

Information Item

GRANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Federal Legislative Update

This tab is included as an informational item. The attachment includes an update on the legislation staff has been tracking. Congress is in its interim period and gearing up for the November 2nd general election. New committee assignments will follow the election.

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FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The second year of the 2-year Congressional session ended on October 8, 2004. The President has 10 days (excluding Sundays), to sign or veto any bills presented to his Office. Any bills on which the President took no action during that time become law without his signature. However, if Congress by their adjournment prevents a bills' return by the President, it does not become law. The following is a summary of the bills staff have been tracking and the outcomes.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The House Passed Bills to Extend HEA through September 30, 2005

On October 6th and 7th, the Senate and House of Representatives passed an extension to the Higher Education Extension Act of 2004 (H.R. 5185) to ensure that there is no interruption in student aid program funds for postsecondary students and in the delivery of these funds. The "clean" one-year extension passed by House does not provide for any programmatic and budgetary changes to the grant programs. HEA grant programs extended through September 30, 2005 include:

- Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP);
 - Federal TRIO Programs (Early Outreach and Student Services Programs); and
 - The Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program
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FISCAL YEAR 2005 APPROPRIATIONS BILLS

House Resolution 5006

Position: None

Related bills: House Report 108-636 and Senate Resolution 2810

Sponsor: Rep. Ralph Regula (R-OH 16th)

Subject: Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill, 2005

Programs Affected

- Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP)

The bill includes \$66,172,000 for the leveraging educational assistance partnership (LEAP) program, the same as the fiscal year 2004 level and \$66,172,000 above the budget request. LEAP provides dollar-for-dollar matching funds to States as an incentive for providing need-based grant and work study assistance to eligible postsecondary students. Federally supported grants and job earnings are limited to \$5,000 per award year for full-time students.

- TRIO

The bill provides \$842,559,000 for the TRIO programs, \$10,000,000 above the budget request and the fiscal year 2004 appropriation. The TRIO programs provide a variety of outreach and support services to encourage low-income, potential first-generation college students to enter and complete college. Discretionary grants of up to four or five years are awarded competitively to institutions of higher education and other agencies. At least two-thirds of the eligible participants in TRIO must be low-income, first-generation college students.

- Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEARUP)

The bill includes \$318,230,000 for the GEAR UP program, \$20,000,000 above last year's level and the budget request. GEAR UP provides grants to states and partnerships of low-income middle and high schools, institutions of higher education and community organizations to target entire grades of students and give them the skills and encouragement to successfully pursue postsecondary education. The Committee bill provides a sixth and final year award to grantees first funded in 2000, while continuing all other funded projects. The Committee also intends that these funds be available to eligible 1999 grantees that opt to apply for new grant awards upon completion of the original award. The Committee believes that grants should be awarded on an annual basis and expects the Department to consult with the Committee on Appropriations of both the House and the Senate prior to the announcement of any new grant competition.

- Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program (Byrd)

The bill does not include funding for the Byrd scholarships program, \$40,758,000 below the budget request and the fiscal year 2004 appropriation. The Byrd scholarship program provides formula grants to States to award \$1,500 scholarships to students who demonstrate academic excellence in high school.

Status: Passed by the House on September 9, 2004 and received by the Senate on September 10, 2004.

Senate Resolution 2810

Position: None

Related bills: Senate Report 108-345 and House Resolution 5006

Sponsor: Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA)

Subject: Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill, 2005

Programs Affected

- Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP)

For the leveraging educational assistance partnership [LEAP] program, the Committee recommends \$66,172,000. The comparable funding level for fiscal year 2004 is \$66,172,000 and the budget proposes to eliminate funding for this program.

The Committee recognizes the important role that the LEAP program plays in maintaining a Federal-State partnership for ensuring that postsecondary education is available to all

academically-qualified Americans. Therefore, it is the Committee's intent to continue this important program.

- TRIO

The Committee recommends \$844,500,000 for Federal TRIO Programs. The comparable fiscal year 2004 funding level and the budget request both are \$832,559,000 for authorized activities.

- Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEARUP)

The Committee recommends \$302,500,000 for GEAR UP. The comparable fiscal year 2004 funding level and the budget request both are \$298,230,000 for this purpose. Funds will support a sixth and final year award to grantees first funded in 2000, while continuing all other projects.

The Committee has provided funds above the fiscal year 2004 level and the budget request for the Department to fund a new grant competition under the GEAR UP program. The Committee believes that grants should not be fully-funded, but instead should be awarded on an annual basis from the fiscal year 2004 and subsequent appropriations during the period of the grant, contingent upon grantee performance. The Committee notes that grants were awarded using this approach during the first 2 years of the program. The Committee expects the Department to consult with it prior to the announcement of this new grant competition.

- Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program (Byrd)

The Committee recommends \$41,000,000 for the Byrd honors scholarship program. The comparable fiscal year 2004 funding level and the budget request both are \$40,758,000 for this program. The amount recommended will provide scholarships of \$1,500 to 27,333 students.

Status: Received by the Senate on September 10, 2004. Placed on calendar for debate and vote.

OTHER BILLS

S 2795

Position: None

Sponsor: Sen. Michael Enzi (R-WY)

Version: As Introduced

Title: The Higher Education Affordability, Access and Opportunity Act of 2004

The bill would amend the HEA in several respects for the purpose of assisting in the training of workers for high-skill occupations. Among other provisions, the bill would amend the Leveraging Educational Assistance Partnership (LEAP) Programs authority to permit a State agency to apply with a philanthropic organization or a degree-granting institution of higher education within the State. This bill has been referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

OTHER INFORMATION

To complete any unfinished spending bills and other measures, lawmakers will return for a post-election lame duck session to wrap up work in the 108th Congress regardless of the Election Day outcome. During the session, congress intends to push forward with planned omnibus appropriations and debt limit votes.

Finally, FPPD staff is currently developing plans and preparing efforts to work with higher education partners and congressional members on reauthorization of the HEA next year.