



Monday, July 27, 2020

I. Policy Intelligence and Education News

- **Senate introduces new COVID relief plan** – Late this afternoon Senate Republicans announced the Health, Economic Assistance, Liability protections, and Schools Act (HEALS Act) that, among many other provisions to aid in disease prevention and treatment, and in economic security, provides \$105 billion for education. This trillion dollar plan is the so-called opening bid from Senate Republicans but not all are on board, so expect changes to the bill before it is passed, and certainly before a relief bill is enacted.
- **Attached fact sheets and legislative text** - Attached are bill language and fact sheets from the Senate Republicans that outline the education and child care-related provisions that are part of the “Safely Back to School and Back to Work Act” and the supplemental appropriations bill, the “Coronavirus Response Additional Supplemental Appropriations Act.”
 - **Text of the “Safely Back to School and Back to Work Act”** – this bill has authorization language for student loan changes, Education Freedom Scholarships (that as far as I can tell are not funded in the appropriations package), and a new child care program. Title II has the education provisions.
 - **Section-by-section** of the “Safely Back to School and Back to Work Act”
 - **One-pager on the Education Freedom Scholarships**
 - **One-pager on student loan repayment provisions**
 - **One-pager on the child care grants**
 - **Text of the “Coronavirus Response Additional Supplemental Appropriations Act” supplemental appropriations bill** – The bill provides \$105 billion for the Department of Education (ED) (text is pages 101-132), and \$15 billion for child care, with smaller amounts for job training and other children’s programs.
- **Funding for the Department of Education:**
 - **\$105 billion in funding for the Education Stabilization Fund**– Supplemental funding for ED is not allocated as had been reported last week: two-thirds of the K-12 funding is reserved for schools that are providing at least some in-person education. The bill provides a total of \$105 billion for the Education Stabilization Fund created by the CARES Act. After reserving 1% of funding for Bureau of Indian Education and for outlying areas, the remaining \$103.95 billion is divided as follows:
 - **5% (approximately \$5.2 billion) for Governors’ Emergency Relief Funds**, which can be used for any emergency grants for any part of education;

- **67% (approximately \$69.7 billion) for the Elementary and Secondary Education Fund**, allocated to states based on the formula for Title I. One third of the funding (\$23.2 billion) will be available immediately to local educational agencies (LEAs), but the remaining two thirds will only be awarded once LEAs meet certain criteria: either they are providing in-person education to at least half the students at least half of the school week, or after the governor approves their reopening plan and at least some students are getting in-person education, but if it is less half the students for half the school week then funding is reduced “on a pro rata basis as determined by the Governor” (page 108). Thus, schools that are providing fully virtual education are not eligible for two thirds of the K-12 funding. The bill includes language to protect charter schools (page 115);
 - **Funding reserved for private schools** – States must set aside funding for private schools based on the proportion of private school students they had before the pandemic hit. Governors allocate the funding based on the number of low-income students in all non-public schools. Private schools providing no in-person education are eligible for only one-third of the funding (pages 123-5).
- **28% (approximately \$29.1 billion) for higher education institutions**, with 85% of the funding allocated based on the number of Pell grant recipients who were not exclusively enrolled in distance education before the pandemic, 10% for additional awards to Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other Aid to Institutional Development programs, and 5% for institutions that the Secretary of Education determines most need assistance to address the coronavirus.
- **Maintenance of Effort** – States must maintain support for K-12 and higher education in fiscal years 2020 and 2021 at least at the “proportional levels” of fiscal year 2019 relative to the state’s overall spending in fiscal year 2019. That means that if the state cuts its overall spending dramatically, its education funding could also be cut by the same percentage and still qualify.
- **\$40 million for student aid administration**
- **\$65 million for the Institute of Education Sciences** to carry out the National Assessment of Education Progress
- **\$8 million for program management**
- **\$7 million for Inspector General**

Child care funding:

- **\$5 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)** (page 76)
- **\$10 billion for “Back to Work Child Care Grants” through the CCDBG** for up to 9 months to pay for extra costs associated with the pandemic (page 80). These grants are created by section 203 of the Safely Back to Work and School Act and will be distributed under the CCDBG to states and tribes, who must apply for the funding. Child care providers who apply for subgrants must have been in continuous operation since March 1 and must stay in business for at least the next year.

Education authorization provisions in the Safely Back to Work and School Act:

- **Education Freedom Scholarships** – the bill authorizes – but does not actually fund – Emergency Education Freedom Grants to states to award to approved scholarship-granting organizations, which are 501(c) 3 organizations that provide qualifying scholarships to students in that state, or 501(c)3 organizations that can receive contributions that are eligible for a state tax credit to pay for scholarships for elementary and secondary students include to attend private schools. Scholarships are tax-free to the recipients.

- **Student loan provisions** – Section 201 consolidates currently student loan repayment plans into only two options: a standard 10-year repayment plan and an income-based plan that requires 20 years of repayment (25 years for graduate student debt) of 10% of a borrower’s discretionary income. If a borrower earns less than the 150% of the poverty level (the description defines that as \$19,140 currently), then the borrower does not have to make a monthly loan payment.
- **Student aid provisions** – the bill extends a number of CARES Act provisions, including changing the FAFSA to note recent changes in a family’s income and to allow financial aid administrators to use judgment about changes in financial status due to the pandemic.
- **Workforce activities** – the bill authorizes additional funding for various workforce development activities. The appropriations package provides a total of \$950 million in the Department of Labor for adult and youth training programs.
- **Waivers** – the bill authorizes waivers from a number of education laws due to the COVID disaster declaration, except for civil rights laws.

II. Advocacy

- **#HearOurEdStories social media campaign this week** – We encourage CEF members to participate in #HearOurEdStories social media campaign this week and to share [the updated toolkit with your membership networks media](#). (See the CEF Update on July 20 for full details, including sample tweets and charts.) This week the House will consider the FY 2021 Labor-HHS-Education bill in an omnibus appropriations package and Congress is working on another pandemic relief bill, so the time is right to emphasize the need for education funding. CEF’s updated #HearOurEdStories social media toolkit includes a focus on the extra costs and needs associated with going back to school this year. It provides the information needed for people to tell Members of Congress why increased education funding is so important.

III. Events

- **CEF’s schedule for the remainder of the summer** –
 - **This week is #HearOurEdStories week on social media** – Please join our #HearOurEdStories social media campaign July 27 through July 31. The [toolkit](#) is updated to focus on the issues of going “back to school” this fall.
 - **Friday, July 31** – 9:30-11:00 a.m. [Zoom Friday meeting](#). Guest speaker: Corey Linehan, Sen. Chris Coons (D-DE).
 - **Friday, August 7** -- 9:30-11:00 a.m. Zoom Friday meeting. Guest speaker: TBD. (This is a newly added meeting.)
 - **August 14 through Labor Day** – CEF meetings will take a break during the congressional recess!