NCHER
DAILY BRIEFING

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In Today's Edition

House Democrats Introduce Continuing Resolution to Keep Federal Government Open, Includes AMF Extension

Today, House Democrats released the legislative text of a short-term **Continuing Resolution** (CR) that would extend funding for all federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Education, until December 3, 2021. Current federal funding expires on October 1st and Congress has not passed any of the 12 annual appropriations bills, including the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, that make up the discretionary portion of the federal budget. That means both the House and Senate have to pass a CR or the federal government will shut down. Similar to past CRs, the legislation includes an extension of the authority to pay Account Maintenance Fees to guaranty agencies.

While the CR is expected to pass the House later today or tomorrow, it is likely to fail in the U.S. Senate as it would also suspend the nation's debt limit through December 16, 2022, a measure that Republicans have said they are unwilling to support. It is currently unclear how Congressional leaders and the White House will solve the twin issues of extending federal funding and raising the debt limit. For more coverage, see these articles from ***Roll Call*** and ***The Hill***.

Student Borrower Protection Center Releases Data on PSLF Program, Shows Certain Teachers Were Not Deemed Eligible

Yesterday, the Student Borrower Protection Center released **documents** received from the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) regarding the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program (PSLF). The document shows that the U.S. Department of Education denied thousands of people who work in public service, including educators, from pursuing PSLF, often due to paperwork hurdles and other administrative errors. The documents indicate that more than 4,500 educators at more than 2,700 schools in big cities and small towns in all 50 states and the District of Columbia were denied forgiveness under the PSLF program. According to the documents, in some cases, educators were rejected for mix-ups such as checking the wrong box or missing a date next to a signature, but others were rejected on the basis that the school did not qualify as a public service employer. The National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) said the new data underscores their calls for the Department to cancel the debts of public service workers who have not been able to obtain public service loan forgiveness. “This disturbing data shines a flood light on just how wrong, widespread and farcical PSLF denials have become,” said Randi Weingarten, President of AFT. “It reveals how minor clerical errors can derail an entire application, handing a debt sentence to educators who’ve dedicated their lives to helping children.”

GAO Report Finds FSA is Understaffed

Yesterday, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a new **report** that examined the staffing levels of the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA). The report found that, from Fiscal Years (FY) 2010 to 2019, there was almost a 150 percent increase in the number of federal student loan borrowers, but FSA's staff increased by only 6 percent. The report says that, in 2020, FSA began to take steps to address its staffing needs and skills gaps. The office found that, despite staff working overtime and supervisors completing extra work, 20 percent of its workload went uncompleted. FSA has taken multiple steps as a result of internal assessments including prioritizing hiring, increasing their hiring, and reorganizing the agency. For more coverage, see this article from ***Inside Higher Ed***.

U.S. Department of Education News

For today's *Federal Register*, click **here**.

General News

Higher Ed Dive reports that the federal government's systems that allow student borrowers to repay their loans based on their income are flawed and can end up saddling them with more debt, a new report by the Student Borrower Protection Center argues.

Forbes publishes a column examining what is next for student loan cancellation.

Fortune examines whether there will be mass student loan forgiveness and says not to count on it – that comes from U.S. Department of Education Chief Operating Officer Richard Cordray.

Inside Higher Ed reports that First Lady Jill Biden returned to the classroom this fall as a community college professor. Community college leaders see the move as emblematic of a new national moment for their institutions.

Bankrate covers a new report from the Texas Public Policy Foundation that reveals parent student loans amount to 30 percent of student loan debt, with parents often borrowing tens of thousands of dollars for their child's education.

Business Insider reports on the Federal Student Aid Estimator and how student and parents use it to help determine the amount of federal student aid.

Inside Higher Ed reports that, among colleges and universities mandating COVID-19 vaccines, many institutions of higher education are reporting steady progress toward compliance with the requirements, even as their approaches to stragglers differ.

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