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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](#).

## President Biden Announces He Will Not Seek Reelection, Endorses Vice President Harris, Leaves Mixed Legacy on Higher Education

Yesterday afternoon, President Joe Biden announced that he will not seek re-election. The news capped weeks of debate about his ability to defeat former President Donald Trump and spelled the end of a long-standing tenure as U.S. Senator, Vice President, and

President that has been filled with ambitious plans to forgive federal student loans. “It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve as your President,” he wrote in a letter posted on social media. “And while it has been my intention to seek reelection, I believe it is in the best interest of my party and the country for me to stand down and to focus solely on fulfilling my duties as President for the remainder of my term.” In a subsequent post, he endorsed Vice President Kamala Harris to be the Democratic presidential nominee.

In examining his legacy on higher education, President Biden pledged to make community college free, double the maximum award for the Pell Grant program, and forgive \$10,000 in federal student loans for borrowers. But many of those promises remain unfulfilled, thwarted by Congress or the courts. On federal student loan forgiveness, more than any prior chief executive, President Biden has sought to use executive power to forgive student loans, a policy stance that gained support among Democratic lawmakers following a decade-long campaign by scholars and advocates to highlight the problem of student loan debt. So far, the U.S. Department of Education has forgiven \$168.5 billion in student loans for nearly five million Americans. The Biden Administration also pushed to expand Pell Grants to students in prison, issued a new gainful employment rule to crack down on career education programs, revamped the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program, revised federal standards around borrower defense to repayment, banned transcript withholding, and required colleges and universities to report more data about the cost of their programs and how students pay for them. Some - if not most - of the policies may be rolled back if President Trump wins in November. Still, the Biden Administration’s botched rollout of the new Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will likely taint the legacy. So far this year, FAFSA completion rates among high school seniors are down by 11 percent compared to last year. Colleges have worried that the multiple delays and technical issues with the form will deter some students from pursuing a postsecondary education this academic year and many institutions are bracing for more problems next year.

In assessing the President’s mixed legacy on higher education, Michelle Dimino, Director of the Education Program at Third Way, a left-of-center think tank, said, “I think his legacy will be one as a strong education president. Nobody can say that President Biden hasn’t been a student-centered education reform proponent.” But Preston Cooper, a Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Research on Equal Opportunity, a market-friendly think tank, said, “The story here is of overreach. By overreaching on student loan forgiveness, he’s made his higher education legacy look not very successful.”

For additional coverage, see this article from [Inside Higher Ed](#).

## Appeals Court Issues Decision Blocking Department of Education From Implementing SAVE Plan

Last Thursday, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit [granted](#) the emergency motion filed by Missouri Attorney General Andrew Bailey requesting that the court block the U.S. Department of Education from implementing the Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE) Plan while it examines a separate lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the plan. The one sentence decision reads: “Appellants’ emergency motion for an administrative stay prohibiting the appellees from implementing or acting pursuant to the Final Rule until this Court rules on the appellants’ motion for an injunction pending appeal is granted.” As previously reported, the emergency motion alleged that the Department was evading the injunction on loan forgiveness put in place by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri by allowing borrowers of a certain income level to have a \$0 payment or providing forgiveness to borrowers eligible for Income Based Repayment adjustment and/or the Revised Pay as You Earn or REPAYE Plan. As such, the court decision looks to block the SAVE Plan in full as well as loan forgiveness under other repayment plans. Politico and other news outlets reported that the move will likely increase pressure on the Department to halt student loan payments while the legal fight plays out. In a [statement](#), the Department said that it was placing borrowers enrolled in the SAVE Plan into an interest forbearance, assessing the impact of the ruling, and would be in touch directly with borrowers with any impacts that affect them. “Our Administration will continue to aggressively defend the SAVE Plan – which has been helping over 8 million borrowers access lower monthly payments, including 4.5 million borrowers who have had a zero dollar payment each month,” a Department spokesperson said. “And, we won’t stop fighting against Republican elected officials’ efforts to raise costs on millions of their own constituents’ student loan payments.” But Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee Ranking Member Bill Cassidy (R-LA) applauded the court’s decision saying the program was an abuse of power. “He isn’t ‘forgiving’ debt,” Ranking Member Cassidy said. “He is taking the debt from those who willingly took it out to go to college and transferring it onto taxpayers who decided not to go to college or already paid off their loans,” Cassidy said of the president in a statement.”

For further coverage, see the following articles:

- [New Biden student loan repayment plan put on hold by appeals court - Los Angeles Times](#)

- [Millions of student-loan borrowers face ‘chaos’ after court blocks Biden debt-relief plan - MarketWatch](#)
- [Student loan payments will be paused for 8 million borrowers after appeals court temporarily halts Biden’s repayment plan - CNN](#)
- [Student Loan Borrowers Face ‘Devastating’ Impacts After Court Halts Loan Forgiveness Plan, Says Official - Forbes](#)
- [Education Department freezes student loan payments for 8M borrowers - Politico](#)

## U.S. Department of Education News

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

The following announcement was posted to Federal Student Aid’s Knowledge Center:

- [\(GENERAL-24-88\) Reminder – Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Determinations](#)

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## General News

[Yahoo Finance](#) reports that the Buckeye Institute recently filed a “friend of the court’ brief with the U.S. Supreme Court urging it to vacate the stay in *Alaska v. Department of Education* challenging the constitutionality of the Saving on a Valuable Education Plan. [Inside Higher Ed](#) reports that, after months of promising federal regulations that could flip the world of online program management on its head, the U.S. Department of Education is largely leaving OPMs untouched for the remainder of the year.

An online version of this Daily Briefing is available to view and print from the [Daily Briefing Section](#) of the [NCHER e-Library](#).

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