



## November 2012 Federal Update

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As members of the 112th Congress adjourned on September 21, 2012, two weeks earlier than scheduled so Members could leave for their home districts to campaign for re-election, they left a number of unresolved policy issues and unfinished business. Known as the “do nothing Congress,” the eight legislative days in which they were in session held true to that nickname. Among a long list of critical issues that Congress was unsuccessful in passing included extending tax cuts for middle-class families, which are set to expire on December 31, 2012, and if not extended taxes will be raised on approximately 114 million families; passing a five-year Farm Bill which would establish various levels of federal support for farmers and ranchers; agreeing to a Postal Service reform, which is losing about \$25 million a day until the House can act on an agreement; and Congress was unable to compile a deficit reduction package, so automatic across-the-board spending cuts equaling close to \$100 billion may occur. Congress intends to reconvene on November 13<sup>th</sup>, with only 12 legislative days on the calendar before the end of the year, to address the spending and tax issues they have failed to agree on so far.

### **House Joint Resolution 117: Continuing Appropriations for 2013 Passes Both Houses**

On September 13<sup>th</sup> the House passed the six-month government funding bill with a 329-91 vote, and one week later the Senate passed this bill with a 62-30 vote. H.J. Resolution 117 would provide \$1.047 trillion in regular appropriations for discretionary federal government operations through March 27, 2013. Some examples of how student financial aid and career technical education (CTE) programs under H.J. Resolution 117 will be funded are as follows: The Pell Grant program has increased from a maximum allocation of \$5500/student to a maximum of \$5,635/student. The Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) program, which provides need-based grants to help low-income undergraduate students finance the costs of postsecondary education, has been allocated \$739,095,000. The Federal Work Study program will receive \$982,659,000, which will provide funds for part-time employment to help needy students to finance the costs of postsecondary education. The CTE State Grants, also known as the Federal Perkins programs, which prepare students to enter the workforce with the academic and vocational skills needed to compete successfully in the job market, will receive \$1,129,903,000.

### **Award Recipients Announced for the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant (TAA CCCTG) program**

On September 19<sup>th</sup>, U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis announced the award recipients for the second round of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Grant (TAA CCCTG) program. Under the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training Initiative, grants are provided to community colleges for the development and expansion of innovative training programs. It is designed to support partnerships between community colleges and local employers to develop programs that provide pathways to employment opportunities. Colleges will use these funds to create affordable training programs that meet industry needs, invest in staff and educational resources, and provide access to free, digital learning materials. The California Community Colleges who were included in the distribution of this grant program are: Berkeley City College, Contra Costa College, Diablo Valley College, Los Medanos College, Ohlone College, College of Alameda, Chabot College, Laney College, Merritt College, Solano

College, Cerritos College, City College of San Francisco, Los Angeles Valley College, East Los Angeles College, and Los Angeles Trade Technical College.

### **Grants Awarded to Strengthen Math and Science Skills of Upward Bound Students**

The U.S. Department of Education awarded 113 grants totaling more than \$30.8 million to Upward Bound students to strengthen their math and science skills, and prepare them for postsecondary education programs that lead to careers in the fields of math and science. Math/Science Upward Bound is a pre-college program funded by the U.S. Department of Education and is designed to help low-income students recognize and develop their potential to excel in math and science, and to pursue postsecondary degrees and careers in these fields. The California Community Colleges who received grants to administer this program included Compton Community College, West Hills College Lemoore, Reedley College, Pasadena City College, College of the Sequoias, and Monterey Peninsula College.

### **House Resolution 6557: College Cost Reduction Act of 2012**

Prior to adjournment, the House introduced H.R. 6557 in the House Education and the Workforce Committee on September 21, 2012. This resolution establishes the Higher Education Regulatory Reform Task Force, to establish procedures for the presentation and expedited consideration by Congress of the recommendations of the Higher Education Regulatory Reform Task Force, to establish requirements for college cost reduction, and for other purposes. It is currently waiting to be heard in the House Committee on Rules.

### **Improving College Affordability: A View from the States**

On September 13, 2012 the U.S. Senate Committee on Health Education, Labor and Pensions held a committee hearing called, "Improving College Affordability: A View From the States." This hearing was a part of a series of hearings dealing with college affordability. The purpose of this hearing was to listen to a panel of higher education constituents across the nation to learn about what's being done at the state level and how it can be replicated by other states. The witness panel explained their state efforts, policies and initiatives for improving college affordability. This committee is interested in the promising innovations that have been implemented across the country and how the federal government can better serve students by learning about what the states are already doing to improve affordability with declining state resources. To view this hearing and/or to read the witnesses' testimony, please visit:

<http://www.help.senate.gov/hearings/hearing/?id=1760d191-5056-a032-52d9-3e5ced47037e>

### **Assessing College Data: Helping to Provide Valuable Information to Students, Institutions, and Taxpayers**

The House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Training chaired by Congresswoman Virginia Foxx (R-NC) held a special hearing on September 20th entitled, "Assessing College Data: Helping to Provide Valuable Information to Students, Institutions, and Taxpayers." A panel of expert witnesses on data reporting provided their views on the types of higher education data currently collected by the federal government and discussed whether this information is useful to families, institutions, and taxpayers. Prompted by the Obama Administration, the federal government was asked to provide more data to help prospective students and families better understand their postsecondary education options. This subcommittee had the concern that additional data requirements could be "duplicative or unnecessarily burdensome to higher education institutions," so the panel of witness were also asked to review the types of education data currently being collected and discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the current federal higher education data collection system. To view this hearing and/or to read the witnesses' testimony, please visit:

<http://edworkforce.house.gov/calendar/eventsingle.aspx?EventID=308347>.