

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
GRADUATE-PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

Legislative Letters

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Updates in Higher Education



Image Credit: Kaylynne Glover, "The Capitol"

Happy New Years Eve! The Department of Education is planning to overhaul higher education, and Lamar Alexander has announced his retirement from Congress, meaning that an HEA reauthorization might become more likely. Still, it's been a pretty slow news cycle, despite that - or perhaps because - a quarter of the government has shut down. The new Congress is preparing to take office on January 3rd, and they are aiming to pass a Continuing Resolution to get the government operational for at least a little while. But will it happen? We'll have to wait to find out.

To view previous editions and to subscribe to our newsletter, check out our [Legislative Letters blog](#)! If you have questions, suggestions, or are interested in contributing to the newsletter, or would like to be a part of the Legislative Concerns Committee, please contact the Director of Legislative Affairs, Kaylynne Glover, at legislative@nagps.org. To provide feedback on the newsletter, you can also follow the link at the end of the Letter to fill out a quick survey. To find out more about the ratified NAGPS [Legislative](#) and [Advocacy](#) Platforms, be sure to follow these links.

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Higher Education Overhaul

Secretary DeVos has [proposed a plan to overhaul higher education](#), specifically to “empower students, empower institutions, and empower innovators,” as well as changing the accreditation process. The department is creating the rulemaking committee, their work to start in mid-January.

THE WHITE HOUSE AND OTHER AGENCIES

Staff Changes

[Defense Secretary James Mattis has left his position](#), making this the third open position on President Trump's Cabinet in recent weeks. Filling them may take a while; the Senate currently has 195 executive nominees and 31 judicial nominees to approve. [President Trump has named Patrick Shanahan as his interim Defense Secretary](#), he is formerly a Boeing executive with less than two years of government experience and [no military experience](#).

THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

LEGISLATION

Appropriations

A partial government shutdown has begun. The [House had passed a continuing resolution](#) that would have funded the remaining quarter of government agencies until February 8th, and while [the Senate had agreed to review it](#), it did not pass once President Trump reversed position on forgoing his ultimatum regarding funding for his border wall. The failed bill also [contained a disaster aid package](#) for schools and colleges who have been affected by recent natural disasters. It is unknown how long the shutdown will last; [House Democrats are expected to try to pass a continuing resolution](#) when they take office on January 3rd, but it may not be successful.

The Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, PROSPER (H.R. 4508 [115])

[Sen. Lamar Alexander \(R-TN\), the Senate HELP chairman, has announced that he will not run for re-election](#), an announcement that further complicates the debate as to whether a serious attempt to reauthorize the Higher Education Act will be made this session of Congress. He has repeatedly indicated that an HEA reauthorization is one of his highest priorities, and this announcement may

mean that the Senate will make progress in drafting their own version, as the two versions in the House have not been seriously considered by the Senate thus far.

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[Most Trustees Believe That Public Approves of Higher Ed](#)

[Five Reasons Why The Master's Degree Continues To Thrive](#)

[DeVos Outlines a Vision for Higher Education. But the Devil Remains in the Details](#)

[Dow suffers worst week since 2008 financial crisis](#)

[Dow has worst Christmas Eve on record, S&P enters bear market](#)

[Student Customers Look for Options to US Higher Ed](#)

REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

[The Accuracy of CBO's Baseline Estimates for Fiscal Year 2018, CBO](#). In its June 2017 projections, CBO overestimated federal outlays and revenues for fiscal year 2018 by 1.7 percent and 1.2 percent, respectively. The projected federal budget deficit for 2018 was 3.7 percent more than the actual amount.

[State Government R&D Expenditures Increase 7% in FY 2017; Health-Related R&D Up 13%, NSF](#). State government agency expenditures for research and development totaled \$2.5 billion in FY 2017, an increase of 7% from FY 2016. Of this amount, \$1.1 billion was directed toward health-related R&D projects. This was the first time that R&D expenditures for any state government function totaled more than \$1.0 billion. Five state governments (California, New York, Texas, Florida, and Ohio) accounted for 62% of all state government R&D in FY 2017. The same five governments constituted 64% of FY 2016 state government R&D. This InfoBrief presents summary statistics from the FY 2017 Survey of State Government Research and Development, sponsored by the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES) within the National Science Foundation.

FEEDBACK FOR LEGISLATIVE LETTERS

Our *Letter* is still new, and we would really appreciate your thoughts on it - after all, it's for you! So please follow [this link](#) to fill out a quick survey so that we can best meet your needs.