



AAU WEEKLY WRAP-UP

ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES
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CONGRESSIONAL SCHEDULE *NEW*

The House and Senate have been in recess this week for the Memorial Day holiday.

The Senate will return to session on Monday, June 1. Its schedule for the week includes consideration of the Railroad Antitrust Enforcement Act (S. 146) and a vote on the confirmation of Regina McCarthy as assistant administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency. CongressDaily reports that the Senate also is expected to consider legislation granting the Federal Drug Administration power to regulate tobacco (S. 982).

The House will return to session on Tuesday, June 2, to focus on authorization legislation for the Transportation Security Administration. Additional details of the House schedule had not been announced at this writing.

If a conference agreement is reached on the FY09 war supplemental appropriations bill (H.R. 2346), both chambers may consider that legislation next week.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

AAU COMMENTS ON DRAFT NIH STEM CELL GUIDELINES

AAU President Robert M. Berdahl on May 26 submitted AAU's [comments](#) on proposed guidelines for human embryonic stem cell research funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The AAU letter praises President Obama's March 9, 2009 Executive Order removing Bush Administration constraints on stem cell research, commends NIH for issuing draft guidelines for such research promptly, and expresses support of the proposed guidelines.

The letter also raises several concerns, including the following:

- It recommends that stem cell lines derived before August 9, 2001, that are currently eligible for NIH funding not be subjected to retroactive consent and approval processes and that they remain eligible for federal funding.
- It recommends that stem cell lines derived under appropriate guidelines after August 9, 2001, and before the effective date of the new regulations also not be subjected to retroactive consent and approval processes and that they be made eligible for federal funding going forward.
- It expresses disappointment that the proposed guidelines unnecessarily limit federal support to research on cell lines derived from surplus *in vitro fertilization* embryos, making lines derived by other methods—such as somatic cell nuclear transfer—ineligible for federal funding.
- It recommends that NIH rely on institutional assurances and material transfer agreements in regulating the research use and sharing of cell lines, and that review and approval by institutional review boards of such lines or transfers not be required.

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SOLICITS IDEAS ON HIGHER EDUCATION
ISSUES, INCLUDING STUDENT PREPARATION, ACCESS, PERSISTENCE**
NEW

The Department of Education, as a supplement to the negotiated rulemaking process following last year's reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, has [announced](#) that it will hold three public hearings and related forums around the country to gather public suggestions on several higher education issues. These include ways the Department could better use its student aid communications and processes to improve college preparation and access, as well as ways the agency could better use federal higher education programs to improve student persistence and degree attainment.

Specifically, the Department plans to establish one or more new negotiated rulemaking committees that would focus on regulations governing foreign schools and regulations that address the program integrity of federal Title IV student aid programs. As part of that effort, officials will hold public meetings next month in Denver, Colorado; Little Rock, Arkansas; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to hear from interested parties about these issues and to take suggestions for other issues the rulemaking committees might consider.

Following each meeting, Department officials will hold public forums to discuss ideas for improving the student aid application process (including Department communications) and improving college access, persistence, and completion. Additional details are available on the department's [website](#).

AAU institutions are encouraged to participate in these public meetings and forums, as the Department is interested in new ideas. AAU staff will continue to monitor and engage in this effort.

OTHER

**REP. DONNA EDWARDS TO HEADLINE JUNE 9 SCIENCE COALITION
BREAKFAST**

The Science Coalition's Headliner Breakfast on Tuesday, June 9, will feature Rep. Donna Edwards (D-MD), vice chair of the Space Subcommittee of the House Science and Technology Committee. Members of the CFR are encouraged to attend the breakfast session, which will begin at 8:30 a.m. EDT at Tortilla Coast, 400 First Street, SE, in Washington, D.C.

Those wishing to attend the breakfast are asked to RSVP by Tuesday, June 2 to Walker Dimmig at wdimmig@qga.com.

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