



National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity

JUNE 2015 PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE

NAPE News

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Congress

Bipartisan House Bill Would Improve Postsecondary Data System, Help Low-Income and Underprepared Students Make Better Decisions

(Courtesy of CLASP/Anna Cielinski)

Early this month, a bipartisan group of House members introduced [H.R. 2518](#), the *Student Right to Know Before You Go Act of 2015*. The legislation, sponsored by Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA), would provide students, families, and policymakers much-needed information to improve postsecondary education decisions. H.R. 2518 is the House companion to [S. 1195](#), a bipartisan Senate bill sponsored by Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Marco Rubio (R-FL). If enacted, it would be a major step toward an improved federal postsecondary data system that could assist low-income and underprepared students.

The bill would provide an exemption from the ban on a student unit record system and would leverage the existing Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) to provide more accurate and complete data on student retention, transfer, graduation, and employment outcomes at all levels of postsecondary enrollment.

Much of the data would be disaggregated by Pell Grant status. This will help policymakers and researchers understand how low-income students are faring in postsecondary education, allowing them to target policy changes toward performance or outcome gaps between Pell and non-Pell recipients.

The bill also requires median annual earnings and employment metrics—disaggregated by program of study, credential received, institution, and state of employment—to be reported 2, 6, and 15 years after completion.

The bill would provide for employment and earnings data at the program-of-study level. Low-income and underprepared students who are place-bound may have limited choices of institutions, but they can choose among many programs of study. These data would help students select programs based on proven earning potential.

While there is much to support in the bill, improvements could be made. For example, it appears that employment and earnings data would not be disaggregated by Pell Grant status under the bill as drafted. Policymakers may be concerned that further disaggregation from the program-of-study level could produce numbers of students too low to report for privacy reasons. That problem could be solved by giving the Secretary of Education authority to combine 5 years of students into one cohort, a practice already employed by state-run [College Measures](#) consumer information websites.

Proposed Changes to Education Act Undermine Civil-Rights Protections for New Majority of Students

(Courtesy of Roll Call, Brent Wilkes et al.)

This school year marks the first time in American history that students of color make up the majority of students in our nation's public schools. This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The statute sought to create equal educational opportunities for disadvantaged students, particularly students of color, which had long been disregarded due to segregation and political disenfranchisement. Unfortunately, the Every Child Achieves Act of 2015 (ECAA), which would amend and alter the ESEA, rolls back our nation's core education civil rights protections. In fact, under the guise of providing flexibility to states, the ECAA sacrifices critical accountability provisions that formed the civil rights foundation of the ESEA. Amendments that could have restored these provisions were withdrawn, and the ECAA was rushed through the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee for consideration on the Senate floor.

House and Senate Budget Makes Wrong Choices for Hard-Working Poor, Low-Income People

(Courtesy of CLASP)

Writing a budget is an exercise in making choices, which means that every budget sends a signal about priorities. The budget resolution that passed with overwhelming Republican support in the U. S. House and Senate reflects priority choices that would make it more challenging for hard-working poor and low-income people to lift themselves and their families to economic security, damaging critical programs that support work and that are necessary to grow our economy for all, not just for those at the top.

Through this budget, legislators who voted for it have chosen to take our nation in an irresponsible direction over the next decade. If its vision were realized, millions more people would be poor and would lack health insurance. Instead of investing in our future, this budget disinvests, driving down spending on vital programs to the lowest levels on record.

Low-income youth and adults need pathways to postsecondary education leading to good jobs, along with Pell Grants and other financial aid so they can afford it. Unemployed—and underemployed—workers need skills and training for better jobs. Working parents need child care so they can hold onto their jobs and move up. Young children need Head Start, home visiting, and other quality early care and education to put them on a path to success. Low-wage workers need better pay, access to paid leave, and more predictable schedules. Our country needs to prioritize all of these investments. Yet, the choices in this budget do the opposite.

While the negative consequences of the budget would hit the most vulnerable communities—like Baltimore—the hardest, the damage would go much further. For example, almost half of children are growing up in low-income families today, most with parents who work hard at low-wage jobs and struggle to put food on the table, get the training or postsecondary education they need to move up, and find time for their children. So it's not just a few communities or a few families that need a better path to stability. It's countless communities in both “red” and “blue” states—with populations representing all races, ethnicities, and backgrounds—that need supports so people can get jobs with family-sustaining wages and have access to a strong safety net when they need it.

While programs for low- and moderate-income people make up less than one-quarter of the federal budget, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has estimated that at least 60 percent of the budget's cuts would come from those programs. The spending cuts of \$5 trillion over the next 10 years would force harsh reductions to nutritional assistance (including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP and WIC), Medicaid, child care, and other vital programs. The dollar amounts specified in the budget imply that policymakers would have to make these cuts, although the budget resolution is not forthcoming about the details of how to make the reductions.

The budget would also attempt to repeal the Affordable Care Act, reversing the significant improvement in the lives of millions who now have access to health coverage. Everyone needs access to affordable health care so that an illness or injury doesn't bankrupt them or keep them out of work for months because they can't afford treatment.

Moreover, policymakers made the choice to abandon the commitment in current law for even-handed treatment of domestic and defense discretionary programs. Over the long term, the budget opts to cut domestic discretionary funding by \$500 billion beyond the cuts that are already required by the Budget Control Act, more than doubling sequester cuts for domestic spending while increasing the defense budget.

This budget also fails to restore fairness and adequacy in revenue collection, which will hold back our economy. Our nation needs corporations and upper-income people to pay their fair share, ensuring that revenues are adequate to meet our fiscal needs.

What happens next? The damaging vision set forth by this budget is non-binding, so it cannot take effect without legislation that would impose the cuts. Congress has already started to consider the appropriations bills that will provide specific dollar amounts for individual programs. The Republican majority in Congress may be able to get enough votes in favor of spending bills that implement the cuts—although even that is uncertain—but there is little doubt that President Obama would veto such bills, and the Congress would likely be unable to overturn his vetoes. Thus, speculation has begun about the possibility of another bipartisan bargain that includes changes to taxes and to mandatory programs, such as SNAP and Medicaid, which are

not included in the appropriations process. The passage of the budget resolution also opens the door to Congress using the “[reconciliation](#)” process to eliminate the Affordable Care Act with a simple majority vote and potentially change other mandatory programs or taxes.

Now is the time for a clear message to Congress about the importance of protecting critical programs that provide economic opportunity and ladders to the middle class and the “American Dream” for the nation’s vulnerable populations—poor and low-income adults, children, youth, and families. Members of the House and Senate have another chance during the appropriations process to make the right choices for our country’s hard-working poor and low-income people.

Administration

President Obama Threatens to Veto House Science Research Funding Bill

(Courtesy of The Washington Times and STEM Connector)

On the Monday evening before the Memorial Day recess, the White House threatened to veto a House science, technology, and innovation funding bill, saying the legislation makes unacceptably steep cuts for the National Science Foundation and other federal agencies. The administration also argues that the America Competes Reauthorization Act of 2015 would undermine efforts to enact regulations. The measure contains a provision that would prohibit the Energy Department, for example, from using the results of federally funded scientific research when developing rules and regulations. “This provision would set an extremely harmful precedent of political interference in the scientific integrity of the regulation process, which would undermine the value of the federal research and development enterprise as a whole,” the White House said.

States

A Peek at Equity Plans

(Courtesy of [Politico](#)/Caitlin Emma et al.)

For the past several months, states have been revising plans to ensure that quality teachers are distributed fairly, especially among low-income and minority children. The Education Department directed states to tackle the issue last July. Those plans, first created in 2006 under Title I of No Child Left Behind, are due to the feds by June 1.

It is a sizable task—state-by-state data released by the Education Department in December found significant disparities in students' access to qualified and experienced teachers. For example, in Pennsylvania, more than 20 percent of teachers are unlicensed in schools serving the largest concentration of minority students. In Pennsylvania's mostly white schools, less than 1 percent of teachers lack a license. So how are states attacking the problem? [Vermont](#) has posted a draft plan that the public can review and submit comments. In the Green Mountain State's high-poverty schools, 6 percent of teachers are in their first year compared to 3 percent of teachers in low-poverty schools, and the state says the disparity is worse in rural areas. Young teachers who are new to rural areas might find that the community doesn't suit their interests, the state says. So Vermont is exploring partnerships with colleges and universities that could recruit students who are specifically interested in serving rural communities.

Upcoming Events

Senate HELP Committee Hearing: Reauthorizing the Higher Education Act: Ensuring College Affordability

June 3, 2015, 10:00 a.m., 430 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC

Webinar on Creating the Next Generation of Manufacturers

June 5, 2015, 1–2 p.m. EDT

Join OCTAE for “Skills on Purpose—Creating the Next Generation of Manufacturers,” a series of panel discussions between national, state, and local leaders from government, businesses, colleges, and schools. In these live, interactive webinars, panel members will explore strategies for building partnerships toward a workforce-driven transformation of the manufacturing sector. In the first webinar, “Employer-Centered Talent Development for Small- and Medium-Sized Firms,” representatives from small- to mid-sized companies will share their workforce development strategies to efficiently and effectively engage with training and education stakeholders and institutions. Such partnerships are critical in ensuring the quality and preparedness of incoming talent, and have become an essential part of growth strategies for many manufacturing firms. To register for this discussion, click [here](#)

STEMCONNECTOR: Broadening Participation in STEM Higher Education: A Closer Look at Best Practices in Diversity Virtual Town Hall

June 16, 2015, 2:00 to 3:30 PM ET

Despite making up almost half of the U.S. workforce, women are vastly underrepresented in STEM jobs and among STEM degrees. Similarly, African-Americans, American Indians, and Hispanics between 18-24 account for 34% of the population, but earn only 12% of undergraduate degrees in engineering. The fact that more than half of the nation's children are expected to be part of a minority race or group by 2020 and adults by 2040, engaging these populations in the STEM workforce is imperative to our nation's future.

Increasing participation among these underrepresented groups continues to be a major focus of STEM initiatives in higher education. Many institutions are fundamentally rethinking how they engage and retain students from diverse backgrounds in STEM fields. Innovations focus on strategic K-12 outreach, employment pathways, course redesign, mentoring, peer support, and technology implementation.

This virtual town hall will feature "boundary-breaking" leaders who are engaging students from all backgrounds in the STEM economy. Focus will be on innovative higher education models that are engaging underrepresented minorities and women in STEM Fields. Click here to [register](#).

Webinar: Heartland Alliance Webinar: Leveraging SNAP Employment & Training: Designing & Implementing Employment Solutions for People Facing Barriers to Employment

June 24, 2015, 1:00 pm to 2:15 pm CDT

This webinar provides the opportunity to learn from federal experts about the structure of the SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) funding stream, how the funding can be used, and particular aspects of the funding stream and partnership opportunities that make it especially

flexible for serving individuals experiencing chronic unemployment. Following the federal overview, the webinar will lift up one state's experience and lessons learned in leveraging SNAP E&T funds to design and implement employment solutions for individuals experiencing barriers to employment. Finally, Heartland Alliance's National Initiatives team will share best and promising practices for designing and implementing employment solutions for the chronically unemployed. Click [here](#) to register.

Other News

The States of Teacher Leadership

(Courtesy of the U.S. Department of Education)

At the [Teach to Lead State Summit](#) on Teacher Leadership, educators from seven states met earlier this month to engage in critical conversations with district and state leaders that will expand and support teacher leadership statewide.

The seven states—North Carolina, New York, Maine, Connecticut, Arizona, Kentucky, Washington—worked with union officials, supporting organizations, and critical friends from other states to reflect on the state of teacher leadership and develop plans to expand teacher leadership to solve their toughest educational challenges. Every individual left the summit with an action commitment to help move the state forward in their plan.

If there was a theme to the event, it would be this: Teachers are the professional experts in education, an untapped resource for innovation and improvement. Tennessee Assistant State Education Commissioner Paul Fleming characterized his experience with teacher leadership as something that has been seriously transformative in Tennessee, much more than than "mere window dressing."

View [pictures from the State Summit](#). Educators may [submit](#) an idea for participation in the Teach to Lead Summit on July 23-24, 2015, through 11:59 pm ET June 5.

Call for Research Papers Using PIAAC Data Deadline Extended to October 30, 2015

OCTAE is collaborating with the U.S. National Institutes of Health, specifically the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child and Human Development (NICHD) and the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR), to sponsor a call for research papers for a new PLOS journal collection on the theme "[Improving the Lives of Adults and Families: Identifying Individual and Systems-level Factors Relating Education, Health, Civic Engagement, and Economic Well-being](#)." Papers are sought on the relationship of education and skills to public health for adults and their families, particularly for those most at risk for poor educational, economic, and health outcomes.

This effort leverages and extends the recent Institute of Medicine report [U.S. Health in International Perspective](#), as well as the recently released Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development's cross-national, population-representative dataset, the [Survey of Adult Skills](#), part of the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies.

OCTAE, NICHD, and OBSSR plan to cover the publication fees associated with a select number of initial publications for this collection. PLOS is a peer-reviewed, highly competitive, open-sourced journal that publishes online, freely available articles related to science, medicine, and

health. Authors interested in applying for financial consideration by these groups should submit a preliminary draft paper and notice of intent for funding by September 15, 2015, to brett.miller@nih.gov.

All papers should be submitted to [PLOS One](#), by October 30, 2015.