

November 9, 2026



Appropriations/Midterm Elections

The Tuesday, November 3, midterm elections resulted in historic wins for Democrats as they gained control of both chambers of Congress, shifting the balance of power between the White House and Congress for the last two years of President Trump's term. The new majority will give Democrats greater influence over the congressional agenda, increased oversight of the Administration and more leverage in federal spending negotiations.

Democratic lawmakers are expected to increase scrutiny of the Administration's efforts to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education (ED), including the transfer of programs and responsibilities to other federal agencies and reductions in the department's workforce. Potential areas of oversight include the decisions behind ED's downsizing, the status of federal civil rights enforcement and the declining number of cases resolved by the Office for Civil Rights. They also plan to use the appropriations process to restrict the Administration's ability to transfer additional staff and programs to other agencies through interagency agreements, which the Administration has relied on to shift ED responsibilities without congressional approval. Senator Chris Van Hollen (MD) has said Democrats could use spending legislation to prevent federal funds from being used to further dismantle ED and potentially reverse some of the Administration's actions.

Beyond oversight, Democrats may pursue legislation on early childhood education and college affordability with the Child Care for Working Families Act, led by House Education and Workforce Committee Ranking Member Bobby Scott (VA) and Senator Patty Murray (WA), being a key priority. Despite their majorities, Democrats will require bipartisan support to overcome the Senate filibuster and President Trump retains veto authority.

With limited time remaining to complete FY27 appropriations, federal spending will be an immediate priority, with government funding set to expire Friday, December 11. Lawmakers may pursue a continuing resolution (CR) extending funding into January, when Democrats will have greater negotiating leverage under the new Congress. House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro (CT), who is expected to become chair of the committee, has pledged to prioritize domestic investments, including education and workforce development. She also plans to claw back billions of dollars Republicans provided to Border Patrol, Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Pentagon through budget reconciliation, outside the traditional appropriations process. DeLauro will work alongside Senator Patty Murray (WA), the top Democrat on the Senate Appropriations Committee, who has also challenged the Administration's efforts to exert greater control over federal spending.

Republicans will also see significant leadership and membership changes on both appropriations committees as today Senator Lisa Murkowski (AK) announced her plans to become ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Committee in the next Congress as successor to Senator Susan Collins (ME). She could side with Democrats in continuing to block White House budget director Russ Vought's efforts to put political appointees in charge of approving federal grants and preventing President Trump from moving forward any mass cancellation of federal funding next fall, two things Murkowski has previously opposed. The Senate committee has yet to advance any FY27 appropriations bills, adding to the challenges facing lawmakers as they return for the lame-duck session.

House and Senate Committee Leadership

Midterm election results have intensified a contested leadership race for the House Education and Workforce Committee, where Democrats are outlining competing priorities for the next Congress. Congressman Bobby Scott (VA), who has served as the panel's top Democrat since 2015 and previously chaired the committee, is seeking the position. He faces challenges from fellow committee members Congresswomen Suzanne Bonamici (OR) and Jahana Hayes (CT).

Bonamici has outlined a three-pronged agenda for her first 100 days if elected chair, which is focused on lowering costs, rebuilding trust with working families and holding the Trump Administration accountable. She has proposed bringing U.S. Department of Education (ED) Secretary Linda McMahon and U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Secretary Keith Sonderling before the committee to answer questions about the Administration's actions, including its efforts to dismantle the ED and transfer responsibilities to DOL. She also wants to restore the committee's subcommittee on civil rights and human services, develop a plan for universal affordable child care with the goal of passing legislation by the end of the spring, and repeal the Republican-backed federal scholarship tax credit. Her agenda would put renewed emphasis on civil rights oversight, child care affordability and the administration's restructuring of federal education and workforce responsibilities. Scott has also signaled an aggressive oversight agenda, asking McMahon and other Cabinet officials to preserve documents related to the Administration's actions. He warned that officials and employees who violate the law could face criminal penalties.

Congresswoman Virginia Foxx (NC), a longtime GOP leader on education and workforce issues and former chair of the committee, is trailing her election by 99 votes and will likely go to a recount. Foxx played a central role in shaping Workforce Pell legislation and led Republican efforts to reauthorize the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Her departure could affect the next Congress's approach to both workforce measures and the committee's Republican leadership.

Democrats are also expected to rename the panel the House Education and Labor Committee, restoring the name it held under previous Democratic majorities.

In the Upper Chamber, Senator Bernie Sanders (VT), the current ranking member of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee and its former chair, is in line to lead the panel. Sanders has made college affordability and education funding central to his agenda, including proposals to make public four-year colleges tuition-free and increase teacher pay. His leadership would also put him in a position to oversee the Administration's education policies and its efforts to scale back the Department of Education.

Department of Labor

On Monday, November 2, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced that it opened applications for its Pay-for-Performance Incentive Payments Program, offering Registered Apprenticeship sponsors direct payments of up to $6,000 per new apprentice in designated priority sectors. Eligible industries include shipbuilding, defense, information technology, telecommunications, advanced manufacturing, semiconductors and nuclear infrastructure. The funding will help employers hire and retain new apprentices, reduce barriers that limit employer participation, and fill in-demand jobs in these sectors. DOL has invested nearly $200 million in pay-for-performance Registered Apprenticeship funds. Applications are being accepted on a rolling basis until available funds are exhausted.

Click here to access the full press release and learn more about how to apply.

Unemployment Report

On Friday, November 6, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released its October jobs report, which showed the U.S. added 165,000 jobs last month, above economists' forecasts and signaling the labor market could be strengthening. The unemployment rate decreased to 4.1%, down from 4.2% the prior month. Friday's report also revised payroll gains for August and September by a combined 84,000. Job growth expanded across a range of sectors with professional and business services adding 70,000 jobs and health care adding 42,000. The report also showed that the number of Americans working part time for economic reasons jumped by 339,000 in October to 4.84 million.

Click here to access the full report.

Click here to access Secretary of Labor Keith Sonderling's press release on the October jobs report.



U.S. Department of Labor Publishes Proposed Rule Setting National Minimum Weekly Work Search Requirement for Unemployment Insurance

On Monday, November 9, the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL's) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) announced a proposed rule designed to improve the integrity and accountability of the Federal-State Unemployment Insurance Program by establishing a national minimum weekly work search standard for individuals claiming unemployment insurance benefits. Under the proposed rule, individuals claiming unemployment insurance benefits would be required to complete at least five qualifying work-search activities each week and to report those activities before payment is issued.

Click here to access the full press release.

Initial Jobless Claims

In the week ending October 31, the advance figure for seasonally adjusted initial claims was 189,000, a decrease of 6,000 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 194,750, a decrease of 2,250 from the previous week's revised average.

Click here to access the full report.



Good Jobs Metro Boston Coalition Celebrates Conclusion of Landmark Initiative

The Office of Workforce Development, in partnership with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, hosted a celebration on August 25 to mark the conclusion of the Good Jobs Metro

Boston Coalition (GJMBC) and recognize the training providers, employers, community-based organizations, and partners who made it possible. The GJMBC was a four-year initiative created to train and place 4,618 unemployed and underemployed residents in the healthcare, clean energy, and child care industries. The initiative was funded by a $23 million grant from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce. The City invested another $24 million in job training across sectors throughout the grant period.

Click here to access the full article.

Skilled Trades in Kentuckiana

Skilled trades offer competitive wages without a four-year degree. With steady demand for people to build and maintain homes and roads, and a strong manufacturing sector, the need for skilled trades workers is expected to grow. In Kentuckiana, these jobs are a major part of the regional economy. Here's a look at who works in the skilled trades, what they earn, and who will fill these roles next.

Click here to access the full article.

Cities Have a Talent Shortage. Apprenticeships Can Close It.

There are over 400,000 vacancies across state and local government (excluding teachers), with only around 155,000 hires in a typical month to fill them. This difference keeps essential services like water treatment plants and airports short-staffed while demand only grows. In Charlotte, North Carolina, that pressure pushed city leaders toward an answer municipal leaders often overlook: building their own registered apprenticeship program.

Click here to access the full article.

Helping Shipbuilders Weather a Perfect Storm

America's shipbuilding needs are growing faster than the skilled workforce required to fulfill them — and community colleges are rising to meet this challenge by scaling up short-term training programs in response to the demand. Changing demographics, an aging fleet of commercial and military boats, and rising global competition are combining to create a perfect storm that threatens national security and commerce, experts say.

Click here to access the full article.

Tech Companies Enlist Colleges to Help Them Train Data Center Workers

The artificial intelligence race has been a boon for construction workers, employing many thousands nationwide as sprawling data centers rise from the dirt.Eventually, the construction sounds will give way to a steady whir or whine emitted from giant, nondescript buildings filled with racks, servers, cables and cooling systems. Then what?

Click here to access the full article.

Voters Reject Data Centers in Local Ballot Initiatives

It was a bad election night for data centers as opponents of their development were successful in virtually all 40 ballot measures across 10 states, according to preliminary results. Voters in localities of various sizes in the Midwest, South, East and West largely voted to reject data centers being built in their jurisdictions, although some of those votes are advisory and therefore not binding on local elected officials.

Click here to access the full article.



New from U.S. Department Treasury

Treasury, IRS Announce Opportunity Zones Designations for Over 6,500 Communities Across America

On Thursday, November 5, the U.S. Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) announced the Qualified Opportunity Zone (QOZ) designations for all 50 states, territories, and the District of Columbia. Under President Trump's Working Families Tax Cuts, the Opportunity Zone tax incentive was permanently renewed, enhanced incentives for investment in eligible rural communities were added, and a process was established for redesignating zones every ten years. The new QOZ designations will become effective on January 1, 2027, and retain this designation for ten years.

Click here to access the full article.

New from Urban Institute

How to Build Stronger Pathways from School to Work and Opportunity

A recent American Academy of Arts and Sciences (Academy) report documents American students' struggles navigating education and workforce systems. Traditionally, education in the US has focused on preparing people to enter stable careers, but today's workers may change jobs more frequently and need lifelong learning to adapt to economic and technological changes. In the face of these challenges, the Academy report offers a strong framework for ensuring all learners can thrive in education, work, and life after high school.

Click here to access the full article.

New from Brookings

Defining and Strengthening the Build Environment Workforce

The modern world relies on a range of physical, human-made assets and systems that undergird daily life and make up the built environment. Spanning highways and railways, pipes and power plants, and homes and businesses, the built environment is expansive and foundational to the country's economy. In turn, these structures rely on an appropriately educated and skilled workforce to design, build, and maintain them.

Click here to access the full article.

New from Bipartisan Policy Center

Webinar - Aging in America: Supporting Family Caregivers and Direct Care Workers

On Tuesday, December 1, from 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. EST, the Bipartisan Policy Center will host a panel discussion on innovative approaches to strengthening support for caregivers. Panelists will examine key challenges, share promising practices, and explore policy solutions to grow the direct care workforce and support family caregivers. This panel is the third in a three-part webinar series that kicks off BPC's Aging of America Initiative.

Click here to register for the webinar.

New from MDRC

What Works in Sector Training Programs

Sector training programs serve adults with low incomes and train them for occupations in industries with strong local demand and room for advancement. Early research found that some of these programs meaningfully improved participants' earnings, and significant public and philanthropic investment followed. As evidence has grown since that initial research, it has become clear that not all sector programs perform equally well: Some help participants earn meaningfully more money, while others may help people earn credentials and even get initial jobs in the target industry, but do not actually help them earn more and thus improve their economic situations.

Click here to access the full article.



Fact of the Week

A June 2026 Software Finder survey of 1,006 U.S. employees found that 69% said being available after hours has not meaningfully improved their careers. Just 8% credit it with a promotion, and 12% with a raise or bonus.

Click here to access an article on the survey.

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