



## **January 24, 2022 – Federal News and Information**

### **BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS**

Last week, the House was in recess while the Senate tried and failed to approve sweeping voting rights legislation. The result was not surprising, given what Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ) conveyed to their colleagues the week prior. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and President Joe Biden cannot consider the outcome anything other than a significant blow to their agenda. Now, they must pivot to other unfinished business, including a strategy for pursuing elements of the Build Back Better Act (BBB), as well as the resolution of FY 2022 appropriations. There is a sense on Capitol Hill that finalizing the latter should happen before the State of the Union Address, which will be delivered March 1.

The temporary spending measure that is keeping the federal government open expires on February 18. Since Democrats and Republicans have yet to agree on topline numbers for FY 2022 spending, it seems unlikely that an omnibus bill will be negotiated and approved before then. In a January 21 [Dear Colleague letter](#), House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) said of upcoming work for the chamber, “The House must pass a strong omnibus. This Omnibus, forged under the leadership of Appropriations Committee Chair Rosa DeLauro, will address critical priorities for our country, including for our national security and for communities at home.”

The letter also references intentions to introduce a competitiveness bill. While the House has already considered two bills — the National Science Foundation for the Future Act and the Department of Energy for the Future Act — leadership plans to introduce a bill suggest that there will be additions to those proposals to formulate a new package. Presumably, this new package will be the basis for House negotiations with the Senate on the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act. Those negotiations have been delayed, due, in part, to the extended consideration of BBB.

As for BBB, in a two-hour press conference last week, President Biden said he would consider breaking the package up into smaller pieces to facilitate passage. That plan will keep the Senate Parliamentarian busy, since the package carried the special privileges of budget reconciliation. There are limits on how many bills can enjoy those privileges.

The House and Senate will be in session this week, and there will undoubtedly be more developments on BBB, appropriations and the competitiveness package. Advocates would like to see progress on all three.

### **ED ANNOUNCES THAT EVERY STATE’S ARP ESSER PLAN IS APPROVED**

On Tuesday, January 18, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) announced that every state education agency (SEA) had received approval of their American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) plan. A press release from ED notes that this means the department has distributed \$122 billion in funds to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. ED believes these funds are critical to helping schools remain open, especially as new challenges arise as the omicron variant of the coronavirus sweeps across the nation. Speaking on this approval, Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said, “I am proud that, with the approval of these plans, states have 100% of their funds and robust plans to help schools remain open and help students thrive. We are urging states and school districts to deploy funds now to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the omicron variant, on our school communities. We continue to encourage state and local education leaders to utilize funds for testing, personal protective equipment, and staff recruitment and retention. In areas where these funds are being deployed quickly, we are already seeing the positive impact that this infusion of federal support is having directly in schools and communities.



## Florida School Boards Association FEDERAL NEWS & INFORMATION

We know what it takes to keep our schools open safely for in-person learning, and these funds will help us achieve that goal.” To read the department’s press release on this topic, please click [here](#). In addition, ED releases a [fact sheet](#) on what the Biden administration has done to help schools reopen safely and meet students’ needs.

### **NSB DISCUSSES THE STATE OF U.S. SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING 2022**

On Thursday, January 20, the National Science Board (NSB) hosted a virtual briefing to discuss its report, *The State of U.S. Science and Engineering 2022*. The report had many key takeaways including that the U.S. leads globally in performing research and development (R&D) in 2019, claiming 27% of worldwide investments. According to the report, R&D is concentrated in a few countries, such as China, Japan, Germany, and South Korea, in addition to the U.S. It also found that the U.S. science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) labor force represents 23% of the total U.S. labor force. The report concludes that there has been a shift in the U.S.’s global position in science and engineering (S&E) because of the fast progress of Asia’s R&D and science and technology (S&T), but the country played an important role in global S&E collaboration during the coronavirus pandemic. To meet future R&D challenges, the report acknowledges the need to diversify and broaden the S&E enterprise in the U.S. The report outlines steps to make these improvements, such as “increasing participation in STEM fields of study and careers to include all socioeconomic and demographic groups and U.S. geographic regions,” among other steps. Retaining foreign talent is another action that the U.S. can take to broaden the enterprise. For more information on the report, please click [here](#).