

Washington DC Update:

Plus Ca Change,
Plus C'est la Même Chose

Scott E. Miller
Still at PHEAA

We Are All Super Heroes
2019 PASFAA Spring Training

What We'll Cover...

- Department of Education, Briefly
- Current State of the New Congress
- Activities by Education Committees
- New and Exciting Ideas
- Old and Unexciting Issues
- Looking Forward



Department of Education

- **Battling in Court over Gainful Employment and Borrower Defense Against Repayment**
- **Negotiated Rulemaking Underway**
 - TEACH Grants
 - Accreditation
- **New FSA COO**
 - Mark Brown
 - Retired USAF Major General
 - Wayne Johnson remains in charge of Next Gen transformation



A Rough Start for Legislating

- **Partial Government Shutdown Held Congress Hostage**
 - Other issues on hold
 - Pelosi trying to keep her caucus together
 - McConnell stays out of the fight
- **Usually, A New Congress Takes Some Time to Get Organized**
 - Especially with a change in party control
 - Especially with 89 new House Members and 9 new Senators



Education Committees Get Started

- **Education and Labor Committee**
 - Formerly Education and the Workforce
- **New Chairman Bobby Scott (D, VA)**
 - Virginia Foxx (R, NC) becomes Senior Republican Member
- **Rep. Lloyd Smucker (R, PA), Senior Republican Member of Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Investment**
 - PA Committee members include R's: Smucker, G.T. Thompson, Dan Meuser; D: Susan Wild



Ed & Labor Committee Agenda

- **Rep. Scott Plans to Send Letters to Secretary DeVos Seeking Information**
 - Answers will determine the extent of oversight hearings
- **Rep. Scott Commits to a Comprehensive Higher Education Act Reauthorization Bill**
 - Does not want to do series of small bills
 - Expect Committee to pass a partisan bill
- **Appropriations Committee Also Holding Oversight Hearings**
- **Financial Services Committee Looking at CFPB**



Education and Labor Committee Plans Bipartisan Hearings

- **The Cost of College: Student Centered Reforms to Bring Higher Education Within Reach**
- **Strengthening Accountability in Higher Education to Better Serve Students and Taxpayers**
- **The Cost of Non-Completion: Improving Student Outcomes in Higher Education**
- **Engines of Economic Mobility: The Critical Role of Community Colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and Minority-Serving Institutions in Preparing Students for Success**
- **Innovation to Improve Equity: Exploring High-Quality Pathways to a College Degree**

Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Foxx are also inviting members of the public to submit research and evidence to be considered during the Committee's work, as well as experts who could serve as potential witnesses.



Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

- **Chairman Lamar Alexander (R, TN),
Ranking Member Patty Murray (D, WA)
Remain in Place**
 - Sen. Casey (D, PA) still a member
 - Sen. Alexander announces intent to retire
after this Congress



Reauthorization Deja Vu All Over Again

- **HELP Committee Will Attempt to Finalize a Higher Education Act Reauthorization Bill**
 - Holding some preliminary hearings
 - Needs bipartisan agreement to have hope of Senate approval
- **Key Differences Must be Bridged**
- **Simplification Still a Theme**
- **Democrats Focused on Access and Cost**



Sen. Alexander's February Surprise

- **Reduce FAFSA to About 24 Questions**
 - Rely on data collected by IRS
- **Move to Two Repayment Plans**
 - 10-year standard and IDR based on 10% of discretionary income
 - Collections via employer withholding
- **Replace Gainful Employment with Program Level Student Loan Repayment Rates**
 - Apply to all institutions



Sen. Murray Weighs In

- **Wants States to Increase Spending on Public Colleges**
 - Goal is to reduce college costs
 - Allow students to avoid debt
- **Emphasis on Increasing Pell Grants**
- **More Scrutiny on For-Profit Colleges**
 - Enhanced Accountability
- **Need to Address “Epidemic” of Sexual Assault on Campus**



Chairman Scott's Reauthorization Priorities

- **Aiming for Significant, Comprehensive Reauthorization Bill**
- **Incentives for States to Increase Spending on Higher Education**
 - Free community college
- **Increase Federal Oversight, Especially Regarding For-Profit Colleges**
- **Accreditors Need to Address College Costs**



New in 2019

- **White House Involvement in Higher Education Policy**
 - Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump
 - They could be focal point for White House policy on higher education
- **More Attention for Workforce Issues**
 - Pell for short course programs
 - Re-training opportunities
- **Can Democrat Presidential Candidates Vote for a Bill Without Free College?**



What Else is Congress Doing?

- **Starting Work on FY 2020 Appropriations**
 - Senate will still have control of process
 - Looking to continue momentum of Pell Grant increases
 - Trying to hold on to funding for Campus Based Programs, TRIO, and GearUp
- **President's Budget Likely to Be DOA**
 - Protects defense-related spending
 - Significant cuts for domestic spending



Challenges for FY 2020

Appropriations

- **Budget Caps May Need to Be Lifted (again)**
- **Debt Limit Increase Needed (again)**
- **Some Talk of a Two-year Budget Agreement to Avoid Sequestration(again)**
 - Yes, we're talking about the Budget Control Act of 2011 (again)
 - Budget caps in effect for FY 2021 (again)



Challenges for the 116th Congress

- **Distractions, Distractions**

- Meuller Report and fallout
- Border “emergency” declaration
- Superhero struggle: Pelosi vs. McConnell
- Super-charged partisan atmosphere
 - Intra party divisions
- The next crisis, and the next....

- **2020 Presidential Campaign Begins**

- Posturing by Senate contenders
- Republicans may try to force tough votes



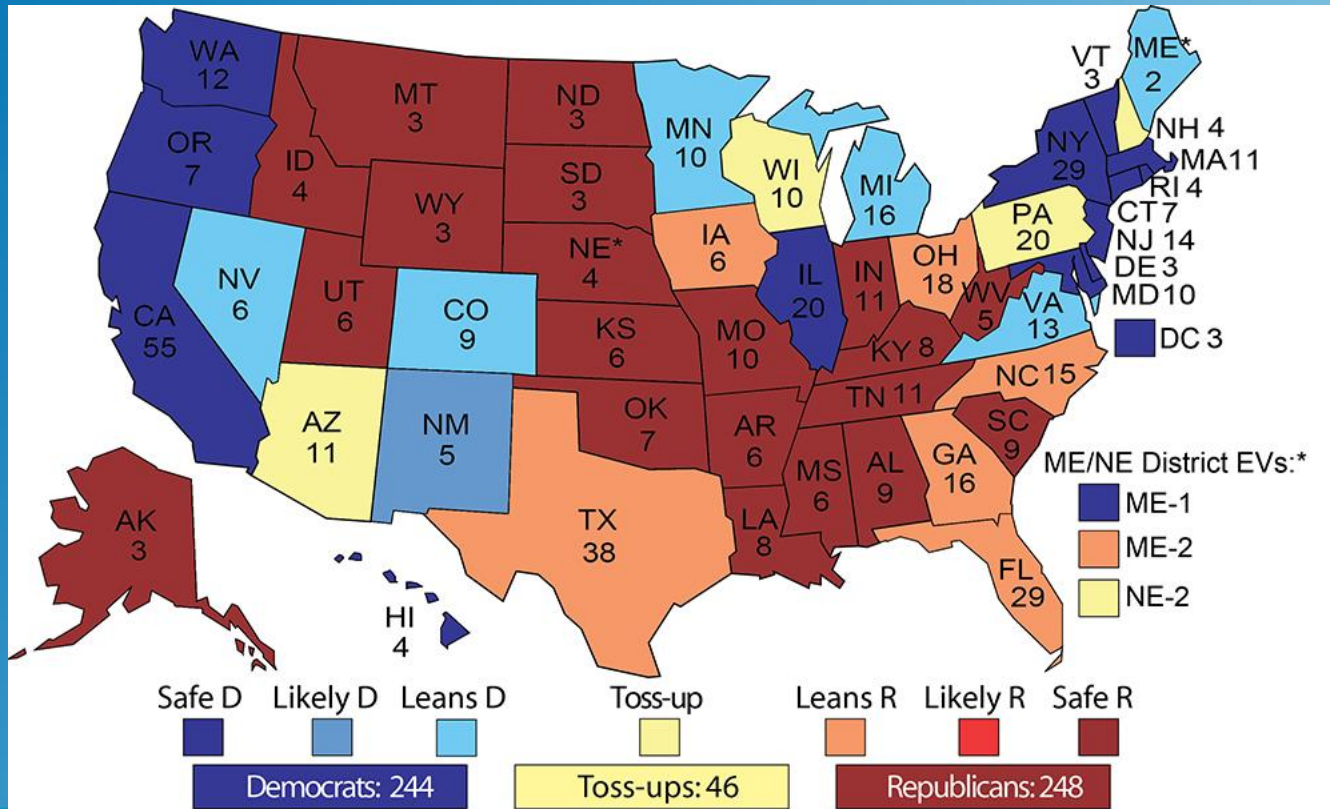
Democrat Senators Running for President

Michael Bennet
Cory Booker
Kirsten Gillibrand
Kamala Harris
Amy Klobuchar
Bernie Sanders
Elizabeth Warren

Fun Fact:
That's 14%
of the
Dems in
the Senate



The Nation Remains Divided



*Two states, Maine and Nebraska, award electoral votes by congressional districts (all others are awarded winner-take-all statewide). Nebraska's two statewide electoral votes, and two of its three districts, are rated Safe Republican. Maine's statewide votes are rated Leans Democratic. The ratings for Maine's two districts, and Nebraska's one competitive district, are listed separately.



**PASFAA's Mission Is
Strong,
Its Members Are
Stronger**



“How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard!”



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