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## **NAEPDC**



### *News, Views, and Clues*

May 11, 2017

#### **Government Relations Report: May**

Eight months into the fiscal year, Congress completed work on the omnibus bill FY 2017 Appropriations Act. The bill passed in the House on May 2 by a 309 to 118 vote and in the Senate on May 3 by a vote of 79 to 18. The president signed the bill on May 4.

The bill froze funding for adult education at the FY 2016 level. Other Titles of WIOA were basically frozen, as well.

The FY 2017 omnibus appropriations bill provides \$68.2 billion for the Department of Education, but once the \$1.3 billion rescission from the Pell Grant reserve is included in the calculation, the funding level drops to \$66.9 billion, a net cut of \$1.1 billion compared with the 2016 level.

The bill does not make the major cuts suggested last month by the Trump administration, with most existing programs receiving about what they did last year.

The bill reinstates year round Pell Grants, allowing an estimated 1 million students to receive a third grant during a given year to attend the summer semester, in addition to two other academic sessions.

Now the focus is on FY 2018. Remember that the skinny budget proposed to cut \$54 billion in non-defense funds and spend the money on defense. Many programs across the non-defense budget were targeted for elimination. Others would have to receive a cut on the order of 14 percent to make the numbers work in the skinny budget. While the skinny budget was silent on adult education, Hill staff warned that we could expect a substantial cut.

Rumors say that the administration will release its 2018 budget on Monday, May 22, although that hasn't been confirmed, and some slippage is possible.

You may recall that the president's budget is usually published in February. Each branch of Congress prepares a budget resolution (which does not need the president's signature) and resolves the differences between the two. This is supposed to be done by April 15. The budget resolutions set overall spending levels for the appropriators. These aggregates are then divided among the different appropriations subcommittees and act as caps on what each subcommittee can spend. If there is no budget resolution in place, the House and Senate can enact targets so the appropriators can start their work. That is likely to be the case this year.

The full budget is expected during the week on May 22, but it could slip.

#### KEY POINTS ABOUT FY 2018:

1. There is no bi-partisan budget agreement in place that undoes the sequester levels. There is no parity between defense and non-defense spending.
2. FY 2018 will be below FY 2017 without any action. Non-defense discretionary appropriations in the aggregate will be below the level in FY 2014. The administration will put pressure on Congress for funding for the wall, for choice, etc., necessarily reducing funds to existing programs.
3. The allocation to the Labor-HHS subcommittee is particularly important. Traditionally, it tends to get only modest increases (if any at all).
4. Over the next several months, the administration and Congressional leadership will have to figure out how to avoid a default on the national debt and avert a government shutdown.
5. New appropriations bills should be enacted by the end of September, but Congress is already behind schedule on producing a budget because FY 2017 dragged on for so long and because the administration has not released its budget.
6. The debt ceiling will likely need to be raised in the fall to enable the government to pay its obligations. This will likely create a crisis situation in which both sides will jockey for advantageous position.

#### OTHER ISSUES

##### COABE HILL DAY

Forty adult education advocates participated in COABE's third Hill Day on April 26. More than 88 meetings with legislators and staff took place, and participants shared the feeling that our collective efforts are starting to have an impact. Members of Congress and their staffs showed growing recognition that the economy demands higher skills, that rural areas as well as urban ones are facing a shortage of skilled labor, and that we are lagging behind our competitors. The successful Capitol Hill Day was capped with a meeting with Betsy DeVos by COABE and NCSDAE leadership.

## REED-BLUMENTHAL FUNDING LETTER

Senators Reed (D-RI) and Blumenthal (D-CT) are circulating a "Dear Colleague" letter advocating for more funding for adult education in FY 2018. If you are able, please urge your Senators to sign the letter. To participate in the "Invest in Adult Education" campaign visit <http://cqrcengage.com/coabe/home?0>

## OTHER LEGISLATION

The bipartisan Perkins CTE legislation was introduced on May 4. Representatives Glenn Thompson (R-PA) and Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL) introduced HR 2353, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act. The proposal is similar to legislation that passed the House in September 2016 by a vote of 405 to 5. The committee is expected to consider the legislation in the coming weeks, however the Senate is moving more slowly.

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Keep up the good work. Let me know when we can help.

## NAEPDC

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