



ITCA Update

February 17, 2025

This week's update reports on activities occurring in Washington DC that relate directly to our mission and purpose. The House is on recess this week and will return next week. The Senate is in session this week, except for February 17th President's Day. ITCA will continue to provide updates on Monday of each week.

U.S. Department of Education

On February 13, the Senate Health, Education and Labor (HELP) Committee held a hearing for Linda McMahon, who has been nominated as the cabinet level Secretary of Education. She was asked a number of questions about IDEA and suggested that IDEA may be better administrated under the Department of Health and Human Services where other health and disability programs are located. She also said she did not expect significant budget cuts under IDEA. The committee is expected to approve her nomination this Thursday, February 20th after which the full Senate will consider the appointment.

Meanwhile, in the last week, the Department cancelled almost \$900 million in contracts for the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), the agency responsible for funding education research and maintaining extensive education statistics. These cuts resulted in the termination of 89 contracts. Also canceled were over \$350 million in contracts and grants for ten Regional Education Laboratories (RELs) and four Equity Assistance Centers.

Federal Personnel

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) met with agency leaders across the government last week and directed them to begin firing employees still in their probationary period. Each federal agency determines how long employees remain on probation, anywhere from one to two years after being hired. This directive could impact as many as 200,000 federal employees. Thousands of federal employees across a number of federal agencies have already been released.

Federal Funding

Budget Resolutions were passed by the House and the Senate Budget Committees last week. The significant differences in these bills must be resolved before a final bill can be enacted. The Senate is working toward two separate bills, while the House is planning one larger bill. The final budget resolution cannot require cuts to specific programs but will require specific authorizing committees to select programs for budget cuts.

The House bill directs the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction over Medicaid, to reduce the deficit by \$880 billion over ten years. It directs the House Agriculture Committee to reduce the deficit by \$230 billion over ten years and the Education and the Workforce Committee to make \$330 billion in cuts over a ten-year period.

The Senate bill would increase defense and border security funding by more than \$300 billion. This would be paid for by cuts to federal programs. The Senate bill does not include provisions for tax cuts.

FFY 2025 Funding

The current Continuing Resolution (CR) keeps the government funded until March 14th with all federal programs funded at the FFY 2024 levels. Leadership in both the House and Senate appropriations committees currently are working to reach an agreement on the next steps. At this point, it is not at all clear what will happen between now and March 14th. Without agreement on final funding levels for all programs or on an extension to the CR, the government will shut down. There is discussion about a yearlong CR that would fund all programs through September 30, 2025.

Department of Health and Human Services

The Senate has confirmed Robert F. Kennedy Jr. as the Secretary of Health and Human Services in a 52-48 vote last Thursday morning.