



DAILY BRIEFING

August 23, 2021

In Today's Edition

- NCHER Daily Briefing to Publish on Abbreviated Schedule This Week
- Weekly Rundown
- House Returns to Legislative Business to Vote on Budget Resolution Triggering Reconciliation
- Department of Education Announces Relief to Military Student Loan Borrowers
- U.S. Department of Education News
- Member News
- General News

NCHER Daily Briefing to Publish on Abbreviated Schedule This Week

The *NCHER Daily Briefing* will publish on an abbreviated schedule consisting of today and Thursday while most of Congress is in recess for the month of August.



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](#).

House Returns to Legislative Business to Vote on Budget Resolution Triggering Reconciliation

This week, the U.S. House of Representatives returns to legislative business more than a month early from its recess to vote on Senate Concurrent Resolution 14, a budget resolution that sets tax and spending priorities for the upcoming fiscal year. The resolution will kick off the reconciliation process that will allow Congress to pass the White House's American Families Plan to create a new tuition-free community college program, increase Pell Grant funding, and provide funds for student success grants.

Later today, the House Rules Committee will begin the process by creating a rule to advance the budget resolution, the bipartisan infrastructure package that passed the U.S. Senate two weeks ago, and voting rights legislation. The rule, which sets up the three bills for floor debate, is scheduled to be voted on tonight. If the rule passes, the House will consider the budget resolution and voting rights package tomorrow. Nine moderate Democrats have threatened to oppose passage of the budget resolution until the chamber passes the bipartisan infrastructure package as well, but House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) has resisted such pressure so far. While she has not publicly committed to a date certain for the infrastructure bill, the speaker indicated this weekend that she had a goal of passing it (along with budget reconciliation) by October 1st. Under the budget resolution, committees on both ends of the Capitol have until September 15th to report their respective sections of a \$3.5 trillion reconciliation bill to the House and Senate Budget Committees.

For more coverage of the House's return, see these articles from [Politico](#) and [The Hill](#).

Department of Education Announces Relief to Military Student Loan Borrowers

Last week, the U.S. Department of Education [announced](#) that it would provide relief to 47,000 current or former servicemembers by retroactively waiving interest on their federal student loans. According to the agency's press release, this action was made possible by a data-matching agreement with the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) that substantially improves access to a student loan interest-waiver benefit for many servicemembers with federal student loans. Under the Higher Education Act, servicemembers deployed to areas that qualify them for imminent danger or hostile fire

pay, have no interest accrual on certain federal student loans that were first disbursed on or after October 1, 2008. In the past, only a small proportion of eligible servicemembers successfully accessed this benefit. For instance, the Department waived interest for only approximately 4,800 service members in 2019 when it did not have the data-match in place. Now the Department is able to identify federal student loan borrowers who serve on active duty by matching records to DOD's personnel records. As a result of the automation the Department can automatically provide the student loan interest benefit to eligible servicemembers and the servicemembers are not required to take any action to receive the interest rate benefit. Previously, servicemembers had to make individual requests for the benefit and provide additional information confirming their eligibility. "Brave men and women in uniform serving our country can now focus on doing their jobs and coming home safely, not filling out more paperwork to access their hard-earned benefits," said Federal Student Aid Chief Operating Officer Richard Cordray. "Federal Student Aid is grateful for our strong partnership with the Department of Defense, and we will seek to reduce red tape for service members wherever possible."

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

U.S. Department of Education News

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

The following announcements were posted to the Information for Financial Aid Professionals website:

- [Implementation of Return of Title IV Funds \(R2T4\) Regulations \(EA ID: GENERAL-21-50\)](#)
- [Final Regulations on Total and Permanent Disability Loan Discharges](#)

Member News



Trellis Company [announced](#) that Timothy J. Fournier, Ed.D., MBA, has joined the organization as its new Chief Operating Officer effective today. Dr. Fournier will assume oversight of several internal functions aimed at increasing strategic capacity and service delivery.

General News

[The Washington Post](#) reports that thousands of student and parent borrowers are still waiting for refunds of their garnished wages despite the federal moratorium on the collection of defaulted federal student loans that has been in place since March 2020, according to data released last week by the U.S. Department of Education.

[Inside Higher Ed](#) reports that the Association of Community College Trustees and Education Strategy Group, an education consulting firm, will launch a two-year initiative to help community colleges develop better pathways between noncredit and credit programs. The project, called the Noncredit and Credit Alignment Lab, is funded by a \$1.2 million grant from the ECMC Foundation.

[NPR](#) includes an interview with Wall Street Journal Reporter Josh Mitchell about his new book, *The Debt Trap: How Student Loans Became a National Catastrophe*.

[WTOL 11](#) reports that many parents of high school students are unprepared for the true cost of college tuition, according to a recent study.

[Inside Higher Ed](#) and [Diverse Issues in Higher Ed](#) report on the 'human cost' of stranded credits. A new report explores the lived experiences of students sidelined by college credits withheld because of unpaid debts owed to the institutions they attend.

[CNBC](#) examines those college majors that have the best return on investment.

[Business Insider](#) reports high interest rates on student loans are keeping borrowers from paying off their initial debt loads.

[Inside Higher Ed](#) reports that fee-free college applications are gaining popularity as more colleges and universities embrace the idea, but some worry about the lost revenue.

[Higher Ed Dive](#) examines whether full approval of coronavirus vaccines by the Food and Drug Administration will alter the fall plans of many colleges and universities. The long-expected move may not change colleges' legal considerations, but it could offer a chance to build trust and momentum.

[Credible](#) reports on student loan rehabilitation and how to qualify and recover.

[Higher Ed Dive](#) reports that the U.S. Department of Education announced last week that it is eyeing changes to a Trump-era regulation that bars colleges and universities from denying faith-based student groups the same rights as other clubs, even if they require their members to hold certain religious views.

[U.S. News and World Report](#) publishes a column from The Institute for College Access and Success' Michele Streeter who examines what student loan borrowers should know about the upcoming negotiated rulemaking session being put in place by the U.S. Department of Education.

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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