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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](#).

## House Scheduled to Consider H.R. 6585, the Bipartisan Workforce Pell Act This Week

This week, the U.S. House of Representatives is expected to consider [H.R. 6585, the Bipartisan Workforce Pell Act](#), which would expand the eligibility for the Pell Grant program to cover eight- to 15-week career-focused programs. The expansion of Pell Grants would be offset by requiring universities that are subject to the endowment tax to repay unpaid interest and principal from borrowers with federal student loans that attended such institutions. The legislation will be considered under an expedited process called “suspension of the rules,” which requires any legislation to receive a two-thirds majority vote to pass.

## House and Senate Negotiations Fall Apart Over Weekend, Federal Government Funding for Four Spending Bills Expires on Friday

Congressional negotiations between House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) on the four of the twelve appropriations bills - (Agriculture, Energy, Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, and Veterans Affairs) seems to have fallen apart over the weekend. On Friday, Speaker Johnson told Republicans that he was optimistic about meeting this week’s deadline, but acknowledged that a partial shutdown would be possible because of major disagreements between negotiators. But on Sunday, Leader Schumer released a [Dear Colleague Letter](#) to senators placing blame on House Republicans for not being willing to compromise with Democrats on several of the policy provisions inserted in House-passed bills nor additional funding for Ukraine. Speaker Johnson subsequently stated that Democrats were putting new issues on the table that had not been previously included in Senate-passed bills and that these were the barriers to the completion of a funding agreement.

The U.S. Senate reconvenes today and the U.S. House is back on Wednesday, leaving lawmakers just a handful of days to hash out their differences and approve appropriations bills or, if needed, clear another short-term Continuing Resolution. Four spending measures expire on Friday with the remaining eight measures, including one for the U.S. Department of Education, expiring on March 8. Congressional leaders from both houses and parties are expected to meet at the White House at the invitation of President Joe Biden on Tuesday regarding the upcoming federal funding deadline and the Senate-passed foreign aid package that is awaiting action in the House. For further coverage, see the following articles:

- [Lawmakers race to avoid looming shutdown as blame game begins | The Hill](#)

- [Biden, 'Big Four' to meet as spending talks sputter - Roll Call](#)
- [Lawmakers fail to reach deal with partial shutdown looming | The Hill](#)
- [A shutdown is approaching. Biden and Johnson's lack of relationship isn't helping. - Politico](#)

## Department of Education Concludes Negotiated Rulemaking Session After Reaching Consensus on Regulatory Text on Economic Hardship

On Friday, the U.S. Department of Education [concluded](#) the fourth session of the negotiated rulemaking committee tasked with developing federal regulations around loan forgiveness. The panel reached consensus on the proposed regulatory text, which would allow for the waiver of federal student loans when the Secretary of Education determines that a borrower has experienced or is experiencing economic hardship. Under the language, the Secretary would be allowed to consider multiple factors in those decisions such as income, age, and the likelihood a person would default on his or her loans. The language would also authorize the Secretary to provide one-time relief to borrowers who the Department determines to be 80 percent likely to default. There were no dissenters on the final vote of the regulatory language, though the proprietary school representative voted that she would not object to the package and the FFELP representative abstained. Because the negotiators reached consensus, the Department is now bound by the regulatory text as it works to issue a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for release later in the spring.

## Department of Education Publishes State-by-State Breakdown of Borrowers Who Recently Received Loan Forgiveness

Last week, the U.S. Department of Education [published](#) a state-by-state breakdown of the almost 153,000 borrowers who were recently notified that they will receive federal student loan forgiveness under the Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE) Plan. According to the breakdown, borrowers in every state across the country and territories will have their loans canceled under this action with Texas borrowers receiving the most forgiveness at \$116.6 million, followed by California borrowers receiving forgiveness of \$114.8 million. The borrowers must have been enrolled in the SAVE Plan, made at least 10 years of payments, and originally borrowed \$12,000 or less for college to be eligible.

The Department has stated that the agency will continue to identify and discharge eligible borrowers regularly. “When we talk about fixing a broken student loan system, this is what we’re talking about,” said Education Secretary Miguel Cardona. “The state-by-state SAVE Plan debt forgiveness numbers we’re announcing today not only show that President Biden’s leadership is making a real impact on people’s lives in every state – they demonstrate that we won’t ever stop fighting to make higher education more affordable and accessible for more Americans. This is that commitment in action. This is the real deal.”

## U.S. Department of Education News

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

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

- [\(GEN-24-03\) Use of Federal Work-Study Funds for Voter Registration](#)
- [Comment Request: Gainful Employment/Financial Value Transparency Reporting Requirements](#)
- [Comment Request: Comprehensive Transition Program \(CTP\) for Disbursing Title IV Aid to Students With Intellectual Disabilities Expenditure Report](#)

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## General News

The Burning Glass Institute and Strada Education Foundation recently published a report titled, [Talent Disrupted- College Graduates, Underemployment, and the Way Forward](#), which found that a significant portion of college graduates find themselves in jobs that do not require a degree. The report recommends that policymakers offer incentives to employers to expand paid internships and invest in partnerships between colleges and universities and employers to promote access to paid internships; develop the ability to measure and report the occupational employment outcomes of college degree programs to inform decision-making by educators, students, families, and other stakeholders; and provide targeted funding to enable public colleges and universities to deliver quality education-to-career coaching to all students.

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget released a new [report](#) estimating that the Pell Grant program could see a shortfall as high as \$95 billion over the next decade. The report says that recently-increased benefit levels, reforms to the federal financial aid

application process, and expected increases in enrollment will result in the program's growth to \$29 billion this year and even higher in future years.

[The Chronicle of Higher Education](#) publishes an opinion piece on why the temporary fix to help students whose parents do not have Social Security numbers file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid is not a realistic solution.

[Yahoo Finance](#) examines how the SECURE 2.0 legislation helps student loan borrowers save for retirement.

[insideARM](#) reports that the Federal Communications Commission recently issued a final rule on revocation of consent for robocalls and robotexts.

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