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CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE  NEW

Both chambers were out of session this week and will reconvene on Monday, May 7.

On Monday, the Senate will begin work on a cloture vote for the Stop Student Loan Interest Rate Hike Act (S. 2343), with the vote expected on Tuesday. The measure would postpone the July 1 scheduled doubling of the Stafford loan interest rate, paying for the one-year delay by ending a tax break on S corporations. Senate Republicans support the House-passed bill (H.R. 4628), which would cover the estimated $6 billion cost of the delay from a health fund created under the Affordable Care Act that covers prevention and public health.

The House schedule for next week has not been announced at this writing.

OTHER

CGS-ETS REPORT EXAMINES CAREER PATHWAYS AFTER GRADUATE SCHOOL

The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) and the Educational Testing Service (ETS) released a report on April 19 that “calls on university, business, and government sectors to team more closely—and innovatively—than they do now in order to prepare the highly skilled talent the country needs to be successful going forward.”

The report, Strengthening Pathways through Graduate School and into Careers, examines such issues as what graduate students know about career options when they are in school, how they learn about occupational opportunities, the role of graduate programs and faculty in informing and guiding students along the path to their professional careers, and the career paths that graduate degree-holders actually take. It offers recommendations for change to universities, employers, and policymakers.
The New York Times published an editorial on April 30 that highlights the “Golden Goose Award,” an initiative of AAU and other organizations that will focus on the often unexpected and transformative outcomes of basic scientific research. Three Members of Congress and the seven organizations announced the launch of the award at an April 25 press conference on Capitol Hill.

The editorial reads, “Leading scientific organizations have...announced plans for their own annual Golden Goose Award to honor seemingly frivolous research that produced big dividends. The goal is to make clear that financing for science should not be cut recklessly in pursuit of deficit reduction.” The editorial notes that the idea for the award “came from Representative Jim Cooper, a Tennessee Democrat, who says he was ‘offended that politicians were making fun of science for their own gain.’” The Times editorial references the Golden Fleece awards conferred by the late Senator William Proxmire.

The editorial cites some examples of seemingly obscure research that proved important—such as a study of the sexual habits of the screwworm, which saved the cattle industry billions of dollars otherwise lost to this deadly cattle pest— and the recent efforts of Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) to carry on the Proxmire tradition. The editorial concludes: “Congress needs to remember that sound research is an investment in the future.”

Joining Representative Cooper at the April 25 press conference were Representatives Charlie Dent (R-PA) and Robert J. Dold (R-IL), as well as representatives of the seven organizations behind the award: AAU, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, The Science Coalition, the Breakthrough Institute, the Progressive Policy Institute, and the Task Force on American Innovation. The first awards will be made at a September 13 Capitol Hill event.


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