FY 2015 Appropriations

On Wednesday September 17, the House passed a continuing resolution (CR) to fund the government at current levels from September 30—when FY 2014 ends—through December 11. The CR passed 273-156, and was paired with a resolution to train and equip Syrian rebels. The Senate passed the house version late Thursday by a vote 78-22, with the bill awaiting President Obama’s signature, well ahead of the end-of-the-month deadline to prevent a government shutdown.


While this is not the official Subcommittee bill, the legislation outlines the House Democrats’ priorities. Highlights include:

- **National Institutes of Health (NIH)** — $30.632 billion for NIH, a 2.6% or $778 million increase over FY 2014 levels
- **Pell Grant Program** — maintains the discretionary portion of the maximum Pell Grant award to increase the maximum award to $5,830
- **Federal Work Study** — $1.01 billion ($35 million increase from FY 2014 levels)
- **Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants** — $748.1 million ($15 million increase from FY 2014 levels)
- **GEAR UP** — $304.6 million ($3 million increase from FY 2014 levels)
- **TRIO** — $846.7 million ($8.4 million increase from FY 2014 levels)
- **First in the World** — zeroed out. Instead they propose using that $75 million for new minority serving institutions challenge grants

“Lame Duck” Session

As Congress prepares to leave Washington until after the midterm elections in November, there’s one main item to take care of in December: averting another government shutdown. Congress will return to Washington on November 12 for orientation and leadership elections for the next Congress taking up most of the time. Of course, who controls the Senate for the next Congress could very well still be undecided, particularly given the possibility of a runoff in the Louisiana Senate race.

Just how much gets done during the session will depend on the outcome of the elections, but there will
be a rather hefty to-do list, including processing nominations, government funding bill, the Syria crisis and reauthorization of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act. As it stands, options for government funding include:

- Extend the CR for the remainder of the year. That would likely result in a small across-the-board cut to all NDD programs to keep spending within the FY 2015 cap.
- Extend the CR until early in 2015 and wait until then to finalize decisions. This likely wouldn’t happen unless the Republicans take the Senate majority.
- Enact an omnibus that contains all 12 bills, as was done in FY 2014 (highly unlikely)
- Enact a “cromnibus” that contains several individual bills (non-controversial) and extends the CR for the rest of the year for the remaining bills. This was done in FY 2013.

Committee for Education Funding Gala/Legislative Conference

On Wednesday September 17, the Committee for Education Funding (CEF) held their annual Gala. The honorees included Representative George Miller (D-CA), Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) and Representative Hal Rogers (R-KY).

At CEF’S Legislative Conference, Margie Omero of Purple Strategies presented a PowerPoint on the 2014 Midterm Outlook that covered the outlook for the election as well as the role of education in the election. The presentation is available here.