


**November 2, 2026**




## Appropriations

Congress is scheduled to return to Washington on Monday, November 9, following tomorrow's midterm elections, with federal funding the primary focus during the post-election lame-duck session. The current continuing resolution (CR) maintains federal funding at FY26 levels and expires on December 11. Congress has yet to complete any of the twelve FY27 appropriations bills in the Senate, while the House has passed three. The House Appropriations Committee has approved its Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education funding bill, but it has not yet advanced to a full House vote.

Lawmakers need to reach an agreement on FY27 funding before the December deadline, either through individual appropriations bills, a larger spending package, or another short-term CY extending current funding into 2027. The outcome of the midterm elections will likely influence negotiations and whether lawmakers seek to resolve funding before the end of the 119th Congress or leave them for the new Congress in January.

## U.S. Department of Labor

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) is recruiting employees from the U.S. Department of Education's (ED's) Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) to fill positions supporting adult education and workforce development programs, raising questions about the future staffing and structure of the office. Between June and September, DOL posted at least 25 positions related to adult education, including work associated with the Perkins grant

program, which provides approximately $1.4 billion annually to support career and technical education programs at high schools, community colleges, and technical colleges nationwide.

Adam Flynn, former Director of Policy, Research and Evaluation in the Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education at the Department of Education, recently joined the U.S. Department of Labor as Deputy Administrator of the Office of Workforce Investment within the Employment and Training Administration. In this new role he will "oversee the Division of Youth Services and the Division of Adult Services and Governance, helping expand workforce opportunities and strengthen pathways to economic success for youth and adults across the country."

According to former ED employees, several OCTAE staff members have been encouraged to apply for the new positions at DOL. However, some of the positions reportedly pay less than current OCTAE salaries, raising questions about whether DOL intends to bring over the entire office or hire only select employees. OCTAE's responsibilities have technically been transferred to DOL through an interagency agreement as part of the Administration's efforts to dismantle ED, but a permanent transfer of the office requires congressional approval. The recruitment effort has also raised concerns among federal employee representatives about the legality and implications of transferring personnel between agencies. At the same time, some Democratic lawmakers have expressed openness to greater coordination between the two agencies on career and technical education, suggesting there may be bipartisan interest in aspects of the proposed restructuring.

## U.S. Department of Education

On Friday, October 30, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) published its final rule to reform the college accreditation system, completing the process ahead of the November 1 deadline established under the Higher Education Act. The rule, which takes effect July 1, 2027, is designed to increase competition among accrediting agencies, strengthen accountability for student outcomes, and reduce regulatory burdens on colleges and universities.

The final rule removes barriers to establishing new accrediting agencies and makes it easier for institutions to change accreditors or work with multiple agencies. It also strengthens expectations for evaluating student achievement, including course completion, licensure pass rates, and economic returns, while requiring accreditors to consider institutional policies related to academic freedom and intellectual diversity. The rule is a key component of the Trump Administration's efforts to reform higher education oversight and address what it views as ideological bias within colleges and universities.

Click here to access the final rule in the Federal Register.

## Education Secretary Speaking Tour

On Wednesday, October 28, U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon gave the fourth and final speech in her "The Next 250: American Education" series at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. Addressing students, educators, and local leaders, McMahon outlined the Administration's efforts to restore public confidence in higher education and advance its vision for the future of American education.

She called on colleges and universities to prioritize merit, eliminate ideological considerations in hiring and admissions, and promote intellectual diversity. She also highlighted the

Administration's higher education accountability agenda and commended Vanderbilt for its reform efforts, particularly its Declaration of First Principles, which emphasizes research, critical thinking, and aligning education and research with the national interest.

The four-part series highlighted the Administration's priorities across K-12, workforce, and higher education. Previous stops included Utah, where McMahon discussed K-12 education and federal funding priorities; Las Vegas, where she highlighted workforce development initiatives, including Workforce Pell and Registered Apprenticeships; and Tempe, Arizona, where she addressed support for historically Black colleges and universities and community colleges, as well as changes to federal student aid programs.

Click here to access the full press release.




## Initial Jobless Claims

In the week ending October 24, the advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims was 194,000, a decrease of 1,000 from the previous week's revised level. The previous week's level was revised up by 1,000 from 194,000 to 195,000. The 4-week moving average was 196,750, a decrease of 1,250 from the previous week's revised average.

Click here to access the full report.




## Mayor Gina Ortiz Jones Gives AI Takes on National TV

San Antonio Mayor Gina Ortiz Jones is featured in a new episode of a national PBS show in which participants debate the pros and cons of real AI use cases. Although the episode of "Breaking the Deadlock" features fictional scenarios, the questions posed to Jones and other participants are very real issues — and cases that Jones could encounter as mayor. In the episode, eight participants, including Jones, are tasked with making decisions in hypothetical

AI dilemmas. They address public safety, privacy, personal financial reward, transparency and more.

Click here to access the full article.

## Philadelphia Leaders Push to Connect Job Growth with Economic Mobility

Philadelphia leaders are looking to capitalize on growth in manufacturing, technology and other key industries to create better-paying jobs — while making sure residents have the skills to fill them. The region has major economic assets, from research institutions to shipbuilding and defense. But employers need skilled workers, and barriers to training and transportation can put those opportunities out of reach for residents. Axios' Mike D'Onofrio and Emily Peck moderated conversations about workforce development and economic mobility with Chellie Cameron, president and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia; Cynthia F. Figueroa, president and CEO of JEVS Human Services; and Philadelphia Mayor Cherelle Parker. The Oct. 27 event was sponsored by JPMorgan Chase.

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## A National Skilled-Trades Strategy Can’t Replace Employer Action

America doesn’t simply need more skilled-trades training programs. It needs a better system for turning potential workers into skilled employees with sustainable careers. In a recent Washington Post opinion essay, Ford CEO Jim Farley and author Walter Isaacson called for a national strategy to strengthen America’s skilled-trades workforce. National coordination can help, but it cannot replace employers’ responsibility to build the systems that recruit, develop, redeploy and retain skilled talent.

Click here to access the full article.

## New York Aims to Train up to 40,000 Residents for AI-Ready Jobs

New York is pouring $10 million into a workforce training and job placement initiative aimed at placing residents in careers that leverage artificial intelligence, state officials announced last week. More than $3 million of that total will support the development of the AI Jobs Institute, a hub where residents will undergo training and courses to develop AI skills. Businesses can also receive assistance adopting AI services through the institution, state officials said in an announcement.

Click here to access the full article.

## As AI Skills Keep Changing, Some Colleges Bet on Learning on the Job

Artificial intelligence is evolving so quickly that employers are still figuring out what skills they’ll need from their workers in even just the next few years. That creates a challenge for colleges trying to prepare students for jobs that may look very different by the time they graduate. It also makes a compelling case for apprenticeships and longer internships, which

allow students to learn on the job, gaining practical experience with emerging technologies at the same time as employers experiment with them.

Click here to access the full article.

## Are We Sending People False Signals About Their Futures?

After high school, Molly decided to work for a few years before committing to a specific path. Encouraged by her parents, she eventually enrolled in a six-month software coding bootcamp that promised a direct route into a growing field. But by the time she completed the program, the market had shifted. Many employers did not recognize the credential as proof she could do the job, while AI-assisted coding tools were beginning to take on some of the work traditionally handled by entry-level developers.

Click here to access the full article.




## New from U.S. Department of Education

## U.S. Department of Education Approves Ohio's Returning Education to the States Waiver

On Friday, October 30, the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) announced another victory for state-driven leadership and innovation by approving Ohio's Returning Education to the States (RES) Waiver. This approval grants the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW) new flexibilities to use federal dollars more effectively on state priorities and improving student outcomes. Ohio is the eighth state to receive a RES waiver, joining Iowa, Louisiana, Indiana, Vermont, Arkansas, South Dakota, and Mississippi.

Click here to access the full press release.

## New from National Skills Coalition

## The Economy is on the Ballot - and Voters are Worried about More than Prices

With the midterm elections just a week away, the economy is once again on the ballot. As gas, groceries, electricity, and rent have become more expensive, the cost of living is a top concern for voters across political parties. But there's an economic anxiety running deeper than the immediate pain of high prices. A recent Ipsos/Reuters poll found that while 74% of voters

think their own cost of living is heading in the wrong direction, 59% don't believe their families have a good chance of improving their standard of living.

Click here to access the full article.




## Fact of the Week

Last week, Associated Builders and Contractors released a state-by-state analysis of U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data that showed all 50 states had a construction unemployment rate below 10% and all but three states (Alaska, Minnesota, and North Dakota) had a rate below 6%.

Click here to access the full article.

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