

From: AACC Office of Government Relations
Date sent: 08/18/2017 12:08:43 pm
Subject: AACC Washington Watch

[Print This](#)

Government Relations and Policy Analysis
[View this email online or in your mobile browser.](#)



Washington Watch AACC's Federal Policy Update



[AACC Website](#) | [Advocacy](#) | [Resources](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Follow Us:   

August 18, 2017

The August recess is a good time to visit with your Congressional delegation to advocate for community college legislative priorities. AACC prepared a [one-page document](#) focused on three critical issues: federal funding, the Pell Grant program, and the DACA program.

An eight-bill appropriations minibus (including the House's FY 2018 Labor-HHS-Education bill) is slated for House floor action in early September. No word yet on any amendments. The Senate Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee is planning to markup its FY 2018 bill shortly after Labor Day. Congress will be under pressure to pass a budget resolution, raise the debt ceiling, advance tax reform legislation, and wrap up the remaining appropriations bills prior to the end of the federal fiscal year.

SIMPLE Act Introduced

Prior to the August Congressional recess, Reps. Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), Ryan Costello (R-PA), Patrick Meehan (R-PA), and Seth Moulton (D-MA) introduced the Streamlining Income-driven, Manageable Payments on Loans for Education (SIMPLE) Act. A companion bill has been introduced in the Senate by Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR). The legislation would enable borrowers to automatically enroll in income-driven repayment plans and renew their plans annually. [AACC supports the legislation.](#)

U.S. Department of Education (ED) News

ED Extends Deadline for Comments on Regulations—ED is actively seeking public comments on regulations that could be repealed or modified. [A notice](#) was published on August 11 in the *Federal*

Register extending the 60-day comment period by 30 days, to September 20. A [good report](#) that summarizes many of the higher education regulatory issues was released by the Senate HELP Committee in 2015. For more about this effort and for a copy of AACC's draft comments, contact [David Baime](#).

Another Gainful Employment Extension on Alternate Earnings Appeals—ED announced in the [Federal Register](#) the new deadline of February 1, 2018, for submitting alternate earnings appeals. In an effort to reduce the burden on institutions in filing such appeals, ED is modifying the submission requirements. In addition, ED is seeking comments by September 18, 2017, on its action not to require institutions intending to file a notice of appeal to “issue warnings to students unless they fail to timely submit an alternate earnings appeal or the appeal is resolved.” These comments and others related to GE will be considered with regard to the upcoming negotiated rulemaking.

Updated Version of FSA Handbook—ED released [Volume 4](#) and [Volume 6](#) of the *2017-2018 Federal Student Aid Handbook*. These new volumes on “Processing Aid and Managing FSA Funds” and “Campus-based Programs” complete the handbook.

Policy and Research Briefs

Talking Points on Accreditation—The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) produced two documents recently that provide talking points about the role of accreditation. The [“Ten Ways in Which Accreditation Serves Students, Society and the Public Interest”](#) provides the basics while the second document, [“Talking Points: The Future Face of Accreditation – Serving the Public Interest,”](#) offers CHEA's position on such proposed policy changes as “bright lines.”

Earning a Credential Bodes Well for Earning Another—The latest National Student Clearinghouse Research Center's [Snapshot Report](#) on *Certificate and Associate Degree Pathways* shows that more than 40% of associate degree earners continue their education to earn a bachelor's degree (more than 60% of 20-year olds or younger). Similarly, more than one out of four (26.7%) graduates of undergraduate certificate programs subsequently earn either an associate or bachelor's degree or both. For a more detailed analysis, [see CC Daily](#).

Implications for Colleges of Changing Demographics of High School Graduates—Future classes of high school graduates are expected to be smaller and more diverse, according to [a report](#) published last month by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). The data, drawn from WICHE's ninth edition of the *Knocking at the College Door: Projections of High School Graduates* study, indicate that “after steady increases in the overall number of high school graduates over the last 15 years, the U.S. is headed into a period of stagnation.” The number of high school graduates is expected to peak by 2026 before it begins to decline. This trend “is largely fueled by consistent declines in the majority White public school population, which is projected to decrease by 17%, down a quarter of a million high school students.” Hispanic high school graduates will increase significantly and will help “counterbalance” the decline in White students. The report notes, however, that these national trends “mask substantial variation by region and state.” In fall 2015, more than half of Hispanic and 40% of Asian and Pacific Islander undergraduates [attended community colleges](#).

Policy Lessons from Survey Results—In August, New America published [the policy implications](#) of its [Varying Degrees survey](#). Public opinion on the cost and value of higher education, among other things, can inform policymakers on a number of policies concerning “how it is financed, and meeting the needs of students who are older and more diverse than in the past.” Specific topics include how student success is measured, addressing the adequacy of federal graduation rates, and the implications of a ban on student unit records. AACC supports lifting the ban on student unit records.

Mixed Repayment Findings for Student Loan Borrowers—Comparing the 2002 cohort of student loan borrowers entering repayment with the 2014 cohort, [the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#) (CFPB) found that while the amount borrowed and the age of borrowers and the repayment plans may have changed during this period, “most borrowers have continued to repay their students loans.” A higher percent of borrowers are borrowing larger amounts and are older. Nearly one out of four borrowers with small loans (i.e., less than \$5,000) and who entered repayment during the past five years were not making sufficient payments to reduce loan balances. Community college students have relatively low rates of borrowing. However, of those borrowing, community college students represent a high share of those taking out small loans and having difficulty repaying them.

Profile of DACA Eligible Population—The Migration Policy Institute released [an issue brief](#) this month

estimating that there were more than 1 million “individuals who met all the eligibility criteria and were thus immediately eligible to apply for deferred action” under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. The report examines college enrollment and workforce patterns, concluding that nearly all those “immediately eligible to apply for DACA were students or workers.” [AACC supports the DACA program](#) as well as the [DREAM Act](#), which would provide DACA students and others with a path to citizenship.

Interested in Reading Back Issues of the Washington Watch?

Visit the [AACC website](#).

The AACC Government Relations and Policy Analysis Team:

Senior Vice President: [David Baime](#), ext. 224

Associate Vice President: [Jim Hermes](#), ext. 216

Legislative Resource Associate: [Laurie Quarles](#), ext. 249

Director, Policy Analysis: [Jolanta \(J.J.\) Juskiewicz](#), ext. 258

American Association of Community Colleges
One Dupont Circle, NW | Suite 410 | Washington, DC 20036
(202) 728-0200 | www.aacc.nche.edu