



Thursday, March 1, 2018

Dear CEF Members:

I. Policy Intelligence and Education News

- **CHIMPS holding up progress on the FY 2018 appropriations omnibus package** – As we reported on Tuesday, appropriators still haven't reached full agreement on how much each subcommittee will get because of a disagreement on the level of CHIMPS (Changes In Mandatory Programs) that are cuts to mandatory spending programs that are then used to offset additional discretionary spending. In essence, the CHIMPs make additional funding available beyond the discretionary caps. Senator Blunt (R-MO), Chair of the Senate Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee, has said that Republicans agreed to limit CHIMPs to \$14 billion, but Democrats want to use the full \$17 billion allowed by the budget resolution. If the lower amount prevails, much of the difference would lower funding for the Labor-HHS-Education bill, which had almost \$6 billion in the House-passed funding bill last summer.
- **Status and proposed schedule for omnibus** – Despite the ongoing disagreement about CHIMPs and some reported unhappiness about the allocation for the Labor-HHS-Education bill, negotiations on the FY 2018 funding package are proceeding. We're told that subcommittees have been negotiating on program funding levels and were to bring unresolved issues to the full Appropriations Committee tomorrow, but that there hasn't yet been much negotiation on the Labor-HHS-Education bill. Reportedly, appropriators want to file the final bill by Wednesday, March 14, leaving a little more than a week for it to pass both chambers and go to the President before the short-term government funding bill expires on March 23. The timetable for finalizing the bill may be in jeopardy if the CHIMP and allocation issues are not quickly resolved.
- **Budget process-related information** – For those interested in some broader budget process information:
 - **CBO baseline on April 9** – The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) will release its annual Budget and Economic Outlook on April 9 at 2pm. This will have the updated economic and baseline spending estimates that CBO will use to score legislation for the rest of the year. It traditionally includes supplemental information on student loan estimates and Pell grant funding, as well. We're told that CBO will also provide its re-estimate of the President's budget proposals then. The Administration scoring for student loan changes are often very different from CBO's.
 - **Special congressional budget process committee formed** – The budget deal that raised discretionary spending caps also created a "Joint Select Committee on Budget and Appropriations Process Reform" (Section 30442) to recommend reforms by November 30. Like the select committee on deficit reduction created by the 2011 Budget Control Act, this committee is bipartisan and bicameral, and its eventual report must be approved by a majority. (As a reminder, the 2011 "Super-Committee" was not able to get a majority to

support its recommendations, which then resulted in sequestration to achieve the required deficit reduction. The members of this new committee are the following eight Senators and eight Representatives:

- Senators Roy Blunt (R-MO), Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), James Lankford (R-GA), David Perdue (R-GA), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Brian Schatz (D-HI), and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI); and
- Representatives Steve Womack (R-AR) (Republican co-chair), Pete Sessions (R-TX), Rob Woodall (R-GA), Jodey Arrington (R-TX), Nita Lowey (D-NY) (Democratic co-chair), John Yarmuth (D-KY), Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA), Derek Kilmer (D-WA).
- **Budget process reforms proposed by independent group** – The Convergence Center for Policy Resolution released budget process reform proposals this week that include requiring a two-year budget plan agreed to by the President and the Congress, a quadrennial fiscal report, and reviewing federal programs that have long-term commitments, among others. Two CEF members were participants in the [Convergence Building a Better Budget Process project \(B3P\)](#): First Focus’s Rachel Merker, and Association of American Universities’ Matthew Owens.

II. CEF Events

- **CEF’s upcoming schedule** –
 - **Friday, Mar. 2, 9-11am:** at AASCU, 1307 New York Ave, NW. Guest Speaker: Mark Laisch, Senate Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee, Democratic staff
 - **Friday, Mar. 9, 9-11am:** at AFT, 555 NJ Ave, NW, 4th floor. Guest Speaker: Farouk Ophaso, House Budget Committee Democratic staff.
 - **Friday, Mar. 16, 9-11am: Quarterly committee meetings,** at University of California, 1608 Rhode Island Ave, NW, auditorium.
 - **Friday, Mar. 23, 9-11am:** at AFSCME, 1625 L Street, NW, 1st floor conference room. Guest Speakers: Eamonn Collins and Mark Ritacco, staff for Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT).
 - **Friday, Apr. 13, 9-11am:** (still tentative) at AFT, 555 NJ Ave, NW. Guest speaker: Kate Cassling, Education LA, Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV).

My best,

Sheryl

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