



AAU WEEKLY WRAP-UP

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CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE *NEW*

The House was in session today and approved a Coast Guard reauthorization bill (H.R. 3619). The Senate did not meet.

The Senate next week may consider two appropriations bills—Commerce-Justice-Science and Military Construction-VA—as well as an extension of unemployment benefits. Both chambers next week will need to approve a second continuing resolution to keep the government funded after the current CR expires on October 31.

The House next week is expected to consider the conference report for the FY10 Interior-Environment appropriations bill (H.R. 2996) and also may take up a bill to improve lending to small businesses (H.R. 3854).

BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS

SLOW WORK ON APPROPRIATIONS PROMPTS SECOND CONTINUING RESOLUTION *NEW*

CongressDaily reports that the House Appropriations Committee is readying a second continuing resolution (CR) to keep the federal government running through December 15. The measure is likely to be added to the conference report for the FY10 Interior-Environment appropriations bill (H.R. 2996). The new CR is needed because the current CR runs out at the end of October and only four out of 12 FY10 appropriations [bills](#) have been enacted.

The publication also reports that the Senate next week may consider the FY10 Commerce-Justice-Science and Military Construction-VA appropriations bills, while House-Senate conference discussions are continuing on the FY10 Defense and Transportation measures.

ORGANIZATIONS URGE HOUSE FUNDING LEVEL FOR RESEARCH IN FINAL FY10 DEFENSE BILL

Two groups of organizations sent letters on October 16 to House and Senate negotiators on the FY10 Defense appropriations bill urging them to provide key defense research and education programs with at least the higher House-approved funding levels.

AAU and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) sent one [letter](#); the other [letter](#) was sent by the Task Force on American Innovation, a coalition of university and industry groups in which both AAU and APLU participate.

The letters urge conferees on the Defense bill to provide at least the higher House funding levels for basic research programs (budget category 6.1), the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, and the National Defense Education Program. The AAU-APLU letter notes, "Innovations developed from basic research funded by the Defense Department—including DARPA—have contributed significantly to our nation's economic and national security." It adds, "Continued funding growth for NDEP in FY 2010 will permit increased support for more bright undergraduate and graduate students who will be the backbone of our future national security scientific and technical workforce."

House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman John Murtha (D-PA) has said that the House-Senate conference could be wrapped up by early next week.

PRESS CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS IMPORTANCE OF NIH-FUNDED RESEARCH UPDATED

ResearchMeansHope.org, a [coalition](#) focused on the need for sustained, real growth in research funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), held a [press conference](#) October 21 to thank the Obama Administration, Congress, and U.S. taxpayers for the \$10.4 billion in medical research funding provided through the Recovery Act and to call attention to the importance of continued increases for NIH in the FY11 budget and beyond.

Speakers at the press conference focused on the role of NIH-funded research in enabling millions of people to lead longer, healthier lives, as well as on the importance of encouraging scientists to pursue important, innovative new ideas. In addressing the economic value of biomedical research funding to universities, businesses, and communities, Coalition chair Edward D. Miller, dean and CEO of Johns Hopkins Medicine, described it as a "wide lane in the road to recovery."

AAU is a member of the coalition, and AAU President Robert Berdahl is a member of the board of directors. AAU issued a [statement](#) at the press conference.

OTHER CONGRESSIONAL ISSUES

ASSOCIATIONS RESPOND TO ADMINISTRATION'S VIEWS ON PATENT REFORM NEW

Six higher education associations that have been working together on patent reform sent a [letter](#) to Commerce Secretary Gary Locke on October 22 reiterating their fundamental support for the Senate Judiciary Committee’s Patent Reform Act of 2009 (S. 515). The letter noted areas for further improvement in the bill and addressed issues raised by the Secretary in his October 5 [letter](#) to the chairman and ranking member of the Committee.

The association letter—sent by AAU, the American Council on Education, the Association of American Medical Colleges, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, the Association of University Technology Managers, and the Council on Governmental Relations—said, “Like the Administration, our associations strongly support Congress’s patent reform effort and believe that S. 515 has brought us very close to the final legislation that will improve an already strong U.S. patent system and enhance the ability of that system to promote innovation and strengthen our economic competitiveness.”

The association letter discussed several provisions of the legislation and noted that in one area of concern for universities, serial challenges, negotiations within the Senate Judiciary Committee are continuing. The associations said they hoped that those discussions would produce an outcome that both eliminates abusive serial challenges and reduces the administrative burden on the U.S. Patent Office.

CONGRESS REAUTHORIZES E-VERIFY PROGRAM, DROPS PROBLEMATIC SENATE AMENDMENT *NEW*

As part of the final FY10 Homeland Security appropriations bill (H.R. 2892), Congress has reauthorized the E-Verify employment verification system for three years as a pilot program, rather than as the permanent program proposed by the Senate. The final measure also does not include a problematic Senate amendment that would have significantly expanded the verification requirements for all employers, including universities, that contract with the federal government.

In a [letter](#) sent to House and Senate conference leaders on September 29, AAU and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) expressed concern about the Senate amendment. “Given that many AAU and APLU universities are the largest employers in our local communities and states, to verify the employment eligibility of all new employees hired during the term of the contract to perform work in the United States, regardless of whether or not they are associated with the federal contract, would pose both a financial and administrative burden for our member institutions.” The groups asked that the provision be removed from the final bill, adding, “...please know that the university community is in the process of implementing the FAR rule on federal contractors and that we are committed to ensuring that those in our employ are legally authorized to work.”

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

PRESIDENT REITERATES IMPORTANCE OF CLEAN ENERGY LEGISLATION DURING MIT VISIT *NEW*

During a visit to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) today, President Obama made a renewed pitch for clean energy/climate change legislation, focusing on the importance of developing clean energy technologies for the economy and the environment. In his [address](#), the President said that the world is now engaged in a peaceful competition to determine the

technologies that will power the 21st century and that the nation that wins this competition will be the nation that leads the global economy. “I want America to be that nation,” he said.

The President noted that Recovery Act funding—which “provides the largest single boost in scientific research in history”—was already making a difference in energy research and technology development, citing specific projects at MIT. He also visited a number of laboratories on campus.

OTHER

COLLEGE BOARD RELEASES 2009 REPORT ON COLLEGE PRICES AND STUDENT AID *NEW*

The College Board on October 20 released its [2009 reviews](#) of college pricing and student financial aid, concluding, “Published tuition and fees at public four-year colleges and universities rose at an average annual rate of 4.9% per year beyond general inflation from 1999-2000 to 2009-10, more rapidly than in either of the previous two decades.”

According to the College Board’s report on [trends in college pricing](#), published tuition and fees for in-state students at public four-year institutions rose by an average of \$429, or 6.6 percent, to \$7,020 in 2009-10. Average total published charges for those students—including tuition and fees and room and board—rose by 5.9 percent to \$15,213. Published tuition and fees at private four-year institutions increased an average \$1,096, or 4.4 percent, to \$26,273 in 2009-10. Average total published charges—including tuition and fees and room and board—for those students rose by 4.3 percent to \$35,636.

According to the College Board’s report on [trends in student aid](#), financial aid—both grant aid and federal loans—increased in 2008-09 to a total of \$168.4 billion. In addition, students borrowed about \$11.9 billion from nonfederal sources (state and private).

Within the financial aid total, preliminary data show that federal grant aid increased over the previous year by \$2.5 billion to \$24.8 billion. The largest portion of grant aid comes from colleges and universities; institutional grants increased over the previous year by \$1.2 billion to \$31.1 billion.

The report also shows that, from 2007-08 to 2008-09, total education borrowing increased by about \$4 billion in current dollars, or five percent. Federal borrowing increased by about \$15 billion, but nonfederal loans declined by about \$11 billion.

The maximum Pell Grant covers 35 percent of average tuition, fees, room and board at public four-year institutions, and 15 percent of total charges at private four-year colleges. Only about 25 percent of recipients qualified for the maximum grant in 2007-08.

The College Board also issued a supplemental report on the economic and social benefits of higher education titled, “[Education Pays](#).” Additional materials are posted on the College Board [website](#).

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