

August 2019 PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE

NAPE Attends the Seventh Annual WCPI STEAM Fair and Reception on Capitol Hill *(Photos Courtesy of Lisa R. Ransom)*



House Committee on Education and Labor Member, Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) with Lisa Ransom



Women's Congressional Caucus Co-Chair, Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence (D-MI)



TechGirlz Founder, Tracey Welson Rossman; Geoff Lane, Policy Advocacy Director; Lisa Ransom

NAPE Senior Policy Advisor Lisa R. Ransom joined the Women's Congressional Policy Institute (WCPI) and members of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues hosted a packed house of middle, high school, and college girls during this year's Seventh Annual STEAM Fair and Reception on Capitol Hill.

WCPI President, Cindy Hall; co-chairs, Congresswoman Brenda Lawrence (D-MI) and Congresswoman Debbie Lesko (R-AZ); vice-chairs, Congresswomen Madeleine Dean and Jenniffer Aydin González Colón (New Progressive-PR), along with Women's Caucus member Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), opened energized program commending the outstanding exhibitors and students for their innovative efforts to encourage and inspire young women to explore opportunities in STEAM.

STEAM Fair event sponsors and partners for this year's WCPI's STEAM Fair included L'Oreal, FACEBOOK, TechGirlz, Qualcomm, astellas, Creating IT Futures, Girl Scouts of the USA, National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine, MD Center for Women in Computing at the University of Maryland College Park, Patriots Technology Training Center, NASA, National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation and the US. Department of Veterans Affairs Center for Minority Veterans, Center for Women Veterans and Veteran Employment Services.

Administration

Erica Clayton Wright Named Acting Director of the U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau

(Courtesy of the U.S. Department of Labor July 23, 2019)

The U.S. Department of Labor recently announced Erica Clayton Wright has been named Acting Director of the Women's Bureau.

Wright has more than 15 years of experience in federal, state and local government serving in various leadership positions. Wright served as the Communications Director for U.S. Senator Rick Santorum, as well as Deputy Director for the Pennsylvania Commission for Women, and Communications Director for the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. Wright led efforts to identify opportunities and advance programs encouraging the upward mobility of women and established a technical curriculum for high school students interested in pursuing advanced degrees in engineering, machining, 3D printing, and manufacturing.

The Women's Bureau develops policies and standards and conducts inquiries to safeguard the interests of working women; to advocate for their equality and economic security for themselves and their families; and to promote quality work environments. The Women's Bureau is the only federal agency mandated to represent the needs of wage-earning women in the public policy process.

June 5, 2019 marked the 99th anniversary of the creation of the Women's Bureau at the U.S. Department of Labor. Established just two months before the ratification of the 19th Amendment, the Women's Bureau is the only federal agency tasked with focusing exclusively on working women by safeguarding their interests, advocating for their equality and economic security, and promoting quality work environments. This year's celebration comes at a time of unprecedented opportunity for all American workers, and especially women.

U.S. Department of Education Faith Leader Stakeholders Call

Join Holly Ham, Executive Director, White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and Acting Executive Director, Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives (CFOI) at the U.S. Department of Education with CFOI staff on the seventh in a series of Faith Leader Stakeholder Calls on August 15, 2019, from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm (EDT). Please note the time for your specific time zone.

During the Stakeholder Call, The CFOI special guest Denisha Merriweather, Youth Liaison in the Office of Communications and Outreach at the U.S. Department of Education will highlight the work of the Department's Youth Engagement Team and discuss opportunities for Faith Leaders across the country to work closer with the Department.

Moderating the call will be Angel Rush, Management Program Analyst at the U.S. Department of Education, Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives.

To RSVP please [register](#) to receive the dial-in information. After registering, you will receive an email from noreply@event-services.com confirming your registration. If you don't receive your confirmation immediately, please check your JUNK or SPAM folders.

Registration closes August 15, 2019.

U.S. Department of Labor Women's Bureau's New Funding to Support Women Affected by the Opioid Crisis—RESTORE Grant Program

On July 23rd, the Women's Bureau announced a new grant program to help women affected by the opioid crisis re-enter the workforce. The Re-Employment, Support, and Training for the Opioid Related Epidemic (RESTORE) grant will award \$2.5 million to organizations that assist in providing coordinated, employment-focused services to women.

The RESTORE program will provide approximately four to eight grants to governments of states and outlying areas, Indian/Native American Tribal governments or organizations, state or local workforce development boards, or nonprofit organizations with IRS 501(c)(3) status, including community-based or faith-based organizations. The recipients can use the grant to foster cooperative relationships among a wide range of entities, including key stakeholders, public

health and substance abuse treatment professionals, and other human services and support service providers, to provide skills development and employment services to women workers.

Organizations applying must provide the following types of activities:

- Providing skills development and employment services to women workers affected by the opioid crisis;
- Establishing a new program or expanding an existing program to quickly address the urgent challenges faced by women in areas of the country hardest hit by the opioid crisis; and
- Forming partnerships with key stakeholders, which may include women's organizations and state and local women's commissions, as well as agencies and organizations in workforce development, public health and substance abuse, human services, and other supportive services.

Click [here](#) to view the solicitation for grant applications. Apply by August 23, 2019.

Congress

Where's the Senate's Education Spending Bill? Will the Holdup Affect Schools?

(Courtesy of Andrew Ujifusa, Education Week)

The House spending bills, [including an all-time high for federal education aid](#), have generated a great deal of interest this year. It's the first time in a decade Democrats control the chamber, and they want to draw sharp distinctions between their priorities and the Trump administration's. But with all that done and dusted weeks ago, you might be wondering: Where's the Senate school funding bill for fiscal 2020?

Good question. By late June last year, the Senate appropriations committee had already passed its legislation to fund the U.S. Department of Education, along with other agencies, for fiscal 2019. Fast forward to today, and we don't even have an education spending bill for the Senate subcommittee that handles K-12 funding to consider. If you're looking at Washington politics from the outside, it might seem odd.

So what's the holdup? In plain English, the problem lies with figuring out caps on federal spending. That's the legacy of a 2011 deal in Congress that applies automatic spending cuts to both defense and non-defense programs, unless lawmakers can agree to new limits on both types of federal spending. ([Here's some background on that issue from early 2018.](#)) The deals have lifted these caps over time; the last deal covered fiscal years 2018 and 2019.

Sen. Richard Shelby, R-Ala., the chairman of the Senate committee that oversees spending bills, has said [he'd prefer to have Congress agree on those new caps](#) before he moves ahead with spending bills that include specific dollar figures, Government Executive reported a few days ago. The House already agreed to bust through 2011 caps earlier this year, paving the way for its spending bills. But obviously the House and Senate ultimately need to cooperate on the issue.

These spending bills cover fiscal 2020, which starts on Oct. 1. So there's not a lot of time for the Senate to get moving, especially since Congress has an August recess. In addition, lawmakers potentially have to deal with lifting the debt ceiling—the point at which the federal government runs out of borrowing power to pay all its bills—[as soon as early September](#).

Sounds like a prelude to frantic, last-minute Beltway fights, right? Maybe so. But any such drama probably won't significantly impact federal funding for schools, said David DeSchryver, a senior vice president at Whiteboard Advisors, a research and consulting firm. (Right now, the Education Department has a \$71.5 billion budget.)

First, he said there aren't many signs yet that lawmakers are truly alarmed about not getting spending bills done and triggering a government shutdown. By Washington standards, they're proceeding at a relatively leisurely pace, DeSchryver noted, and lawmakers tend to work out deals that avert some of the more-dreaded consequences ([last winter's shutdown being one exception](#)). "I don't see any reason why we would expect anything different than more of the same," he said. "Past behavior is predictive of future behavior."

For another thing, DeSchryver said, school budget officers have gotten used to waiting a few months past the official Oct. 1 start of each fiscal year to get word on what their upcoming federal funding will look like.

Finally, remember that many federal education programs are forward funded. This means federal spending for disadvantaged students (Title I) in fiscal 2020, for example, impacts the 2020-21 school year. So that gives districts some time to plan, assuming the appropriations process doesn't become a total trainwreck. One prominent exception? [Impact Aid—more about that here](#).

And when we do get a spending bill, what can we expect? Likely something that doesn't look very different from recent Senate education spending bills, according to DeSchryver. That means small funding increases for big-ticket programs that are based on preset formulas, like special education grants to states and educator training. Title I and special education spending combined make up more than half the money the Education Department spends on K-12.

"The formula programs are the ones that really matter," DeSchryver said.

The odds are also very much against [U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos' school choice ideas](#) getting funded, he added.

But DeSchryver said it'll also be interesting to compare final funding numbers for Title IV, a flexible block grant districts can use to help students' health and access to diverse learning opportunities, and career-technical education grants. Both get in the neighborhood of \$1.2 billion in aid now, and both address students' transition to postsecondary education and careers in different respects.

Other Organizations

Civil Rights Commission Calls for New School Discipline Guidance

(Courtesy of Kimberly Hefling, PoliticoPro)

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights on Tuesday called on the Trump administration to replace Obama-era school discipline guidance with a new set of similar instructions.

The guidance, which was issued in 2014 by the Obama administration, was designed to address disparities in school discipline practices. But in December, [the Education and Justice departments rescinded it](#), citing the threat it posed to school safety.

The move came days after the White House school safety commission chaired by Education Secretary Betsy DeVos recommended that the agencies do so—angering civil rights groups and congressional Democrats, who argued it was unfair to link the guidance designed to curtail the so-called schools-to-prison pipeline to atrocities like school shootings.

The Commission on Civil Rights, which is a federally funded independent body tasked with making recommendations to the president and Congress on civil rights issues, said the guidance played an "important part" in ensuring that state and local district policies respect students' civil rights.

“The U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) should continue offering guidance to school communities regarding how to comply with federal nondiscrimination laws related to race and disability in the imposition of school discipline,” the Commission said.

The recommendation was among several in a 224-page report that followed a nearly two-year review of school discipline practices. The findings were approved 6-2 during the civil rights agency’s April 12 meeting, but the report spells out the specifics and gives each commissioner an opportunity to comment in-depth.

“The Commission’s research shows that many schools throughout the United States utilize and rely upon discipline policies that allow for disproportionate removal of students of color with disabilities from classrooms, often for minor infractions of school rules and often in ways that are inappropriately applied by teachers, non-administrative staff, and school officials,” the Commission said.

“Further, this uneven application of disciplinary policies disproportionately appears in low-income and urban communities. While some schools and districts have made important progress, more work still needs to be done to ensure that all public school students are guaranteed equal protection of their right to an education as provided by the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and under federal civil rights law.”

The report criticizes the Office for Civil Rights’ move under DeVos to narrow the scope of investigations, and calls for “rigorously” enforcing all civil rights laws.

Earlier this month, the Education Department said it was [resolving cases at nearly twice the speed](#) of the Obama administration.

“Whether the Commission acknowledges it or not, OCR has addressed discipline complaints more effectively over the last two years than over the preceding six. We have closed more cases with substantive change per year meaning schools have changed their policies or procedures in order to protect students’ civil rights. Our commitment to enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is unwavering and the proof is in the numbers,” Liz Hill, an Education Department spokesperson, said in an email in reaction to the report.

Beyond the Education Department, the Commission called on the Justice Department to collect and disseminate best practices schools can use to implement improvements to school discipline with practices such as restorative justice. The Commission said the use of school resource officers or other law enforcement personnel to regulate noncriminal activity is “inappropriate” and also called on the Justice Department to provide legal guidance and training on the “appropriate and nondiscriminatory” use of school resource officers.

But it was its characterization of school discipline rates that earned some of the strongest pushback from the two Commission members with dissenting views.

“Students of color as a whole, as well as by individual racial group, do not commit more disciplinable offenses than their white peers—but black students, Latino students, and Native American students in the aggregate receive substantially more school discipline than their white peers and receive harsher and longer punishments than their white peers receive for like offenses,” the Commission said in its findings.

“Students with disabilities are approximately twice as likely to be suspended throughout each school level compared to students without disabilities,” the Commission also said.

The dissenting commissioners, conservatives Gail Heriot and Peter Kirsanow, questioned the idea that discriminatory behavior by teachers and administrators leads to disparate outcomes among groups of students.

Heriot said that “perhaps the most insupportable finding in the report” is one that says students of color “do not commit more disciplinable offenses than their white peers.”

“I wish racial disparities of this kind did not exist. And there is very little I wouldn't give to make them disappear. But the evidence shows they do exist, and pretending otherwise doesn't benefit anyone (with the possible exception of identity politics activists). It certainly does not benefit minority children. To the contrary, they are its greatest victims,” Heriot said.

Heriot said it's unknown what accounts for the “differing rates of misbehavior,” but that issues such as poverty, differing rates of fatherless households and differing achievement in school are among the factors.

Kirsanow said the best that could be said for restorative practices and reducing suspensions “is that in some school districts, students who would otherwise have been suspended are in school for more days. This is a paltry return for the price of increased classroom violence and disrupting the education of students who are there to learn.”

Catherine Lhamon, the chairwoman of the Commission and who led the department's Office for Civil Rights during the Obama administration, said in an interview that she strongly disagrees with challenges by Heriot and Kirsanow to the data presented.

“The report text speaks for itself and the quality of the research cited in the report is cited because our staff who have expertise with this kind of analysis believe this is the best research in the country, and are highlighting what it says,” Lhamon said.

Other News

How ICE Impacts Schools—Government Cooperation on Immigration Enforcement (ICE) Means Fewer Hispanic Students

(Courtesy of Lauren Camera, U.S. News and World Report)

More than 300,000 Hispanic students have been displaced from K-12 schools in communities where local police have forged partnerships with Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers to better enforce immigration laws, according to a [new study](#) from researchers at Stanford University.

The researchers used data acquired from the Department of Homeland Security through Freedom of Information Act requests to identify 55 counties where ICE partnered with local law enforcement agencies to identify, arrest and remove undocumented residents. Between 2000 and 2011, those policies resulted in the displacement of about 320,000 Hispanic students, most of whom were elementary school age and likely born in the U.S.

In communities where such partnerships existed, the number of Hispanic students dropped by 10% after just two years.

“I was really surprised by the magnitude of this effect,” Thomas Dee, a professor at Stanford University and lead author of the study, says. “To see such clear evidence of impact was really quite striking to me. If you look in the years prior to the adoption of these ICE partnerships, there is no change in Hispanic and non-Hispanic enrollment, and then you see this drop-off.”

The partnerships, the researchers said, worked in two main ways—by encouraging families to leave and discouraging other families from moving there. In contrast, ICE partnerships did not affect non-Hispanic enrollment.

The researchers also underscored that the evidence is based on data from a period when federal support for ICE partnerships with local police was more limited than in recent years. The increased number of partnerships likely has resulted in more severe displacement, they said.

“It’s important to note that our findings are based on data from 2000 to 2011 when these ICE partnerships received measured support from the Bush and Obama administrations,” Mark Murphy, co-author of the report and a doctoral student at Stanford, says. “The number of ICE partnerships has increased dramatically during the Trump administration.”

During the years studied, 55 communities had adopted such partnerships. As it stands today, ICE currently has 90 active [partnerships](#) with local law enforcement agencies.

Dee said he was particularly concerned about the magnitude of their findings given previous research that documents the harm caused to students when their families are forced to move under duress.

“So the scale of that impact, given what we know about the developmental harm to children of reactive moves, is quite stunning to me.”

The report comes as Ken Cuccinelli, the acting director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, said immigration authorities are prepared to carry out deportations of about 1 million people.

August Reading

[McKinsey: The future of Work in America: People and Places, Today and Tomorrow](#)

[DEMOS: Debt to Society](#)

[The Joint Center: Racial Differences on the Future of Work](#)

[Georgetown University Center of Education and Workforce: Three Educational Pathways to Good Jobs](#)

[National Women’s Law Center: Progress in Advancing Me Too Workplace Reforms in #20Statesby2020](#)