day the likely current funding bill will expire (see above article). The first two weeks of December look to be filled by impeachment hearings in the House. There is speculation that a House vote on impeachment may occur the week of December 16. If this occurs, the Senate would return to the chamber in January with an impeachment trial as the number one item on the agenda. It is expected that that will absorb Senators requiring all other business to be set aside.

Ensuring that the government continues to be funded will be wrapped through this impeachment schedule. We will see how successful the Congress can be at multi-tasking.

3. New Resources for Educators

- **The Education Law Center** is out with *Making the Grade 2019* which reports that K-12 public school funding continues to be deeply unfair in many states and represents a major factor responsible for disparities in education resources, opportunities and outcomes for the 50 million public school children across the country. One stunning fact is the variation in per pupil spending across the states. For example, Arizona provides \$8,569 per pupil while Vermont spends \$27,588 per pupil. See: <https://edlawcenter.org/research/making-the-grade/>
- **The National Education Policy Center** released *Seven Trends in U.S. Teacher Education , and the Need to Address Systemic Injustices* see: <https://nepc.colorado.edu/>
- **The National Education Policy Center** released an article in its newsletter *College Admissions and 504 Plans: A Q and A with NAPC Fellow Edward Garcia Fierros* which considers the influence of socio-economic status and the use of 504 plans. See: <https://nepc.colorado.edu/>
- **Forbes Magazine** is out with a good overview of the teacher shortage: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/phyllislockett/2019/11/11/to-curb-the-teacher-shortage-we-need-to-think-bigger-about-the-problem/>

- **The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy** released a report which find that over 36 million adults in the US lack basic literacy skills costing the nation up to \$1.4 trillion in GDP. See: <http://map.barbarabush.org/>
- **The National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools** released a report which finds that charter schools suspend students with disabilities at slightly higher rates than traditional schools. See: <https://www.ncsecs.org/wp-content/uploads/NCSECS-15-16-CRDC-Report.pdf>

I'll be celebrating my birthday this weekend. So hard to believe I am already 29. Amazing!
Until next week! @janewestdc

Best,

Jane