



January 10, 2022 – Federal News and Information

Budget and Appropriations

Lawmakers returned to work last week, but between snowstorms that closed the federal government twice and Democratic leadership trying to get organized after their December Build Back Better (BBB) disappointment, there is no clear path forward on that matter or FY 2022 appropriations.

Senator Joe Manchin's (D-WV) opposition to the BBB plan has prompted leadership to put it on the back burner. As has been widely reported, the senator wants only working families to get the proposed extended child tax credit, which puts him at odds with most of his fellow Democrats. In an effort to save President Joe Biden's agenda, Democrats are pivoting to an effort to try to reform the 60-vote threshold filibuster after Senate Republicans blocked debate on three major Democratic voting rights and democracy reform bills in 2021. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) has committed to "debate and consider changes to Senate rules on or before January 17, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, to protect the foundation of our democracy: free and fair elections." Senator Schumer needs Senator Manchin's support for this strategy, and the West Virginian has told reporters he sees the rule change as "a heavy lift."

As for FY 2022 spending, Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Pat Leahy (D-VT) voiced support for an omnibus last week, saying, "Whether we do BBB or not, we have to have an omnibus. And I think we can have it before next month." His Republican counterpart, Ranking Member Richard Shelby (R-AL), told reporters that there has been "no progress" in spending talks. Without agreement on topline numbers, it seems that a third temporary spending measure will be needed before the February 18 expiration of the current one. Shelby did say, "We're ready to talk."

There was clarity on one issue last week — the State of the Union Address will be March 1, 2022. On Friday, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) formally invited President Biden to Capitol Hill, saying, in part, "[T]his past year has been historic: with the life-saving American Rescue Plan, once-in-a-century Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and, soon, the truly transformational Build Back Better Act!...In that spirit, I am writing to invite you to address a Joint Session of Congress on Tuesday, March 1, to share your vision of the State of the Union."

This invitation almost certainly means that the FY 2023 budget request is not expected any sooner. 2022 looks to be yet another unpredictable year with regard to the budget and appropriations process.

IES TO ANNOUNCE TWO NEW PRIZE COMPETITIONS

Last month, Mark Schneider, the Director of Institute of Education Sciences (IES), announced the creation of two new prize competitions beginning early 2022 in a blog post on the IES website. According to the post, the first competition will "incentivize innovation in middle school science instruction" and the other will "improve mathematics achievement for elementary students with disabilities." More details will come closer to the rollout of the competitions, according to Schneider. The blog post goes on to highlight some of the "truly disturbing data" motivating the competitions. It cites disappointing results in American students' National Assessment of Educational Progress results. Schneider reaffirms IES's desire to address improving science education and performance, after more resources have historically been put into improving outcomes in reading and math by the institute. To read the entire blog post, please click [here](#).

ED AND DOT WORK TOGETHER TO HELP ADDRESS SCHOOL BUS DRIVER SHORTAGE



Florida School Boards Association FEDERAL NEWS & INFORMATION

On Tuesday, January 4, the U.S. Education Department (ED) and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) of the Department of Transportation (DOT) announced they would be collaborating to help address the school bus driver shortage across the country. One action being taken to increase the number of new hires is to remove the “under the hood” portion of the commercial driver’s license (CDL) skills test, which asks participants to identify engine components. The bus driver shortage is a key factor in preventing students from keeping kids in the classroom full-time. Speaking on this decision, Education Secretary Miguel Cardona said, “We’ve heard from educators and parents that labor shortages, particularly of bus drivers, are a roadblock to keeping kids in schools. Today’s announcement will give states the flexibility they need to help increase the pool of drivers, who are a key part of the school community, and get kids to school safely each day where students learn best. And American Rescue Plan funds can be used to hire these critical staff, including offering increased compensation or other incentives to recruit and retain staff.” To read a press release from ED, please click [here](#).