



NAPE NOVEMBER 2014 PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE

What Are “Your” Public Policy Priorities? NAPE Wants to Know.

A new year and a new Congress are rapidly approaching. To prepare for the changing political landscape, NAPE would like to know how you manage your public policy agenda at the federal and state levels and what federal policy issues are most important to you. Please take a few minutes to complete our Public Policy Survey. *Your responses are essential* in helping NAPE form its policy strategy for 2015.

Please complete the survey at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2014_Policy_Survey.

The survey closing date is Friday, December 5, 2014. THANK YOU!!!!

Mid-Term Election Report

2014 Election Creates a GOP Congress, Shift Leadership in the Senate and Key Committees

As Congress returns to a lame duck session to address the possibility of an omnibus bill because the current Continuing Resolution (CR) expires on December 11, it does so understanding that the 114th Congress will begin in approximately 45 days under Republican leadership in both the House and the Senate. The links below provide a state-by-state breakdown of what the 114th Congress will look like.

2014 Senate Election Results

<http://www.politico.com/2014-election/results/map/senate/#.VGOSrKMo7aE>

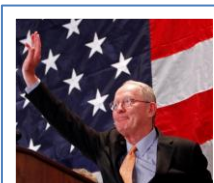
2014 House Election Results

<http://www.politico.com/2014-election/results/map/house/#.VGOTt6Mo7aE>

GOP Leaders in Congress Outline Education Priorities

(Courtesy in part of *Education Weekly*)

After easily capturing the number of seats they needed to take control of the U.S. Senate—and padding their majority in the House of Representatives—congressional Republicans have laid out an aggressive education policy agenda that includes overhauling the long-stalled No Child Left Behind Act and the mammoth Higher Education Act.



Soon to be Chair of the Senate HELP Committee, Senator Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., waves after claiming victory on Nov. 4 in Knoxville, Tenn. —Wade Payne/AP

While divided government will remain, because the White House is in Democratic hands at least until President Barack Obama finishes his second term, the new political calculation in Congress will likely spur

movement on education bills. Lawmakers who play major roles on the chamber's education committees were quick to outline their priorities, which also include school choice measures, funding issues, and generally scaling back the federal footprint on K-12. **(READ MORE)**

Wins in Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, North Carolina, and South Dakota—were all tight and expensive races that in the end went to Republican candidates—the GOP garnered enough seats to take leadership of the Senate. Democrats currently hold the Senate with 53 seats to Republicans' 45 (plus two independents who are aligned with the Democrats), but in the next Congress, Republicans will control at least 52 seats.

In the House, Republicans extended their majority from 234 to at least 243. (At the time this article went to press, some races in both chambers had not been decided.)

The flip in the Senate will result in a reconfiguring of key leadership positions. **Senator Lamar Alexander**, a former U.S. secretary of education under President George H.W. Bush, [is slated to take the reins of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee](#). The Tennessee Republican and former governor is known as a pragmatic politician, fond of working across the aisle. He will likely collaborate with **Senator Patty Murray** (D-WA), who is expected to leave her post on the Budget Committee [for the top Democratic slot on the HELP Committee](#) as the current chairman.

Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) retires at the end of the year.

Although **Senator Barbara Mikulski** (D-MD) is next in line to serve as Ranking Member of the Senate HELP Committee, she is more likely to become Ranking Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, thereby positioning Murray as Ranking Member of the Senate HELP Committee.



Senator Patty Murray, incoming Ranking Member of the Senate HELP Committee

At the helm of the House Education and the Workforce Committee will be a familiar face, **Rep. John Kline** (R-MN), who easily recaptured his seat, even after being targeted by liberal HBO personality Bill Maher's "flip a district" effort. With the departure of **Congressman George Miller** (D-CA), the top Democrat on the committee, who is retiring at the end of the year, **Congressman Bobby Scott** (D-VA) is expected to fill the slot of the Ranking Member.



Bobby Scott, incoming Ranking Member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Action

Rep. Kline has ushered two different versions of an overhaul of the NCLB law—the current edition of the nearly 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act—through the House as committee chairman during the past two Congresses.

"I've been trying and trying to get No Child Left Behind replaced, ... and now I'm much more optimistic," he said in an interview. "I'm looking at every way to get it done. It's the most important [education priority] because states are struggling with the temporary-waiver system set up by the administration. We need to change the law."



Chairman Kline’s efforts to rewrite the law include two similar proposals structured differently—a piecemeal overhaul and a large, broader bill. Under both proposals, states would still have to test students, but they wouldn’t have to set goals for student achievement. In addition, they wouldn’t have to intervene in schools that aren’t making progress with particular subgroups of students, such as minorities or those with disabilities.

Chairman Kline said he expects to work closely with Senator Alexander. Meanwhile, Senator Alexander will likely pick up where he left off on the NCLB law, with a bill he introduced last year that garnered support from every committee Republican but didn’t get a single Democratic co-sponsor. The measure, which is similar to Chairman Kline’s, would significantly scale back the federal role in K-12 policy. Among other provisions, it would allow states to devise their own accountability plans and eliminate the federal role in requiring states to set specific student-achievement goals, or in identifying a certain percentage of schools as low-performing.

Schools would still be required to test students in reading and math in grades 3-8 and once in high school, as the law currently requires, and report the results, including for subgroups of students.

Senator Murray, who is known for being [one of the Democrats’ strongest negotiators](#), will have an extra incentive to work with Senator Alexander to overhaul the law: The U.S. Department of Education recently yanked her home state of Washington’s NCLB waiver, sending it on a messy transition back to the law’s outdated accountability system. “She knows how to cut a good deal,” said a Senate GOP aide, adding that the committee under Mr. Alexander’s stewardship “will always be an inclusive process.”

Higher Education

Both chambers [have made baby steps toward reauthorizing the Higher Education Act](#) this year. Rep. Kline has helped pushed three bills through the House with bipartisan backing—one that would increase financial-aid counseling, another that would simplify the amount of financial forecasting families receive for estimated college costs, and another that would allow colleges to test competency-based degree programs.

Senator Alexander, meanwhile, has teamed up with Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) to offer a more comprehensive proposal involving, among other things, the Pell Grant program, student-aid applications, financial-aid counseling, and loan-repayment options. “He wants to simplify [the law] and so do I,” Chairman Kline said of Senator Alexander. “The reason you take a piecemeal approach is so people can understand what you’re doing—both the House and Senate and the larger public; it doesn’t mean it has to [be structured] that way.”

Other Education Issues

Conservatives will almost certainly use the budget process to try to eliminate the Obama Administration’s favorite competitive-grant programs, such as Race to the Top, Investing in

Innovation, and the expanded School Improvement Grant program. GOP lawmakers in the House have tried for the past few years to scrap those programs, but Senate Democrats have always championed them in budget negotiations.

Senator Alexander is especially a critic of both Race to the Top and the NCLB waivers—he is fond of saying they have turned the federal Department of Education into a “national school board” and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan into a “waiver-granting czar.”

Meanwhile, school choice policies [have become signature issues](#) for a number of high-profile Republican senators widely seen as having presidential aspirations, including Senators Rand Paul of Kentucky and Marco Rubio of Florida, both of whom have written or co-sponsored school choice bills.

Senator Alexander also has a school choice proposal, which would allow states to take almost all of their federal K-12 funds and combine them into one giant block grant aimed at creating scholarships for low-income students that could be used at any school, private or public. Chairman Kline is less inclined to support a voucher program and more interested in passing a bill that would replicate high-quality charter schools. Such a bill would be similar to a measure he ushered through the House last year. “Parents need more options and choice, and public charter schools offer that, without the controversy that comes with vouchers for private schools,” Mr. Kline said.

Will Republicans Produce?

Luckily for the House committee chairman, Senator Alexander has worked with Democrats—including **Senator Mary Landrieu** of Louisiana, whose 2014 race was punted to a December runoff—on a bill to revamp the federal charter-school-grant program. Some political watchers aren’t convinced Republicans are motivated to legislate, but the House and Senate education leaders—along with the Senate Republican leader, Senator Mitch McConnell of Kentucky—have shot back at those concerns.

“Mission number-one is to get results,” said the GOP Senate aide. “We are not going to do a bunch of chest-thumping pieces of legislation that make us feel good about ourselves.” Chairman Kline agreed: “I think we’ll get more votes on the Senate floor. I expect that out of Mitch McConnell and Lamar Alexander, and that will be a good thing.”

At the very least, Chairman Kline said, he has “great confidence” Congress will move forward on an NCLB overhaul and the higher education reauthorization. “And then it will be up to the president to decide what he’s going to do about it,” he added. **President Obama**, for his part, seemed to be open to working across the aisle, particularly with regard to education issues.

“I was encouraged that this year Republicans agreed to investments that expanded early-childhood education. I think we’ve got a chance to do more on that front,” he said during a post-election press conference on November 5. “We’ve got some common ideas to help more young people afford college and graduate without crippling debt.”

Administration

Missing Women: The G20, Gender Equality and Global Economic Governance (James Heintz of University of Massachusetts, Amherst for Heinrich Boll Stiftung, available [here](#))

With the conclusion of the Group of 20 (G20) Summit in Brisbane, Australia last week, one of the key outcomes of the [Summit](#) was a 5-year Financial Inclusion Action Plan to guide and promote the uptake of policies or services that reduce gender inequality and promote women's economic empowerment. It was reported that more than half of the G20 countries exceed 50 percent women workforce participation. Australia's urging of the G20 to close the global gender gap in the workforce was fortified by Oxfam International's recent report, [The G20 and Gender Equality](#).

The G20 declares itself the “premier global economic forum” and was created to tackle the most pressing challenges confronting the world economy today, including reducing instability and preventing future financial crises. Given this commitment, it is striking how little attention has been paid to issues of gender equality in its policy frameworks, summits, and declarations. The G20 has committed itself to a goal of shared and inclusive growth. Central to the agenda was a target to reduce the gender gap by 25 percent by 2025 and add billions to economic growth as well as confronting the problem of inequality. Fulfilling this objective would mean the creation of around 100 million jobs for women according to the G20, which intends to increase world economic growth by 1.8 percent above the forecast over the next 5 years. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development warns that despite young women achieving higher education levels than their male counterparts, the gender gap remains in the labor market.

This report examines the G20's strategies and their effects on gender equality. It finds that in the past, the G20 has not seriously considered the consequences for women and men when formulating policies and setting its agenda. There are indications that this situation has changed somewhat, with a commitment to gender equality made at the 2012 Los Cabos Summit in Mexico. Nevertheless, questions remain over whether gender equality will be taken seriously. Representation within the G20 is unbalanced—only 25 percent of the heads of state of the G20 member countries are currently women. The figure for the official government representatives, the “sherpas,” is lower—only 15 percent are women.

Broad-based economic policies have gender-specific effects because sources of gender inequality interact with changes in the economic environment to produce distinct outcomes for women and men. Gender-blind policies are rarely gender neutral. Gender bias must be identified within the G20's approach to economic governance if the commitment to inclusive growth is to be realized. This report analyzes the policy areas identified in the G20's *Framework for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth* and subsequent summits and processes, including fiscal policy, monetary policy, global rebalancing, financial regulation, trade, social protection, and employment. Although the G20 has committed to policy positions in each of these areas, actual implementation frequently falls far short of the mark.

The G20 has embraced a strategy of “fiscal consolidation,” which requires reductions in government borrowing and public debt. Although consolidation could be achieved by raising taxes, the emphasis has been on spending cuts. In terms of monetary policy, the G20 has

emphasized price stability, which typically involves targeting low rates of inflation, which may negatively affect employment.

The *Development Action Plan* expires this year. As the G20 looks toward a revised Action Plan and the post-2015 development agenda, gender equality should be integrated throughout the policy framework, including issues such as employment, social protection, unpaid care work, asset ownership, financial inclusion, violence against women, and reproductive rights.

Based on this analysis, the report makes five concrete recommendations:

1. Establish a G20 Task Force on gender equality to prepare a *Toolkit on Economic Policy and Gender* to integrate gender into the G20's agenda;
2. Ensure that gender equality is more fully reflected in the G20's two primary policy frameworks—the *Framework on Strong, Sustainable, and Balanced Growth* and the *Development Action Plan*;
3. Incorporate gender equality into the G20 monitoring activities of international organizations, such as the IMF, OECD, and WTO;
4. Use existing gender equality indicators and develop new indicators to assess progress within the G20 and internationally; and
5. Initiate a consultation process with key stakeholders on the *Toolkit on Economic Policy and Gender* and the ways in which the G20 should be held accountable for advancing gender equality.

If adopted, these recommendations would represent significant steps toward integrating gender throughout the G20's policy priorities and would fill a gap that currently undermines the goal of shared and inclusive growth.

***The G20 Members are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States.*

White House Releases a Report on Women and Girls of Color: Addressing Challenges and Expanding Opportunity

(The White House)

On November 12, 2014, the White House, led by Tina Tchen, Director of the White House Council on Women and Girls (CWG) held a special briefing to launch a report titled [Women and Girls of Color: Addressing Challenges and Expanding Opportunity](#). This report highlights work the Administration has done over the past 6 years to reduce barriers to success for everyone including women and girls of color. From continuing to fight to increase the minimum wage, encouraging women to enter STEM-related fields, providing increased access to health screenings and much more, this report re-emphasizes the Administration's commitment to helping all women succeed in every area of their lives.

As **White House Senior Advisor Valerie Jarrett** noted in her WH Blog:



“Today, girls of color still perform lower on standardized tests than their white peers. They are more likely to be suspended from school or drop out. Women and girls of color face higher rates of poverty, receive lower wages for their work than their white peers, and are more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system.

Women of color also face some of the highest rates of heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and other serious conditions, while experiencing disproportionately high rates of domestic violence. And when women are the primary or sole breadwinners for nearly half of all households of color, these disparities do not just affect them, but their entire families and communities.

At the same time, this CWG report does highlight some significant bright spots. Between 1997 and 2013, we’ve seen a 258% increase for businesses owned by Black women, 180% for Hispanic women, 156% for Asian American women, and 108% for American Indian/Alaska Native women. Women of color have ascended to the upper ranks of our workplaces and board rooms across industries; teen pregnancy rates for girls of color have plummeted; and high school and college graduation rates have risen. These are important gains, not only for women of color, but for everyone. As these women flourish, their families are strengthened, jobs are created in their communities, local economies grow, and our entire country benefits.”

As part of its efforts to address barriers and disparities that still exist for so many Americans and so many women and girls of color in particular, the White Council on Women and Girls is convening a Working Group on Challenges and Opportunities for Women and Girls of Color. This Working Group will bring together policy staff from the White House and across federal agencies—as well as experts, leaders, and advocates from outside the government—to focus on issues including education, economic security, health, criminal and juvenile justice, violence, and research and data collection. More information on the Working Group will be released at a later date.

In addition, consistent with President Obama’s commitment to ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed, in January 2015, the Department of Education, the White House Domestic Policy Council, the White House Council on Women and Girls, and Georgetown University will convene thought leaders, policy makers, practitioners, researchers, advocates (including NAPE), and marginalized girls and young women to focus on increasing access to STEM and CTE opportunities. They will address barriers to access, including cultural competency, race and gender stereotypes, discrimination, and lack of sufficient resources to support programs in schools and communities. This Washington, DC, convening will produce and inform policy and programmatic proposals to help disrupt patterns of gender-based occupational segregation by increasing young women’s and girls’ participation in programs that prepare them for high-skill, high-wage jobs, including nontraditional occupations. The aim is to develop a strategy to prepare students for in-demand careers in high-growth industry sectors.

About the Report

In recent years, on indicators ranging from educational attainment to economic security to health and well-being, women and girls of color have made tremendous progress. The number of businesses owned by women of color has skyrocketed, and women of color have ascended to the upper ranks of workplaces across industries. Teen pregnancy rates for girls of color have plummeted, and high school and college graduation rates have risen.

Yet, these achievements may obscure the very real challenges and disparities that persist for women and girls of color. Girls of color still lag behind in their performance on standardized tests, and they are more likely to be suspended from school. Women and girls of color still face higher rates of poverty and receive lower wages for their work than their white peers, and they are more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system. Women of color still have some of the highest rates of heart disease, obesity, diabetes and other serious conditions, and they experience high rates of domestic violence. And when women are the primary or sole breadwinners for nearly half of all households of color, these disparities do not just affect them, but their families and communities as well.

Furthermore, as President Obama recently noted, women of color “struggle every day with biases that perpetuate oppressive standards for how they’re supposed to look and how they’re supposed to act. Too often, they’re either left under the hard light of scrutiny, or cloaked in a kind of invisibility.” When addressing the challenges women and girls of color face—challenges that often lie at the intersection of race and gender—we often fail to fully acknowledge, and account for, this complexity.

Nearly \$170M in Ready to Work Partnership Grants Awarded to Help Long-term Unemployed Americans Find Work (Courtesy of the U.S. Department of Labor)

The U.S. Department of Labor recently [announced \\$169,771,960 in grants](#) to expedite the employment of Americans struggling with long-term unemployment. The grants are part of the Ready to Work Partnership initiative to support and scale innovative collaborations between employers, nonprofit organizations, and federal job training programs to help connect ready-to-work Americans with ready-to-be-filled jobs.

“There’s no question that individuals struggling with long-term unemployment are better off than they were 12 months ago, but there are still twice as many of them as there were before the recession. The constant struggle to find work has left many of them feeling discouraged and disregarded,” said **U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez**. “The federal grants we’re awarding today are part of a series of administration initiatives designed to help encourage, empower and employ this pool of talented individuals.”

These grants are part of an administration-wide effort to address the ongoing issue of long-term unemployment. Secretary Perez and **Jeff Zients**, Director of the National Economic Council, met with chief human resource officers of leading companies, including Citigroup Inc., CVS Health, The Boeing Co. and Dow Chemical Co., among others, during a roundtable discussion hosted at the White House on Wednesday, October 15, to discuss improvements these companies have made to increase recruitment of and eliminate barriers to hiring long-term unemployed

individuals. The Office of Personnel Management will also issue guidance to federal agencies on increasing recruitment and hiring of long-term unemployed individuals.

Grants, ranging from \$3 million to \$10 million, were awarded to 23 partnerships to serve individuals in 20 states and Puerto Rico. Three grantees—District 1199C Training & Upgrading Fund (Pennsylvania), Memphis Bioworks Foundation (Tennessee) and Worksystems Inc. (Oregon)—will support projects in multiple states. The goals of the Ready to Work Partnership initiative are closely aligned with the Obama Administration's job-driven training principles. Grantees will work with local and regional employers, industry groups, and their state commerce and development agencies to strengthen public-private partnerships. In addition, all grants require an evaluation component that will help significantly increase the body of knowledge about the most effective strategies in workforce development.

The original grants solicitation announced funding of up to \$150 million for this program. However, additional H-1B funding was made available, which allowed for approximately \$20 million more to be awarded.

USDOE Issues Guidance About Rights of Students with Vision, Hearing, or Speech Disabilities

U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights and Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, together with the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division, issued joint guidance about the rights of public elementary and secondary students with hearing, vision, or speech disabilities to effective communication. The guidance, in the form of a [letter to educators \(available in Spanish\)](#) with an attached [Frequently Asked Questions document](#), is intended to help schools understand and comply with federal legal requirements on meeting the communications needs of students with disabilities. We are also releasing a [fact sheet](#) on the guidance for parents ([available in Spanish](#)).

Federal Agencies

National Science Board Releases New Online STEM Education and Workforce Resource

(Courtesy of OCTAE, US Department of Education)

The National Science Board ([NSB](#)) recently [released](#) an online, interactive [tool](#) on its STEM Education Resource website. According to the press release, the site features “new and updated data and graphics about STEM education and workforce in the U.S.” and gives “answers and facts on topics such as student proficiency, college degrees in STEM fields, and jobs in science-related occupations.” Entities providing and coordinating services for adult learners may find this new resource useful to their work.

This new tool allows the user to connect to the data, trends, and analyses from the NSB's [Science and Engineering Indicators](#) report, a biennial publication to Congress and the President on the state of science and engineering, containing the latest unbiased, high-quality research. The resource highlights 60 key questions that are arranged by level of education and the workforce, along with various statistics, charts and diagrams that offer responses to each of the inquiries.

Consumers are able to view and download the most recent data and illustrations, study developments, and share material via email and/or social media. There are also links to additional analyses for each topic.

Partner Organizations

AFT/AFL-CIO CTE Workforce Development Summit in Pictures

(Courtesy in part by AFL-CIO and NH Labor News)

Hosted by the **Randi Weingarten**, President of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and **Richard Trumka**, President of the AFL-CIO, last week's [CTE Workforce Development Summit](#) brought organized labor, business, educators, community, and policy leaders together to discuss the needs and benefits of creating multiple pathways to high school and higher education graduation, real-world job skills and economic prosperity. [Summit speakers](#) emphasized that today's CTE programs are very different from yesterday's vocational education programs. CTE has been reimagined to bring together all the players needed to make it succeed—students, teachers, businesses and other employers, and higher education institutions. Keynote speaker **Vice President Joe Biden** was joined by **Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez**, and AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer **Liz Shuler**, [White](#) House National Economic Council Deputy Director **Byron Auguste**, former Governor and President of the Center for American Progress Action Fund **Ted Strickland**, along with a host of labor and corporate leaders and educators.

During his welcoming remarks, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka explained the importance of improving training and learning for workers: “Workforce development won’t be a cure-all, but it is a necessary ingredient. What we need is a full, comprehensive system for lifelong learning. I’m talking about everything, from high school programs to community colleges to apprenticeship programs to on-the-job learning. We all benefit when workers develop transferable skills, so we can move among employers if we want and grow as professionals throughout our working lives.”

During his opening remarks, Vice President Biden gave three directives on what American have to do:

1. *Deal with income inequity.* “When ordinary people aren’t making money, the pie does not expand. The Fed said that it is the greatest income disparity we’ve had at any time since the 19th century. Starting with a fair tax code—one that values people who earns a paycheck as much as people who collect a dividend. Why should a hedge fund manager gambling with someone else’s money make seven or eight hundred million dollars a year pay at 17 percent—when school making \$58,000 pay at 24.5 percent? Growing economic disparity is the greatest risk to economic growth.”
2. *Invest in our infrastructure.* “It starts a virtual cycle that attracts businesses from around the world who want to invest in the United States because businesses want to where they can get their products to the floor as quickly as possible and off the floor as cheaply as possible. That’s why they come. A.T. Kearney (a global management consulting firm) asked the 300 largest industrialists in the world every year for the last 30 years, where is the best place in the world to invest. Once again the answer has been and is “America”.

Fifty-four percent of American companies invested in manufacturing facilities in China are planning to come home to America. There is a reason they're coming home. Gas in the US is 3-5 times cheaper here as it is in China; and 2-3 times cheaper than it is in Europe. Best research universities in the world. We have the best workers in the world. That said, right now the U.S. infrastructure is ranked 29th in the world in terms of quality transportation infrastructure. There's so much we can do."

3. *Maintain and enhance our workforce so that we have the most sophisticated, best trained workforce in the world.* "The world is changing. All those companies that took their business overseas are now coming home. But guess what? The same businesses that left here are different than the businesses returning because of technology. It now takes a different skill set to do the same job because technology has moved so far ahead. For all those that question whether Americans want to work I say, 'give me a break'. Americans want to work for a decent wage. They want to work to be able to take care of their family. They want a chance to live a middle-class life. The middle-class isn't a number, it's a value set."

The Vice President also spoke passionately about the role that unions play in educating the workforce: "Unions for the last hundreds of years have been lighting a fire every day. Unions have been doing this their entire existence.... Organized labor has been responsible for the United States becoming the greatest economic power in the 20th century and will remain so in the 21st century. Unions are the reason we have the best workers in the world...and we do, by the way. You've all helped build the middle class and we've got a job of rebuilding it....The one thing I've learned about the middle class: When the middle class does well, the wealthy get wealthier and the poor have a way up. Sounds corny, but that's the American way and we've got to get back to it." Vice President Biden closed his remarks by sharing that if he had to describe America in one word, the word would be "Promise."

Secretary Perez made the case that the government plays a role in working with businesses, the education system, and unions in preparing workers" "We're building a skills ecosystem, a skills superhighway with many on-ramps and off-ramps."

Panelist **Nicholas Pinchuk**, Chairman and CEO of Snap-On Inc. summed up the sentiment of the day. "We are in a global competition for jobs. The single best [way] is CTE. We need to out-skill the competition."



Center for American Progress Releases a Report (Courtesy of CAP)

Our nation is currently experiencing growing levels of income and wealth inequality, which are contributing to longstanding racial and ethnic gaps in education outcomes and other areas. These large gaps, in combination with the significant demographic changes already under way, are threatening the economic future of our country. Thus, closing racial and ethnic gaps is not only key to fulfilling the potential of people of color, but also is also crucial to the well-being of our nation. This report quantifies the economic benefits of closing one of the most harmful racial and ethnic gaps: the educational achievement gap that exists between Black and Hispanic children and native-born White children.

Gaps in academic achievement are a function of a host of factors, such as income and wealth inequality, access to child care and preschool programs, nutrition, physical and emotional health, environmental factors, community and family structures, differences in the quality of instruction and school, and educational attainment. This suggests there are a wide range of public policies that could help narrow educational achievement gaps. [The Economic Benefits of Closing Educational Achievement Gaps—Promoting Growth and Strengthening the Nation by Improving the Educational Outcomes of Children of Color](#) demonstrates that there are enormous payoffs to closing the gaps through public policies. It also outlines effective public policy strategies to achieve this goal, though their details are left to future research.

After briefly summarizing the analysis's findings, this report places the educational achievement gaps in context to help explain their significance and the reasons they exist. In particular, the report reviews data on growing inequality, demographic changes, and intensifying global economic competition. This clarifies the need to address educational achievement gaps and helps

explain why the benefits of closing gaps are great. The report then describes factors that cause educational achievement gaps and offers public policies that could help close them. The subsequent sections of the report discuss the literature on the importance of academic achievement to economic growth, the methodology used in the analysis, and its detailed findings.

This report illustrates one aspect of the staggering economic cost of the failure to adequately invest in the development of our people: It estimates the increases in U.S. economic growth that would occur if racial and ethnic achievement gaps were closed and the educational playing field were leveled. Specifically, this analysis projects how much greater U.S. gross domestic product, or GDP, would be from 2014 to 2050 if the educational achievements of Black and Hispanic children were raised to match those of native-born White children. This study does not examine gaps that exist among other groups—such as Native Americans, Asians, and children of more than one race—because of data limitations and small sample sizes. This does not imply that achievement differentials among other groups do not exist, are not harmful, or do not deserve attention.

If the United States were able to close the educational achievement gaps between native-born White children and Black and Hispanic children, the U.S. economy would be 5.8 percent—or nearly \$2.3 trillion—larger in 2050. The cumulative increase in GDP from 2014 to 2050 would amount to \$20.4 trillion, or an average of \$551 billion per year. Thus, even very large public investments that close achievement gaps would pay for themselves in the form of economic growth by 2050.

Closing racial and ethnic achievement gaps—by raising incomes and increasing the size of the economy—would also have significant positive impacts on federal, state, and local tax revenues. From 2014 to 2050, federal revenues would increase by \$4.1 trillion, or an average of \$110 billion per year. State and local government revenues would increase by another \$3.3 trillion, or \$88 billion annually. Therefore, government investments in closing educational achievement gaps that cost less than an average of \$198 billion annually over the next 37 years would pay for themselves even in strictly budgetary terms. To put this figure in perspective, consider that the annual cost to implement the Obama administration's high-quality, universal pre-K program averages \$7.5 billion per year over the first 10 years.

As explained in the report, these projections understate the impact of closing achievement gaps for at least three reasons. First, they assume that educational achievement improvements are limited to black and Hispanic children; in the real world, policies that increase these children's educational achievement are likely to improve all children's achievement. Second, the model does not take into account any of the social benefits—such as better health outcomes—that are likely to occur as a result of educational improvement. Finally, the model does not calculate the potential positive effects on children born to future parents who, because of improved academic achievement, will have higher incomes and thus be able to provide them better educational opportunities. If the model properly accounted for all of these factors, the benefits of improving educational achievement would be substantially larger than those estimated in this study.

The benefits of closing educational achievement gaps amount to much more than just increased GDP and tax revenues. The current generation of children will be better off when they are adults

because they will have higher earnings, higher material standards of living, and an enhanced quality of life. Future generations of children will be more likely to grow up in families that can offer them the enriching opportunities of a middle-class lifestyle; they will therefore be less likely to grow up in families struggling in poverty. Present-day adults, whether working or in retirement, will benefit from the fact that higher-earning workers will be better able to financially sustain public retirement benefit programs such as Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security.

The retirement of the Baby Boomers will put pressure on the federal budget in the coming decades as more retirees draw from these benefit programs. Investing in the nation's educational achievement will provide future budget relief as Americans earn more and, thus, pay more in taxes. For example, closing racial and ethnic educational achievement gaps would lift Social Security tax contributions by \$877 billion by 2050. Similarly, Medicare tax revenues for the Hospital Insurance Fund would increase by \$265 billion from 2014 to 2050, providing a substantial boost to Medicare solvency. In other words, strengthening the educational achievement of our youth will help provide economic security for us, the elderly, and future generations.

These potential economic gains illustrate in stark terms the massive waste of human talent and opportunity that we risk if achievement gaps are not closed. They also suggest the magnitude of the public investments the nation should be willing to make now and in the decades to come to close achievement gaps. Even from a very narrow budgetary perspective, the tax revenue gains this study forecasts suggest that investments to close racial and ethnic achievement gaps could amply pay for themselves in the long run.

Realizing Innovation and Opportunity in WIOA: A Playbook for Creating Effective State Plans

The National Skill Coalition released a new report, [Realizing Innovation and Opportunity in WIOA: A Playbook for Creating Effective State Plans](#). The report provides recommendations on how states can use their Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) state plan to establish or expand strategies that close the skill gap and help workers and businesses succeed.

WDQC Released Report on State Progress, Register for Webinar

Workforce Data Quality Campaign (WDQC) released a report, [Mastering the Blueprint: State Progress on Workforce Data](#), which highlights state efforts to connect and use workforce data. The inaugural report is based on a nationwide survey conducted by WDQC in which states rated their progress on a 13-point Blueprint for strong data systems.

Grant Opportunities

Eligibility for 2015 Grant Competitions

On November 3, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Education (OPE) published a [notice](#) in the *Federal Register* offering institutions of higher education the chance to become eligible to [apply](#) for the following *Title III and Title V* programs of the *Higher Education Act of 1965*:

- Strengthening Institutions Program (SIP)
- Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions (ANNH)
- Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISI)
- Native American Serving Nontribal Institutions (NASNTI)
- Developing Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI)
- Hispanic-Serving Institutions STEM and Articulation (HSI STEM)
- Promoting Post-baccalaureate Opportunities for Hispanic Americans (PPOHA)
- Predominantly Black Institutions (PBI)

Applications for eligibility are due by Thursday, December 18. More information on the eligibility process can be found [here](#). Program information can be found on OPE's [Institutional Service Home Page](#).