

Federal Policy and Advocacy Update

CONGRESSIONAL UPDATE

The 118th United States Congress convened on January 3rd, with Republicans taking control of the House of Representatives after picking up nine additional seats during the November 2022 Midterm Election. Democrats expanded their power in the Senate by gaining one additional seat. Democrats re-elected Chuck Schumer (D-NY) as Senate Majority Leader and as of this writing, Republicans have not voted on a new Speaker of the House, although Representative Kevin McCarthy (D-CA) remains a top favorite among the Republican party.

While the House and Senate have not officially announced committee assignments, Representative Virginia Foxx (R-NC) is favored to take over as chair of the House Education and Labor (HELP) committee. In late November, a group of Republicans on the HELP committee sent a letter to the Republican Steering committee in support of Representative Foxx's pursuit of a waiver to lead the committee in the next Congress. Foxx, who chaired the committee between 2017 and 2019 and served as the ranking member when Democrats were in power, is facing a challenge from Representative Tim Walberg (R-MI), who also has pledged greater oversight of President Biden's administrative actions on student loans and Title IX. Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) is expected to take over as chair of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, replacing current chair Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) who is likely to become chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

ADMINISTRATION UPDATE

In December 2022, the United States (U.S.) Supreme Court announced that it will consider two cases on the legality of the Biden Administration's student loan forgiveness program. The first suit was filed by six Republican-led states that claim the program is illegal because it was not authorized by Congress and, among other impacts, will negatively affect state tax revenues. The second suit stems from a Texas judge's ruling that the President's program is unconstitutional because it lacks legislative authority; further, the U.S. Department of Education did not follow appropriate rulemaking procedures that allow for public comment on proposed actions. This suit was filed by the Job Creators Network on behalf of two student loan borrowers who do not meet the program's requirements for loan forgiveness. The cases will be heard during the February 2023 session, meaning a decision could be rendered as early as June.

FEDERAL ADVOCACY ENGAGEMENT 2023

In February, the Chancellor's Office and Board of Governors leadership will meet with Members of Congress to elevate the California Community Colleges federal policy priorities. These advocacy meetings are an annual effort that coincide with the National Legislative Summit (NLS) in Washington, DC and done in partnership with the Foundation for California Community Colleges and the Community College League of California, and are joined by faculty, students and administrators.

Our delegation will advocate for the strengthening of federal financial aid programs, expanding protections for undocumented students, and increasing funding for federal workforce programs, among other priorities. These events are expected to take place in person for the first time since February 2020, we continue to monitor COVID-19 guidelines and advisories to ensure the health and safety of all participants.