

EDUCATION



HIGHER EDUCATION ACT. The biggest issue on the education agenda is the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA). There is bipartisan interest in addressing the issues of the cost of higher education, student loan debt levels, the need for more financial counseling for students who are borrowing, and simplification of the income-driven repayment plans. However, there has yet to be bipartisan consensus on solutions on how to address these issues.

The House Education & Workforce Committee reported the PROSPER Act in December to reauthorize HEA, which was last reauthorized in 2008. The bill was reported out of committee on a party-line vote. To address the rising growth in tuition rates, the bill imposes new loan limits that particularly impact graduate programs. There are a number of other controversial provisions in the bill, including rolling back the gainful employment regulations for for-profit schools put in place by the Obama Administration and removing the so-called 90-10 requirement on those schools. The House is expected to pass this bill sometime in the first quarter of 2018.

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee is likely to take a more bipartisan approach to HEA Reauthorization. Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray have a proven track record of forging bipartisan consensus and the expectation is they will try to do so again with HEA. Work on HEA is expected to begin at the committee level in the first quarter of 2018.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION. The House also passed a bipartisan bill to improve the federal career and technical education (CTE) programs in September. The bill reforms the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, which for more than 30 years, has provided federal support for state and local career and technical education. The bill makes it easier for state and local governments to access these funds and provides more flexibility in how the funds are administered. Even though there is broad bipartisan support for the bill, as it passed in the House on a vote of 405 to 5, it is not expected that the CTE bill will jump ahead of HEA in the Senate.

FOR QUESTIONS OR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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