



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

March 10, 2025

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Washington Update

Appropriations

On Saturday, March 8, House Republicans released a seven-month continuing resolution (CR) that would increase spending by \$6 billion for deportations, veterans' health care, and the military, while cutting \$13 billion from non-defense programs. The measure, crafted by Speaker Mike Johnson along with the White House, aligns with President Trump's priorities and escalates the confrontation with Democrats ahead of the Friday government shutdown deadline. Trump has urged Republicans to support the bill, and House Democratic leaders have already opposed it, criticizing the GOP's shift from bipartisan negotiations to a patch that would give Trump more control over federal spending.

The bill includes a \$6 billion increase in defense spending and fulfills a request for additional ICE funding for deportations. It also freezes over \$20 billion in special IRS funding. Meanwhile the proposed cuts impact bipartisan projects, including \$40 million for programs helping children and families, \$890 million for health care facilities, \$116 million in Small Business Administration funding, and \$107 million in cuts to workforce development programs, with funding for emergency preparedness and clean water projects also on the

chopping block. The proposal also calls for \$202,344,000 cuts to the Department of Education, which appears to be directed at local programs. The package omits a provision to reverse Medicare doctor pay cuts, disappointing physician groups; excludes additional disaster aid for recent wildfires and hurricanes; and does not address the upcoming debt ceiling deadline.

House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro (CT) criticized the CR, expressing concerns that it provides unchecked flexibility for billionaires and President Trump to reallocate funds, potentially harming American families and businesses. DeLauro argued that the bill would negatively impact veterans, seniors, working people, and small businesses by increasing housing costs, reducing health care quality at the VA, and cutting essential programs like Social Security and Army Corps of Engineers construction projects. She also highlighted the potential for increased wait times and backlogs at the Social Security Administration due to staffing cuts, and raised concerns about SpaceX's involvement in government contracts, which she believes could bypass transparency and congressional oversight.

Republican leaders aim to pass the bill with only GOP votes by Tuesday and force Senate Democrats to either back the plan or face a government shutdown.

[Click here](#) to access the full text of the bill.

[Click here](#) to see the Republican press release and section-by-section summary of the bill.

[Click here](#) to see the Democratic fact sheet on the CR.

Department of Labor Nominees

On Thursday, March 6, the Senate voted 66-30 to end debate on Lori Chavez-DeRemer's nomination for Secretary of the Department of Labor (DOL), paving the way for a final confirmation vote. Chavez-DeRemer, a former GOP representative, advanced from the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee with bipartisan support and has backing from several labor unions. Although she previously co-sponsored the PRO Act, she distanced herself from it during her confirmation hearing to ease concerns from business-friendly Republicans.

Earlier that day, the Senate HELP Committee voted 12-11 along party lines to advance Keith Sonderling's nomination for Deputy Secretary of Labor. A floor vote could take place as soon as this week. Sonderling previously served as acting administrator of the Wage and Hour Division during Trump's first term. If confirmed, Chavez-DeRemer and Sonderling are expected to roll back Biden-era regulations and reduce the DOL workforce under a White House directive.

Amid these leadership changes, DOL is reinstating all probationary employees laid off last month following legal challenges and public backlash against the Trump administration's government reduction efforts. AFGE Local 12 informed members that terminated workers would return to their jobs on Monday, March 10, with official notifications forthcoming. While the exact number of affected employees remains unclear, DOL's cuts have been less severe than those at other agencies. Probationary employees — typically in their first year or two— lack full civil-service protections. However, the reinstatement may be temporary, as the Trump administration is preparing for additional mass layoffs, known as "reductions in force." This development coincides with the General Services Administration's (GSA's) plan to sell DOL headquarters and other federal properties, raising further uncertainty about the department's long-term workforce stability.

The Senate is set to meet today at 3:00 pm (ET) to hold a floor vote on Chavez-DeRemer's nomination to lead the Department of Labor.

Department of Education Secretary

After her Senate confirmation on Monday, March 3, Linda McMahon's first act as Education Secretary was to email staff, emphasizing the need to eliminate bureaucratic bloat quickly and responsibly. She highlighted three core priorities, including the belief that postsecondary education should lead to well-paying careers aligned with workforce needs. Critics argue that the \$881 million cut to the Department's Institute of Education Sciences (IES) will undermine efforts to evaluate education programs and their alignment with labor market demands. Education researchers from the Brookings Institution emphasized that understanding and solving problems requires reliable data, which these cuts threaten. While acknowledging that some IES cuts were poorly executed, American Enterprise Institute's (AEI's) Rick Hess argued in *Education Next* that much of the eliminated research was of questionable value and suggested that the majority of the cuts were justified.

[Click here](#) to read the Department of Education press release on the confirmation.

House Education and Workforce Committee Hearing

On Wednesday, March 5, the House Education and Workforce Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development held its first hearing of the 119th Congress to examine the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) legislation. Witnesses for the hearing, "Strengthening WIOA: Improving Outcomes for America's Workforce," included President of the Board of Directors for National Youth Employment Coalition Robert Sainz; President and Chief Executive Officer of Strada Education Foundation Dr. Stephen Moret; Senior Vice President of Workforce and Careers at Ivy Tech Community College Molly Dodge; and Director of the Office of Education and Workforce Transformation for the Office of the Governor of Alabama Nicholas J. Moore.

In his opening remarks, Subcommittee Chairman Burgess Owens (UT) emphasized the

importance of reforming WIOA to address the gap between job openings and unemployed individuals. Witnesses and lawmakers discussed reducing bureaucratic complexity and improving efficiency within the workforce system. Witness Nicholas Moore highlighted the need to integrate policy, technology, and process to streamline services, particularly for veterans and other jobseekers and advocated for a more efficient system where individuals could access comprehensive support from a single point of contact. Dr. Moret emphasized the need for better data on employment outcomes to help workforce boards make informed decisions, pointing out that current performance data is often incomplete, making it difficult for jobseekers to select effective programs. Witnesses agreed that improving access to high-quality information helps learners make better decisions about their career pathways. The hearing also addressed the value of short-term certificates in providing entry-level job opportunities.

[Click here](#) to access the recording of the hearing.

Protecting the Right to Organize Act

On Wednesday, March 5, a bipartisan group of House and Senate Members reintroduced the Richard L. Trumka Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act (HR 20), which aims to expand protections for workers' rights to unionize and bargain collectively for wages, benefits, and workplace safety. The House bill was introduced by House Education and Workforce Committee Ranking Member Bobby Scott (VA), House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries (NY), and Congressman Brian Fitzpatrick (PA) while the the Senate was introduced by Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee Ranking Member Bernie Sanders (VT).

Supporters of the bill argue it addresses income inequality, declining union membership, and would strengthen federal labor protections by authorizing penalties for employers who violate workers' rights, facilitating initial collective bargaining agreements, and clarifying the classification of employees versus independent contractors. It also includes measures to protect workers from retaliation, allows unions to collect "fair share" fees, and provides workers with the right to pursue private legal action for labor violations. Additionally, it seeks to ensure fair union elections by limiting employer influence, prohibiting mandatory anti-union meetings, and requiring greater employer transparency.

Advocates for the bill assert that it is necessary to protect workers' ability to organize and address perceived imbalances in the labor market. AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler described current labor laws as inadequate, arguing they allow corporations to undermine union efforts. Supporters urge Congress to advance the legislation, while opponents express concerns about the potential impact on businesses and the broader economy.

[Click here](#) for the bill text of the bill.

[Click here](#) for a fact sheet on the bill.

[Click here](#) for a section-by-section summary of the bill.

Pell Grant

According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the Pell Grant program is projected to face a \$2.7 billion shortfall for the next fiscal year. While funds won't need to be addressed until planning for FY26, some policy experts urge early action. Michele Zampini, senior director of college affordability at The Institute for College Access & Success, suggested that addressing the shortfall through the reconciliation process could prevent delays and ensure funding stability.

[Click here](#) to access the CBO projections document.

Unemployment Rate

On Friday, March 7, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released the February jobs report, which showed nonfarm payrolls increased by 151,000 – better than the downwardly revised 125,000 in January but less than the 170,000 consensus forecast. The unemployment rate edged higher to 4.1%. Though the federal workforce reductions won't be felt fully until coming months, the efforts are beginning to show. A total of 10,000 federal jobs were lost over the month but those losses were countered by hiring in healthcare, financial activities, transportation and warehousing, and social assistance. Healthcare led the way in job creation, adding 52,000 jobs.

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

New from DOL/ETA

TEN: Announcing UI Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) Program Outcome Payments for FY24

On Tuesday, March 4, th U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) released the Training and Employment Notice (TEN) *Announcing Unemployment Insurance (UI) Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments (RESEA) Program Outcome Payments for FY24* to announce RESEA outcome payments for FY 2024, as required by Section 306(f)(2) of the Social Security Act (SSA).

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

Initial Jobless Claims

In the week ending March 1, the advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims was 221,000, a decrease of 21,000 from the previous week's unrevised level of 242,000. The 4-week moving average was 224,250, an increase of 250 from the previous week's unrevised average of 224,000. The advance seasonally adjusted insured unemployment rate was 1.2 percent for the week ending February 22, unchanged from the previous week's unrevised rate.

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

WDC in the News

Set Up for Success: Supporting Immigrant Youth Through the Workforce Development System

Like all young people, immigrant youth find themselves in a high-stakes period of life. They may be completing their education, building professional skills, and finding their first jobs—a transition to adulthood that can have a significant impact on their prospects for long-term educational and career success. With the retirement of the baby boom generation well underway, and immigration expected to be the main driver of future U.S. labor force growth, supporting young immigrants alongside their native-born peers as they make this transition is an important issue for the United States as a whole and for many states and local communities. Yet, immigrants—and especially English Learners—often fall between the cracks of the systems designed to promote young people's educational and career success. This policy brief explores efforts to serve immigrant youth in workforce development programs, with a particular focus on a program under the federal *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA) that serves young people disconnected from school or work or facing other barriers: the WIOA Youth program.

Drawing in part on interviews with the staff of local workforce development boards and workforce service providers, this brief examines the WIOA Youth program's promise and obstacles in reaching this population. It also discusses how the program illustrates promising practices and lingering challenges to serving immigrant youth in workforce development programs more broadly.

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

WIOA Reauthorization Back on Track

During a House Education and Workforce panel hearing on Wednesday, members from both parties showed that they are eager to keep the momentum going to reauthorize the nation's main workforce development legislation, which missed congressional passage in December by a hair. The opening remarks from the chair and ranking member of the Higher Education and Workforce Development Subcommittee mirrored each other in noting that the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) needs to be updated to better connect job seekers with employers and jobs. Both noted the bipartisan A Stronger Workforce for America Act (H.R. 6655), which in December was initially included in a bill to temporarily extend fiscal year 2025 funding, only to be removed at the last minute.

At Wednesday's hearing, both sides of the aisle highlighted various aspects of H.R. 6655, which included language to codify the Strengthening Community Colleges (SCC) Training Grants program. Molly Dodge, senior vice president of workforce and careers at Ivy Tech Community College — Indiana's statewide two-year college system that serves more than 200,000 students annually — told the panel it received a 2022 SCC grant that helped to modernize training for the supply chain and logistics industry and to buy new equipment.

[Click here](#) to read the full article.

As Skills-Based Hiring Grows, LinkedIn Has Yet to Find Its Place

A photo of a man on one knee surrounded by roses, holding a ring. An update of a ravaged home following the California wildfires. A political meme for the left—and one for the right. A reflection on the past year. A layoff announcement. While typical for social media sites, this rundown was not seen on Facebook, Instagram, or TikTok. It was seen—and is becoming the norm—on LinkedIn. Over the last two-plus decades, the site once viewed as a place for recruiters and a landing page to make standard job announcements has morphed into a social media site for some, a skill-building site for others, and an emerging playground for artificial intelligence.

With the future of TikTok in flux and pushback toward Meta-owned Facebook and Instagram, this could be LinkedIn's moment to shine. But people think that moment is largely passing by—in part because LinkedIn can't decide what it wants to be. In the skills-based hiring world, LinkedIn has long been seen as a white whale. It has more than 1B users spanning 200 countries and both recruiting and learning platforms, along with experiments with AI-powered job matching. But as the skills-first movement has gained traction in governors' offices and the C-suites of some of the country's largest corporations, LinkedIn doesn't seem to be pushing to be the dominant player.

[Click here](#) to read the full article.

Reports & Articles

New from New America

On Capitol Hill, Concerns Grow Over NSF Cuts Threatening Community College STEM Job Training

On February 12th, New America and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) hosted a briefing on Capitol Hill sponsored by the Congressional Community College Caucus, co-chaired by Representative Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.) and Representative Joe Courtney (D-Conn.). The briefing, titled “Turbocharging Community College Pathways to the Future of Work and the Innovation Economy,” focused on the critical role of the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF), the federal agency dedicated to STEM R&D and education, in supporting community college workforce pathways to a strong, skilled technical workforce across STEM industries – especially for industries or jobs shaped by emerging technologies, including biotechnology, artificial intelligence (AI), and quantum computing. Panelists included Shalin Jyotishi, Founder and Managing Director of the Future of Work and Innovation Economy Initiative at New America, President Janet Spriggs of Forsyth Technical Community College, and Steve Jurch, Associate Vice President of ACCT’s Center for Policy and Practice.

[Click here](#) to read the full article.

Fast Fact

According to a recent Gallup survey, rural Gen Zers are much less optimistic than those living in urban areas about landing a good job (by 19 percentage points) or being able to earn a college degree (16 points). More than three-quarters (77%) of Gen Z respondents say they would like to move to a different town, state, or country if they had the opportunity. Yet rural Gen Zers who want to move are more likely than their urban peers to want to stay closer to home.



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