



Wednesday, February 1, 2017

Dear CEF Members:

I. Policy Intelligence and Education News

- **Senators Collins and Murkowski will not vote to confirm Betsy DeVos** – As mentioned in yesterday's CEF update, Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Susan Collins (R-ME) had expressed concerns about voting to confirm Education Secretary nominee Betsy DeVos. Today both Senators announced that they will be voting against her on the Senate floor. Those two votes, along with the expected opposition of all 48 non-Republican Senators, would mean that Vice President Pence would have to vote to break the tie to confirm DeVos. The Senate has changed today's floor schedule to have the vote on confirming DeVos before voting on Senator Jeff Sessions's (R-AL) nomination to be Attorney General. If Sessions were confirmed first, then Republicans would have a vacancy and would have to wait until the seat is filled with someone who supports DeVos's confirmation even with the Vice President's vote.
- **New Administration education staffers** – The Department of Education (ED) is starting to be staffed up. While responsibilities are still being sorted, the list of new names is below – we will be setting up meetings with some of these folks in the future:
 - Jason Botel, senior White House advisor for education
 - Josh Venable, who could become Chief of Staff at ED according to POLITICO Pro.
 - Jim Manning, the leader of the ED landing team
 - Stanley Buchesky, who will work on budget and finance at ED
 - Derrick Bolen
 - Debbie Cox-Roush
 - Kevin Eck
 - Holly Ham
 - Ron Holden
 - Amy Jones, currently education director for the House Committee on Education and the Workforce
 - Andrew Kossack

- Beatriz Ramos
 - Cody J. Reynolds
 - Patrick Shaheen
 - Teresa UnRue
 - Eric Ventimiglia
 - Jerry Ward
 - Patrick Young
- **Jerry Falwell to lead higher education task force** – Reports are that President Trump has chosen Jerry Falwell, Jr., President of Liberty University, to lead a task force to recommend changes in federal higher education policies. According to the [Chronicle of Higher Education](#), Falwell says he will focus in part on reducing federal regulations governing accreditation and recruiting.
 - **OMB Director-nominee Mulvaney's views on Pell grants** – If Rep. Mick Mulvaney (R-SC) is confirmed to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget, education advocates will have to work to educate him about the value of making college more affordable. When publicly asked whether he would commit to maintaining funding for Pell grants, Mulvaney gave the answer below that immediately segues into talking about scrutinizing wasteful spending. He then says the Trump administration will have to prioritize how to achieve the President's vision, including funding for college assistance programs.

Question: President Trump promised to address rising student debt, but you have supported budgets that would slash Pell Grants for millions of students struggling to pay for college. Pell recipients are already more than twice as likely to have to borrow as other students, and they graduate with thousands more debt than other students. Can you assure us that the Trump administration will not propose cuts in Pell Grant funding, making it even harder to pay for and complete college and increasing student debt?

Mulvaney: I believe that all spending, and waste within all types of government spending, should be subject to the highest level of scrutiny. In developing the 2018 Budget, we will look at spending across the entire Federal government and assess how to prioritize investments to achieve the President's vision, including funding for college assistance programs.

II. Advocacy

- **“Find an Expert” on CEF’s new website** – One of the helpful features on our new website is going to be a “Find an Expert” link, organized by major thematic topics (early childhood, K-12, higher education, workforce training and adult education, cross-educational issues). We think this will help Hill staff, the press, and others looking for resources and information. If you would like your name, organization, and email address to be included, please send that information along with the category you’d like to be listed under – it’s usually but not always clear! – to Alex Hoffberg at Hoffberg@cef.org.

III. Upcoming CEF Schedule

- For planning purposes, here is a list of CEF events for the next month or so:
 - **Friday, Feb. 3:** No CEF Meeting - change from original schedule
 - **Friday, Feb. 10:** CEF Meeting, AFT (555 NJ Ave, NW)
 - **Friday, Feb. 17:** CEF Meeting (California State, Hall of States, 444 N. Capitol St, NW, room 333)
 - **Friday, Feb. 24:** No CEF meeting
 - **Thursday, March 2:** New Member/website launch event, TBD
 - **Friday, March 3:** No CEF meeting

My best,

Sheryl

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