

The Education Report

A weekly report of public policy issues in American Education from

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July 19th, 2002

Senate Committee Approves FY03 Labor HHS Appropriations Bill

On July 16th, the Senate Labor Health and Human Services Subcommittee approved the FY03 appropriations bill. The \$136.6 billion bill was approved by the full Appropriations Committee on July 18. The Committee's ranking Republican, Ted Stevens (AK), said that the appropriations bill will have an increasingly difficult time passing each legislative step because the Senate is using a discretionary spending total that is \$9 billion more than the House figure.

Subcommittee chair Tom Harkin (D-IA) and ranking member Arlen Specter (R-PA) praised the bill's \$3.7 billion increase in National Institutes of Health funding and \$4.2 billion increase in Department of Education funding.

The Department of Education increase includes an additional: \$1.5 billion for Title I education; \$250 million for teacher quality under No Child Left Behind; \$1 billion for special education state grants; \$12.5 million for rural education programs; \$850 million for Pell Grants raising the maximum to \$4,100; and \$2 billion for Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants. Many of the education programs that received funding in the Bill are programs that President Bush's proposed budget eliminated.

The bill is not expected to reach the Senate floor until after the August recess, at which point a floor amendment may be pushed by Democrats to increase education funding. The issue of mandatory full funding for IDEA remains on the table and will likely be addressed at another time.

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education is scheduled to mark-up their FY03 appropriations bill on September 5th. Preliminary reports indicate that Chairman Ralph Regula (R-OH) will stick with the President's \$131 billion discretionary mark for this bill.

In Light of Difficult Labor-HHS Appropriations Bill, House Alters Appropriations Schedule

Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert (R-IL) announced scheduling change for the FY03 appropriations bills. The new agenda will move all of the relatively easy appropriations

bills though before the August recess in order to concentrate on the more difficult ones, especially the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education bill in September. The subcommittee is scheduled to mark-up the Labor-HHS Education bill on September 5th.

Conservatives added many amendments to the Interior bill in protest over several other appropriations bills (including the Interior bill) that have gone well beyond their spending targets set in President Bush's FY 03 budget. The House will continue to work on the Interior, Treasury-Postal and Legislative Branch bills. Full Committee mark-up of the Agriculture bill and consideration of the Energy and Water bill has been postponed so legislators can focus their efforts on the Labor-HHS, Education appropriations bill.

Department of Education Requests Public Comments on President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education Report

The Department of Education announced a request for public comments on the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education report in the July 18th Federal Register. Comments are due no later than August 19th, 2002. Comments should be addressed to:

Thomas Irvin
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
U.S. Department of Education

The Department encourages the public to e-mail comments to Comments@ed.gov or fax them to 202-260-0416 instead of mailing them in.

To view a copy of the report, visit:

<http://www.ed.gov/inits/commissionsboards/whspecialeducation/reports.html>

College Board to Stop Distinguishing Special Accommodation Scores

The College Board announced that it will stop distinguishing special accommodation exams results from regularly administered exams results. Previously, The College Board "flagged" test scores that were taken under special conditions to account for students' learning or other disabilities. Typically such accommodations involve students receiving more time to take the exam. Now test scores will not be distinguished between students receiving the accommodations and those not receiving accommodations.

Many disability advocates praise the new regulation because it does away with a significant stigma students with disabilities face when dealing with college admission officers. Critics of the decision claim that this opens the door for students to exploit the special accommodations provisions by claiming to have a disability just to get more time to take the all-important SAT (which is owned by the College Board). College Board President Gaston Caperton said, "the College Board must uphold a rigorous review

process to ensure that extended test-taking time is not granted to students who do not require this accommodation.”

Secretary Paige Stops in Denver as Part of No Child Left Behind Tour

On July 12th, Secretary of Education Rod Paige spoke in Denver, Colorado as part of his No Child Left Behind national tour. Secretary Paige addressed the importance of e-learning in the No Child Left Behind Act. In his remarks, Secretary Paige noted, “By harnessing technology, we can expand access to learning and close the achievement gap in America.” In addition to Secretary Paige’s remarks, the Department of Education held a forum on e-learning. The forum contained presentations given by experts in the business, education and government sectors.

Secretary Paige’s speech highlighted some specific benefits of e-learning, including:

- It’s ability to expand learning opportunities without geographic constraints.
- It’s ability to allow costly and logistically difficult field trips to occur in the classroom.
- It’s tendency to promote individual instruction.
- It’s ability to provide parents with options on how to best educate their children.

Secretary Paige said, “Computers are becoming for our children what chalk was for our parents – an essential teaching tool.” Secretary Paige emphasized the importance of the \$700 million made available to states through the Enhancing Education through Technology Program and the \$2.25 billion through the E-rate initiative in helping schools develop e-learning programs.

New Bilingual Website Unveiled to Assist Spanish Speakers Find Postsecondary Information

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans unveiled a new bilingual website to help Hispanic students and parents obtain basic information oriented towards preparing Hispanic youth for higher education. Director of the initiative Leslie Sanchez said “All children, whatever their circumstances, deserve a chance to learn, achieve academic success, and have the opportunity to go on to college.” Website content is provided by the College Board and Tormont Publishing and includes “Myths and Facts about College Costs,” “20 Questions to Ask Your Guidance Counselor” and “Things You Need To Know About Paying for College.” The website also introduces it’s spokesman, Pablo the Eagle.

The website hopes to combat some of the trends recently documented in a Tomás Rivera Policy Institute Center for Latino Educational Excellence report. President of the institute Harry Pachon said that the report finds that by 2015 “Latinos will have the lowest percent of college graduates of any major ethnic group in the United States.” The report also conducted a survey of Hispanic parents in several cities across the US.

Researchers found that two-thirds of those surveyed incorrectly answered half of the “fairly straightforward” questions about higher education. A representative question was: “From what you know, are advanced placement classes often counted toward college credits?”

The website can be viewed at: www.YesICan.gov and www.YoSiPuedo.gov

The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute Center for Latino Educational Excellence report can be found at: <http://www.trpi.org/publications.html#EDUCATION>

Department of Education to Hold No Child Left Behind Implementation Meetings

The Department will hold four regional meetings to assist states in implementing the No Child Left Behind Act. States are asked to form delegations of 10-15 state and local education leaders. Topics at the meeting will include Title 1, school choice and supplemental services. The meetings will occur at the following dates and locations:

- October 2nd-4th in Orlando, Florida
- October 7th-9th in Washington, D.C.
- October 23rd-25th in Denver, Colorado
- October 28th-30th in Chicago, Illinois

For more information, visit: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SASA/conference.html>

107th CONGRESS, 2nd SESSION

TENTATIVE SENATE CALENDAR 2002/ NON-LEGISLATIVE PERIODS

Tom Daschle, Majority Leader

August 5 - September 2 *Senate not in session (August Recess)*

September 2 *Labor Day*

September 3 (Tues.) *Senate reconvenes*

September 16 (Mon.) *Yom Kippur (NO VOTES)*

October 4 *Target adjournment*