

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

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Strengthening Cities Through
Workforce Development



THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

April 7, 2025



Appropriations/Budget

On Saturday, April 5, the Senate Republicans took a key procedural step to advance President Donald Trump's legislative agenda, which includes major tax cuts and increased border security funding, and adopted its budget blueprint in a vote of 51-48. Senators Rand Paul (KY) and Susan Collins (ME) were the only two GOP senators to oppose the resolution while every senate democrat voted against it. The resolution, which only needed a simple majority of votes to pass, now heads to the House for further consideration. If the proposal passes the House, it will unlock the next step in the reconciliation process and allow committees to bypass a filibuster and begin drafting legislation. House Republican leaders are urging their members to support the Senate's version of the budget resolution.

On Saturday, House Speaker Mike Johnson (LA), Majority Leader Steve Scalise (LA), Majority Whip Tom Emmer (MN), and Conference Chair Lisa McClain (MI) sent a "Dear Colleague" letter to members urging them to support the proposal. GOP leaders are hoping to approve the Senate's version in the House before the upcoming Easter recess beginning on April 10 — aiming to pass final legislation by Memorial Day. Some GOP members remain opposed, including House Freedom Caucus Chair Andy Harris (MD), who says the Senate's \$4 billion in proposed cuts falls short of the House's \$1.5 to \$2 trillion target. Harris and others in opposition have called for specific plans for spending and deficit reduction before supporting the measure.

The Senate resolution would permanently extend the 2017 GOP tax law and add up to \$1.5 trillion in new tax cuts, boost defense and border spending by \$325 billion, and raise the debt ceiling by \$5 trillion. It uses a “current policy baseline” that assumes tax provisions will be extended — a method backed by Senate Budget Chair Lindsey Graham (SC) but criticized by Democrats. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates this approach could add \$4 trillion to the deficit over the next decade.

The House version, passed in February, differs in that it would increase the deficit by up to \$4.5 trillion through tax changes, provide \$300 billion for defense and immigration, and require at least \$2 trillion in spending cuts or reduce the size of the tax cuts. It raises the debt ceiling by \$4 trillion.

The House is expected to take up the Senate resolution this week.

[Click here](#) to access the budget framework

[Click here](#) to access the Dear Colleague letter.

[Click here](#) for an analysis of the Bicameral Budget Plan.

Department of Labor Secretary Tour

On Saturday, April 5, U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer kicked off a national “America at Work” listening tour in Scranton, Pennsylvania, which is intended to gather input from workers, union members, employers, and community leaders to inform federal labor policy updates. On the tour Chavez-DeRemer could face tough questions from workers and union leaders as President Trump’s recent tariffs impact markets and America’s overall economic outlook which clash with her pro-worker message.

In her remarks, Chavez-DeRemer emphasized the importance of hearing directly from the workforce to understand their concerns and priorities. She stated that the information gathered would help guide recommendations to the president and support workforce and economic development. The Department is still in the process of scheduling additional stops on the tour as part of broader efforts to modernize the agency’s operations alongside a government-wide restructuring. The visit coincides with the release of stronger- than-expected March job numbers, with the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reporting an increase of 228,000 jobs — surpassing projections of around 140,000. Despite the positive labor data, markets continued to decline in response to ongoing trade tensions and tariff policies.

Department of Labor Deferred Resignation Program

On Thursday, April 4, U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer informed employees in four DOL offices that the agency is reopening the Deferred Resignation Program and Voluntary Early Retirement Authority as part of the Trump administration’s federal workforce downsizing efforts. The offers, available through April 14, apply to staff in the International Labor Affairs Bureau, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), Women’s Bureau, and Office of Public Affairs. The move aligns with President Trump’s push to significantly reduce the federal workforce, led by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) under Tesla CEO Elon Musk. Civil servants have faced repeated

rounds of reductions in force (RIF) firings and rehiring due to legal challenges and leadership reversals. The OFCCP is set to lose 90% of its staff following a January executive order gutting its authority, while other offices have seen probationary employees terminated. Chavez-DeRemer stated her goal is to provide “as many options and as much information as possible” to support informed career decisions. Additional guidance and plans for broader reductions across the agency are expected in the coming weeks.

Department of Education Secretary

On Wednesday, April 2, U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon met with a group of House Democrats to discuss her plans for the Department of Education. Lawmakers raised concerns about potential reorganization efforts, including the consolidation of federal grants and the transfer of certain functions to other agencies. They sought clarification on how statutory obligations, such as civil rights enforcement and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), would be maintained. McMahon assured them that any structural changes would comply with legal requirements. She emphasized the importance of local decision-making in education and reaffirmed that federal funding would continue. However, lawmakers remained concerned about potential reductions to the agency and the broader impact on students and schools. The discussion also addressed recent layoffs, the administration of student aid, and the status of remaining pandemic relief funds. Congressman Mark Takano (CA), who organized the meeting, noted that McMahon has agreed to additional discussions with other House Democrats to further address their concerns.

U.S. Department of Education Rulemaking

On Thursday, April 3, the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Postsecondary Education announced plans for negotiated rulemaking on Title IV programs under the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965. The Department is seeking public input on streamlining higher education regulations, enhancing federal aid programs, and improving the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, the Pay As You Earn (PAYE) plan, and the Income-Contingent Repayment (ICR) plan. As required by the HEA, the Department will gather public feedback before drafting regulations. The Department will host two public hearings — an in-person one on Tuesday, April 29 and a virtual public hearing will be held on Thursday, May 1. The Department will accept written comments that must be submitted through the Federal eRulemaking Portal. The deadline for public comment is 30 days after publication in the Federal Register.

[Click here](#) to access the full press release with more information on how to submit comments.

House Education and Workforce Committee

On Tuesday, April 1, House Education and Workforce Committee Ranking Member Bobby Scott (VA) convened civil rights leaders to discuss the implications of a recent executive order (EO) affecting the U.S. Department of Education and diversity-related initiatives. Scott raised concerns about the EO’s impact on student civil rights, emphasizing the agency’s role in distributing aid through Title I and Pell Grants and enforcing civil rights laws. He also noted historical parallels in debates over states’ rights. The discussion included Representatives Jahana Hayes (CT) and Glenn Ivey (MD), along with representatives from the NAACP Legal

Defense Fund and the ACLU. Panelists urged Congress to examine the effects of these policy changes, increase public awareness, and take legislative action.

Senior Policy Counsel and Co-Manager of the Equal Protection Initiative for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund Amalea Smirniotopoulos stressed that many Americans are unaware of how policy shifts could impact diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Congresswoman Hayes highlighted concerns from constituents who feel disconnected from the impact of legal and legislative actions. Panelists encouraged lawmakers to continue advocating for affected programs, documenting policy developments, and crafting legislation to support future protections, recognizing that these efforts require sustained commitment over time.

[Click here](#) to read a press release of the event.

Department of Labor Nominee

President Donald Trump has nominated former Congressman Anthony D’Esposito to serve as the U.S. Department of Labor’s (DOL’s) inspector general. D’Esposito, a former New York City police detective, previously served one term in Congress before losing reelection in November. The inspector general role, responsible for oversight and accountability within the department, became vacant after Trump dismissed Larry Turner, along with several other inspectors general, in January. Trump also tapped attorney Jonathan Berry to lead DOL’s Solicitor’s Office. Berry, a contributor to the Project 2025 policy blueprint, has advocated for significant labor policy changes, including overhauling civil rights law interpretations and rolling back diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. He has also called for eliminating the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), which enforces anti-discrimination rules for federal contractors. OFCCP has already proposed reducing staff by 90%.

Additionally, Trump nominated Andrew Rogers, currently acting general counsel at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, to lead the Wage and Hour Division, which enforces federal pay and labor laws. Financial adviser David Castillo was selected to serve as the DOL’s chief financial officer. Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer is expected to play a key role in shaping the Department’s policy agenda, while Berry’s appointment signals alignment with conservative-led labor policy reforms.

Building Youth Workforce Skills Act

On Wednesday, March 26, Congressmen Nathaniel Moran (TX) and Lloyd Smucker (PA) reintroduced the Building Youth Workforce Skills Act, which seeks to expand workforce training opportunities for eligible in-school youth. The bill would allow local workforce development boards to use existing Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program funds to provide Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to in-school youth, who are currently ineligible under existing law. This legislation would extend access to in-school youth, creating additional pathways to skills training without increasing overall WIOA spending.

[Click here](#) to access the full press release on the bill.

Unemployment Rate

On Friday, April 4, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released the March unemployment report, which showed stronger than expected job growth last month. Nonfarm payrolls increased by 228,000, up from the downwardly revised gains of 117,000 in February and better than the estimated 140,000 for March. The unemployment rate inched up to 4.2% from 4.1%. Despite the growth in March, economic uncertainties still loom due to President Trump's new tariffs announced last week, which impose a 10% minimum tax on most imports.

[Click here](#) to access the full jobs report.

[Click here](#) to read Secretary Chavez-DeRemer's statement on the March jobs report.



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