



Monday, January 9, 2017

Dear CEF Members:

## I. Advocacy

- CEF Committee chairs for 2017** – Our new President, Jocelyn Bissonnette, has named the following CEF members to chair committees this year. Thanks to all for agreeing to take on this leadership role. At the CEF member retreat on January 27, everyone will have a chance to participate in meetings with the committee chairs and decide which committees you'd like to join this year. We encourage full participation – we have an ambitious agenda and will benefit from everyone's input and activity.

Committee	Chairs
Hill Teams	Kuna Tavalin, Frank Ballman, John Laughner
Gala	Ally Bernstein, Noelle Ellerson Ng, Kelly Vaillancourt Strobach
Membership & Bylaws	Jim Gelb, Ronny Lau
Advocacy & Research	Corey Williams, Juliane Baron, Valerie Williams
Budget	Josh Westfall
Nominations & elections	Kevin Maher

## II. Policy Intelligence and Education News

- **Funding votes this week in Congress** – As detailed in the CEF Update on January 5, this week [Congress will consider](#) and likely pass a pared-back fiscal year 2017 budget resolution that provides the mechanism to fast-track a reconciliation bill to repeal parts of the Affordable Care Act. The Senate will continue to debate the budget resolution and have its customary “vote-a-rama” on amendments, likely all night on Wednesday, with the House voting on the budget on Friday.
- As we expected, the Senate will consider an amendment on behalf of Senate Rand Paul (R-KY) to freeze all funding beginning next year except for Social Security and the postal service, which are off-budget. This would result in drastic spending cuts compared with current law levels, and would eliminate the annual deficit in about five years. Keep in mind that the budget resolution does not actually implement any funding changes – it is a guide to authorizing committees, and is not legislation that is signed into law. To effect such a change in spending requires enacting bills that would freeze all entitlement spending (i.e., Medicare, Medicaid, SNAP, student loans, federal pensions, crop payments, etc.) as well as appropriations, which in total grow very slowly under the sequester caps now in law.
- **Betsy DeVos confirmation hearing on January 11** – The Senate is holding many confirmation hearings this week, including the Senate HELP Committee hearing on the nomination of Betsy DeVos as Education Secretary on Wednesday, January 11, at 10:00 am in 430 Dirksen Senate Office Building. The hearings remain on schedule despite calls by some Democrats to postpone them until the Office of Government Ethics has completed its background examination.
- Senator Warren (D-MA) sent a scorching [16-page letter](#) to DeVos asking for clarification of her views on a variety of education funding and policy issues, including “Will you commit to opposing any private school voucher program that results in a net funding cut for any public education system?” The letter lays out DeVos’s past advocacy efforts for tax-payer funded vouchers for use at private schools and “opposition to accountability in K-12 education,” and posts a number of questions for the nominee.
- **Education Secretary John King’s exit memo** – Secretary King published an [exit memo](#) on “Progress Under the Obama Administration’s Education Agenda” last week. Among discussion of policy changes, it highlights the largest investment in higher education – increasing annual financial aid by more than \$50 billion and tax benefits by more than \$12 billion – since the passage of the GI Bill 70 years ago.

### III. Events

- **AERA Lecture on Supporting College Student Access and Success on Wednesday** – The American Educational Research Association invites you to [register](#) for the livestream of its Centennial Lecture on “Supporting College Student Access and Success.” The

featured speaker is Bridget Terry Long, Academic Dean and Professor of Education and Economics at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The lecture is on Wednesday, January 11, at 6pm.

- **Friday morning CEF meeting this week** – Friday we will have CEF’s first regular Friday morning meeting of the new year. It will feature guest speaker Gerry Petrella, Policy Director for Senate Minority Leader Schumer. Thanks to the American Federation of Teachers for hosting! The meeting is from 9-11am in the AFT offices at 555 NJ Ave, NW.

Other CEF events for January are listed below:

- Tuesday, January 10 – CEF Board planning retreat
- Friday, January 20 – no CEF meeting (Inauguration Day)
- Friday, January 27 – CEF Member retreat, 8:45-1:30pm at University of California (1608 Rhode Island Ave, NW, 1st Floor Auditorium)

My best,

Sheryl

Sheryl V. Cohen, Executive Director



1800 M Street, NW

Suite 500 South

Washington, DC 20036

T: 202-327-8125

[cohen@cef.org](mailto:cohen@cef.org)

[www.cef.org](http://www.cef.org)