



Monday, February 8, 2021

I. Policy Intelligence and Education News

- **Budget reconciliation: Congressional overview and resources from CEF and others** – Last week the House and Senate took the necessary step to activate the budget procedures that allow passage of a reconciliation bill that Democrats will use to pass as much as possible of President Biden’s American Rescue Plan. On Friday, the House and Senate passed an identical budget resolution that contains reconciliation instructions to multiple committees, including the House Education and Labor Committee and the Senate HELP Committee, to report out bills by February 16. Those bills will be put into a package for House and Senate floor consideration under budget reconciliation procedures. A reconciliation bill’s key benefit is expedited floor consideration in the Senate – it requires only a simple majority vote to pass, cannot be filibustered, is limited to 20 hours of debate, and amendments must be germane. However, the Senate’s “Byrd Rule” precludes the inclusion of “extraneous” items, which among other things keeps out anything without a budgetary impact or a merely incidental budgetary impact. That could exclude a minimum wage increase from this COVID-relief package.
 - **House Education and Labor Committee markup tomorrow at 3pm ET** – The first step for education funding-related items is tomorrow’s reconciliation markup in the House Education and Labor Committee at 3pm ET ([webcast through this link](#)). The Committee received reconciliation instructions to report legislation that has a cost of up to \$357.1 billion over ten years. Presumably this includes among other provisions the Administration’s proposal for an additional \$170 billion in education stabilization funds, \$40 billion for child care, and the cost of raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour (which ultimately may not be included in the package). The legislative text has not been made public, and this weekend various committees were still working to figure out what language is likely to pass a Byrd Rule challenge. The Senate HELP Committee has not yet put out a notice of when its markup will be.
 - **CEF informational resources on reconciliation** –
 - **Recording of CEF’s briefing on reconciliation** – At Friday’s CEF meeting we had a briefing on budget reconciliation that provided a lot of background information on the process, limitations and benefits of using a reconciliation bill, and how past reconciliation bills have affected education programs (spending cuts, benefit increases, creating new programs, and more). CEF members can view the briefing

on the “CEF Event Coverage” part of the [member-only area](#) of CEF’s website. If you don’t have a password to the member area of CEF’s website, just fill in your email address and create a password, and as long as we recognize the email address as belonging to a CEF member you’ll be approved.

- **Twitter livestream** – On Friday afternoon, I [answered some education-related reconciliation questions on CEF’s first Twitter livestream](#). Now that we have the logistics down, we’ll work with CEF’s Social Media Committee to see if there are other topics we might want to hold similar live conversations to explain and share CEF information with the public.
- **ACG podcast on reconciliation** – Last week the American Continental Group launched a podcast, American Continental Drift, and the first episode featured [ACG Partner Chris Israel and me discussing the budget resolution and reconciliation process](#). The podcast is on ACG’s [website](#) and on [Spotify](#).
- **Reconciliation primers and information** – Below are the links we shared in the agenda for Friday’s briefing that include some overviews on the budget reconciliation process, the Byrd Rule, and a list of the 21 reconciliation bills that have been signed into law.
 - [Introduction to Budget Reconciliation](#) – Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
 - [Budget Reconciliation: The Basics](#) – House Budget Committee
 - [The Budget Reconciliation Process: Stages of Consideration](#) - Congressional Research Service
 - [The Budget Reconciliation Process: The Senate’s “Byrd” Rule](#) - Congressional Research Service
 - [Budget Reconciliation Measures Enacted into Law: 1980-2017](#) - Congressional Research Service
- **CBO budget projections on Thursday** – The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) will issue its annual budget and economic update on [Thursday at 2pm](#). At the beginning of each year, CBO updates its [projections for Pell Grant costs](#) and student loan program costs and interest rates – this is sometimes in January and sometimes later in the spring. The last [Pell Grant update was in March 2020](#) and didn’t yet include the pandemic’s impact on program costs, so this year’s update should be illuminating about whether more or fewer low-income students are expected to use Pell grants to attend college.
- **Reminder: CEF membership renewals for 2021 are due this Friday** - Thanks to the many who have already sent in membership renewal forms for 2021. The stronger we are, the more impact CEF can have towards the goal of increasing the federal investment in education. [The membership renewal form is on CEF’s website here](#) and is due this Friday, February 12. The renewal form is also an opportunity to tell us who you in your organization should receive the CEF Updates and to revise your description for CEF’s 2021 membership directory. Dues can be paid by check, credit card, or through the member page of the CEF website.

II. Advocacy

- **CEF Hill Teams meeting** – Tomorrow members of CEF’s Hill Teams are meeting with the education staffer for Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY), who joined the House Appropriations Committee this year. We are continuing to meet with other new members on the education and funding-related committees to introduce CEF, its advocacy, and informational resources. If you’d like to join the Hill Teams and Advocacy Committee so you’ll get the announcements of when the meetings are and have the opportunity to participate, send me an email and we’ll add you to that committee.

III. Events

- **CEF’s upcoming schedule -**
 - **Thursday, Feb. 11** – 5-6:00 p.m. ET – [CEF Zoom happy hour](#). Join us to meet new CEF members and chat with your old friends!
 - **Friday, Feb. 12** – 9:30-11:00 a.m. ET, [Zoom Friday meeting](#). Guest speakers: Amanda Beaumont and Bryce McKibben, Senate HELP Committee.
 - **Friday, Feb. 19** – No CEF Meeting during the congressional recess.
 - **(tentative) Thursday, Feb. 25** – Zoom Hill reception (details to come).
 - **Friday, Feb. 26** – 9:30-11:00 a.m. ET, [Zoom Friday meeting](#). Guest speaker TBD.
 - **Friday, March 5** - 9:30-11:00 a.m. ET, [Zoom Friday meeting](#). Guest speaker TBD.