



# DAILY BRIEFING

Tuesday, January 3, 2023

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## Weekly Rundown

The NCHER Weekly Rundown, which includes the latest information on important events in Washington, DC, is available today and can be downloaded from the [NCHER website](#).

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## House and Senate Convene for 118th Congress, Vote for Speaker Undecided After Three Ballots

Today, both the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate convened to start the First Session of the 118th Congress where Democrats retained and expanded their majority in the upper chamber while Republicans took a narrow majority in the lower chamber. Over in the Senate, the day's proceedings centered around swearing-in new senators and hearing the traditional welcoming speeches from Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) who became the longest serving Senate leader. The chamber then recessed until January 23rd.

Over in the House, the day's proceedings began and ended with the chamber taking three separate votes on who will serve as the next Speaker of the House. On both the first and second ballot where 218 votes are necessary for election, Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) received 203 votes, Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) received 212 votes, and Rep. Andy Biggs (R-AZ) and others received 19 votes. On the third ballot, Rep. McCarthy received 202 votes, Rep. Jeffries received 212 votes, and Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH) and others received 20 votes. Following the three ballots, the House abruptly adjourned for the day with plans to conduct additional ballots tomorrow. As previously reported, a group of conservative Republicans have pledged not to support Rep. McCarthy for Speaker. The Republican leadership has spent the last few weeks negotiating with the House Freedom Caucus in order to secure the necessary votes, but their efforts have been unsuccessful. The House will have to resolve who the Speaker will be for the next two years before it can move on to other business, including swearing-in of new members and selecting committee assignments. The last time that it took the House more than one ballot to elect a Speaker was about a century ago in 1923, so there is little precedent for what happens tomorrow and over the next few days.

For more coverage, see the following articles:

[Chaos reigns in House as GOP fails to pick a Speaker | The Hill](#)

[Five takeaways from Tuesday's McCarthy drama at the Capitol | The Hill](#)

[Speaker chaos delays swearing-in of new House members | The Hill](#)

[McCarthy opponents unmoved as speaker election drags on - Roll Call](#)

[Senate convenes with pomp and circumstance, and no drama - Roll Call](#)

## White House OIRA Releases Proposed Rule Creating New Income Driven Repayment Plan

Last week, the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) [completed](#) its review of the proposed rule creating a new Income Driven Repayment (IDR) plan as detailed by the U.S. Department of Education in August 2022. With the completed review, the proposed rule could be published in the *Federal Register* at any point. While there is no information yet on what the proposed rule entails, the White House announced back in August that the new IDR plan will reduce the amount of discretionary income borrowers must pay each month to 5 percent, increase the amount of income considered non-discretionary income to 225 percent of the federal poverty level, and forgive unpaid monthly interest.

## FSA Releases 2024-2025 FAFSA Specifications Guide Detailing Upcoming Changes

Last Wednesday, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) [released](#) the 2024-2025 Draft FAFSA [Free Application for Federal Student Aid] Specifications Guide. The FAFSA Simplification Act, enacted into law as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021, requires FSA to overhaul the FAFSA in an effort to simply the process for low- and moderate-income students and their families. FSA published the specifications guide to give financial aid administrators and other stakeholders information to understand and prepare for changes to the FAFSA. Beginning with the 2024-2025 FAFSA cycle, all FAFSA-related processing information will be consolidated into this multi-volume resource. The new resource will replace the following documents: Summary of Changes for the Application Processing System EDE Technical Reference, Application Processing System Specifications for Software Developers, the ISIR Guide, SAR Comment Codes, and Text and the CPS Test System User Guide. In the announcement, FSA included two sections of the specification guide. First, a [draft introduction](#) provides an overview of the information in the guide, a cross-reference table from previous documents to the new guide, and a schedule of the planned releases of all volumes of the guide. Second, [Draft Volume 4- Record Layouts and Processing Codes](#) was attached to provide record layouts for schools and organizations that need to design software systems to interface with FSA's new FAFSA Processing System. FSA shared that updates to the specifications guide will be added when available and a

“Change History Table” is included in each volume of the guide.

## U.S. Department of Education News

For today’s *Federal Register*, click [here](#).

The following announcements were posted to the Federal Student Aid’s Knowledge Center Website:

- [\(GENERAL-22-102\) OUTAGE ALERT – IRS DRT Outage on Jan. 7, 2023](#)  
DECEMBER 29, 2022
- [\(DL-22-07\) William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program Reconciliation](#)  
DECEMBER 29, 2022
- [\(APP-22-26\) Publication of the 2024–25 Draft FAFSA® Specifications Guide](#)  
DECEMBER 28, 2022

## Member News



The Boards of Directors of the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) and Kentucky Higher Education Student Loan Corporation (KHESLC) recently [announced](#) that they are seeking a dynamic leader to fill the position of Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director. KHEAA/KHESLC are sister

organizations created by state statute, whose joint mission is to enable Kentuckians to achieve their education goals beyond high school. The CEO/Executive Director will serve as one of the Commonwealth’s leading policy advocates for financial access to and successful completion of postsecondary education, representing the interests of prospective and enrolled Kentucky students and their families. To apply, submit a cover letter and resume via email in PDF format to [ceosearch@kheaa.com](mailto:ceosearch@kheaa.com) by 4:30 PM EST Tuesday, January 31, 2023. For more information, click [here](#).

## General News

[Business Insider](#) reports on what student loan borrowers can expect in 2023 as the U.S. Department of Education's federal student loan forgiveness plans head to the U.S. Supreme Court.

[CNN](#) reports that there are big questions that borrowers need to know in 2023 such as the future of federal student loan forgiveness.

[Inside Higher Education](#) provides further coverage of the higher education provisions included in the Consolidated Appropriations Act passed by Congress and signed into law by the President. The new budget law increases the maximum award for Pell Grants and funding for student success grant programs. Colleges and universities will also receive more than \$1.5 billion for projects in earmarks.

[The Wall Street Journal](#) reports that *U.S. News and World Report* will revamp its law-school rankings amid challenges from top schools about the value of the list.

The Alliance for Research on Regional Colleges recently released a new [report](#) that found regional public institutions educate more than five million students across the country.

[Forbes](#) reports on three bipartisan higher education reform ideas that could pass in the new 118th Congress.

[The Hill](#) quotes former head of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York that a recession is "pretty likely" in the United States.

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