



AAU WEEKLY WRAP-UP

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CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE

HOUSE AND SENATE SCHEDULES NEXT WEEK *NEW*

Both the House and Senate were in session today, focusing on legislation that Congress considered but did not enact last year.

The House today passed two bills dealing with wage discrimination (H.R. 11, H.R. 12) which were approved last session by the House but not the Senate. The chamber also approved a resolution in support of Israel (H. Res. 34). The Senate today began consideration of an omnibus lands bill (S. 22), which was blocked in the last Congress by Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK). Senate votes on the bill are possible during an unusual session scheduled for this Sunday.

Next week, the House will focus on legislation to expand the State Children's Health Insurance Program (a measure that President Bush vetoed twice last session), as well as legislation creating new conditions on the release of the remaining \$350 billion in the \$700-billion financial recovery package, the Troubled Asset Relief Program (P.L. 110-343). Also possible for consideration is legislation to require regular audits of every government agency.

CQToday reports that the Senate next week will spend much of its time on the omnibus lands bill. Thereafter, the Senate could take up two wage discrimination bills, either its own versions or the bills passed today by the House.

PELOSI ANTICIPATES ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE WILL BE COMPLETED IN MID-FEBRUARY *NEW*

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) said yesterday in a [statement](#) that she hoped the major economic stimulus package being developed by the Obama presidential transition team and congressional leaders would be approved by the House by the end of January and ready for the new President's signature in mid-February. She warned that she would cancel the Presidents' Day recess if the measure is not completed by that deadline.

The Speaker's statement was a step back from previous statements predicting that Congress would approve the measure in time for Mr. Obama to sign immediately following his inauguration on January 20. Rather than moving on a fast track, the package will be considered under "regular order," with committee hearings and markups and a House-Senate conference. Speaker Pelosi's office said the House Appropriations and Ways and Means committees were likely to mark up the measure during the week of January 19, with House floor consideration possible the following week.

With the Senate already scheduled to be in session on Sunday, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) said the Senate Democratic Caucus would hold a meeting that day to hear more from Mr. Obama's advisors on the tax provisions in his proposal. Some Senators have expressed concern that individual tax breaks would end up in savings accounts rather than be spent to bolster the economy. CongressDaily reports that Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-MT) hopes to mark up the committee's portion of the bill during the week of January 19. Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) told the publication that he would urge inclusion in the package of a \$4,000 tax credit for college tuition.

BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS

PRESIDENT-ELECT OBAMA CALLS FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION INVESTMENTS IN ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE *NEW*

In a [speech](#) aimed at encouraging Congress to act quickly on the economic stimulus package, President-elect Barack Obama on January 8 included research and education among the priority investments needed to "immediately jumpstart job creation and long-term growth." Specifically, he called for "investing in the science, research, and technology that will lead to new medical breakthroughs, new discoveries, and entire new industries." He also said, "To give our children the chance to live out their dreams in a world that's never been more competitive, we will equip tens of thousands of schools, community colleges, and public universities with 21st century classrooms, labs, and libraries."

Other technology-related investment goals for the \$775-billion package, dubbed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Plan, include doubling production of alternative energy within three years and computerizing medical records nationwide within five years.

EXPERTS URGE HOUSE DEMOCRATS TO INCLUDE RESEARCH FUNDING AND INFRASTRUCTURE IN ECONOMIC RECOVERY PACKAGE *UPDATED*

Panelists at a forum held January 7 by the House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee urged Members to include funding for research and research infrastructure in the economic recovery package that the Obama transition team and Congress are now developing.

Former Lockheed-Martin CEO [Norman Augustine](#), who chaired the National Academies panel that wrote “Rising Above the Gathering Storm,” and MIT Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences Department Head [Maria T. Zuber](#) urged Democratic House leaders to provide greater funding for science education, research, and innovation infrastructure. They said that an important step toward ensuring long-term economic growth would be to fully fund the America COMPETES Act.

Their presentations also reinforced recommendations for the stimulus package made by [AAU](#) and others. Dr. Zuber’s written statement, for example, specifically cited recommendations made by AAU and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. She called for added funding for basic energy sciences, including for the Energy Frontier Research Centers program; expansion of research instrumentation support through the National Science Foundation (NSF); and greater funding for science and engineering education.

The hearing, convened by Steering Committee Co-chairs George Miller (D-CA) and Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), with the participation of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) (whose follow-up statement can be found [here](#)) and several House committee chairs, was intended to give House Democrats and the public an opportunity to hear from economists and other experts about the elements of an economic recovery plan that might most effectively create new jobs and spur long-term growth. Mr. Augustine and Dr. Zuber were joined on the panel by Moody’s chief economist Mark Zandi, former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, and former chief economic advisor to President Reagan, Martin Feldstein.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

NATIONAL ACADEMIES REPORT URGES EASED RESTRICTIONS ON EXPORT CONTROLS AND VISAS *NEW*

A National Academies panel co-chaired by Stanford University President John Hennessy has issued a [report](#) calling on the next President to loosen certain federal restrictions on high-technology exports and visas for scientific researchers and students. According to the report, many export control and visa rules created during the Cold War address threats that no longer exist and now undermine national security and economic prosperity.

The report, “Fortress America,” urges President-elect Barack Obama, upon taking office, to use executive orders to modify these rules. It states that federal officials should apply specific principles in determining which goods or technologies are placed on the export control lists and that dual-use technologies should be regulated cautiously, with the burden of proof placed on those seeking to restrict access to them. Likewise, the report calls for streamlining of the visa application process and incorporation of skills-based preferential processing; it recommends that student visas be extended to allow recent graduates more time to find employment with U.S. firms.

The National Academies' Committee on Science, Security, and Prosperity in a Changing World, which authored the report, was co-chaired by President Hennessy and Brent Scowcroft, U.S. national security advisor under President George H.W. Bush. Other members of the panel included Purdue University President France Cordova

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ISSUES SCHEDULE FOR NEGOTIATED RULEMAKING ON HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY ACT

The Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Education [announced](#) in the December 31 *Federal Register* that it will establish five negotiated rulemaking committees to draft proposed regulations under Title IV of the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA). The committees are:

1. Loans—Lender/General Loan Issues
2. Loans—School-Based Loan Issues
3. Accreditation
4. Discretionary Grants
5. General and Non-Loan Programmatic Issues

The Department is soliciting nominations for the five committees of individuals who represent key stakeholder constituencies. The deadline for nominations is January 23, 2009.

Because the HEOA made so many changes in the law, the Department says it will not attempt to issue regulations on all of the new provisions right away. In particular, regulations to implement the provisions affecting foreign schools and unfunded programs will be developed through the negotiated rulemaking process at a later date.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION LETTER SUMMARIZES PROVISIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY ACT

The Department of Education late last month released a 219-page [Dear Colleague letter](#) summarizing most of the provisions of the Higher Education Opportunity Act. The package describes the HEOA's amendments to the Higher Education Act as well as to other laws and also describes non-institutional studies, reports, and summits required by the new law. The summary is designed to assist institutions in understanding the many changes made to the Higher Education Act by the new law and does not change any requirements in the law. Included with the letter is a chart that groups new provisions by effective date.

The letter restates that institutions are expected to make a good-faith effort to comply with the new law, except those provisions for which the HEOA specifies that regulations are necessary for implementation or those for which the Department indicates that it must take certain operational steps before institutions are expected to comply.

The letter also notes that because institutions will be implementing many new provisions before receiving departmental guidance, the Department will, during subsequent reviews of compliance with the HEOA, "take into account any written guidance that had been provided by the Department during the period under review or, as applicable, the absence of such guidance."

NIST SEEKS APPLICANTS FOR UNDERGRADUATE S&T SUMMER FELLOWSHIPS

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is requesting applications for its Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships (SURF) program, which offers undergraduate summer work opportunities at its Gaithersburg, Maryland and Boulder, Colorado campuses.

The program, which focuses on several specified science and technology areas, allows students to work with “internationally known NIST scientists, to expose them to cutting-edge research and promote the pursuit of graduate degrees in science and engineering.” Fellowships are open to U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Some funding for the program is provided by the NSF Research Experience for Undergraduates program.

Additional information is available in the December 30 [Federal Register](#).

OTHER

ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES RELEASES NEW HUMANITIES INDICATORS REPORT

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences on January 7 released the prototype of its [Humanities Indicators](#) project, designed to provide comprehensive data and analysis over time about humanities education, employment, and research. The project is modeled after the Science and Engineering Indicators published biennially by the National Science Board.

Data provided in the Humanities Indicator prototype were compiled from existing sources, but next year’s report will include original data collected by the Academy in collaboration with several learned societies.

The data are organized into five major parts: primary and secondary education in the humanities, undergraduate and graduate education in the humanities, the humanities workforce, humanities funding and research, and humanities in America.

CNSF INVITES PARTICIPATION IN MARCH 24 EXHIBITION AND RECEPTION

The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) has [announced](#) that it will host its 15th annual exhibition and reception on Tuesday, March 24, 2009, on Capitol Hill. CNSF members interested in exhibiting at the event are urged to register for an exhibit booth no later than January 28; members also are encouraged to become donors or cosponsors.

The annual event, which this year will be held March 24 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in B338-340 Rayburn House Office Building, provides an opportunity for colleges and universities to showcase research and education projects funded by the National Science Foundation to Members of Congress, congressional staff, and others.

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