NEWS SUMMARY

On Thursday, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and the Department of Justice made the first appointments to a new organization dedicated to identifying and fostering development and adoption of standards and guidelines for the nation’s forensic science community. Among the experts named to the Forensic Science Standards Board is Anil Jain, distinguished professor in Computer Science & Engineering at MSU.

Members of Congress continue to debated FY15 appropriations for the Departments of State, Energy and Homeland Security. The annual appropriations process is expected to take its course over the rest of the year. Congressional hearings this week include:

- **June 23** Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Subcommittee on Financial and Contracting Oversight panel discussion entitled “Campus Sexual Assault: The Administrative Process and the Criminal Justice System;”
- **June 24** Senate Finance Committee hearing entitled “Less Student Debt from the Start: What Role Should the Tax System Play?”
- **June 25** Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Policy hearing on recent graduates and the economy; and
- **June 26** Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee hearing entitled “Sexual Assault on Campus: Working to Ensure Student Safety.”

On Monday, the White House held a [summit on working families](#). Among the initiatives outlined were the following.

- **Federal Science Agencies Leading Efforts to Increase Women in STEM Research Careers:** The Department of Energy (DOE) will announce new partnerships with 100kin10 and US2020 to expand their Women @ Energy series profiling women in Federal STEM careers to inspire the next generation of energy scientists and engineers. The National Science Foundation (NSF) will implement nearly a year ahead of schedule cost allowance policies for childcare at professional conferences that lesson the challenges for working families.
- **Mobilizing Colleges to Improve College Access and Success for Underserved Students:** College and Universities have launched new programs, scholarships, and outreach, in
response to the President and First Lady’s call at the White House College Opportunity event in January 2014, to expand STEM college completion for more underserved students, including broadening achievement to women and minorities in STEM fields in which they are under-represented.

The White House has submitted to Congress a request for supplemental war funds for Fiscal Year 2015. It includes $58.6 billion for DoD and $7.3 billion for the State Department.

President Obama has nominated the following individuals to his Administration:
•  John Leslie, Jr., Chairman of Weber Shandwick, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the African Development Foundation (and, upon appointment, to be designated Chairperson);
•  Donald Pereira, Chief of the Section of Fisheries at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, to be a Commissioner of the U.S. Section of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission; and
•  Douglas Stang, Assistant Director for Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, to be a Commissioner of the U.S. Section of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission.

NEWS ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Table of Contents

AGRICULTURE
•  AGRICULTURE RESEARCH BOARD FACES FULL SLATE OF ISSUES
•  MIKULSKI CONSIDERS OPTIONS ON AGRICULTURE SPENDING
•  WHIP CHANGE TO FURTHER DELAY AG SPENDING BILL
•  NOTICE OF SOLICITATION OF MEMBERS TO THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, EXTENSION, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS ADVISORY BOARD
•  USDA TAKES STEPS TO AID NEW FARMERS
•  THE $15 BILLION BEE IN PRESIDENT OBAMA’S BONNET

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES
•  BIR/STTR GRANTEES: APPLY TO THE NEW I-CORPS AT NIH PROGRAM
•  NIH PUTS MASSIVE U.S. CHILDREN’S STUDY ON HOLD
•  NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR HEALTHCARE RESEARCH AND QUALITY: REQUEST FOR NOMINATIONS FOR PUBLIC MEMBERS
•  NFL GIVES NIH $30 MILLION FOR HEALTH RESEARCH
•  SENATE PANEL ADVANCES AUTISM RESEARCH BILL

FEDERAL BUDGET PROCESS
•  MIKULSKI WEIGHS A SHIFT IN STRATEGY FOR SPENDING BILLS
•  EPA FIGHT JEOPARDIZES MULTIPLE SPENDING BILLS

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY
•  FAULT LINES SURFACE
•  3 CHANGES IN FINANCIAL AID THAT DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS AGREE ON
• EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WILL ‘PAUSE’ ON STATE AUTHORIZATION RULE
• A SLEW OF STUDIES, SUMMARIZED
• SENATE HELP COMMITTEE MAKING PROGRESS ON HIGHER EDUCATION ACT REAUTHORIZATION
• DUELING HIGHER EDUCATION ACT REWRITES EMERGE IN BOTH CHAMBERS

**IMMIGRATION**
• HOW IMMIGRATION REFORM DIED
• BLEAK PROGNOSIS FROM BOTH SIDES OF AISLE IN HOUSE FOR IMMIGRATION OVERHAUL

**LIBRARIES**
• E-RATE TOPS THE JULY 11 FCC AGENDA

**PHYSICAL SCIENCES & ENGINEERING**
• PROGRESS REPORT: PRESIDENT OBAMA’S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN
• LAWMAKERS BUILDING OFFSETS FOR SCALED-DOWN MANUFACTURING MEASURE
• ADVANCED REACTOR RESEARCH: DOE SUPPORTS MULTIPLE TECHNOLOGIES, BUT ACTIONS NEEDED TO ENSURE A PROTOTYPE IS BUILT
• BIG DATA, OPEN DATA & THE FEDERAL AGENCIES
• NASA LAUNCHES EARTH SCIENCE CHALLENGES WITH OPENNEX CLOUD DATA
• NASA’S SCIENCE MISSION DIRECTORATE CUBESAT INITIATIVE
• ENERGY DEPARTMENT INVESTS $3.2 MILLION TO SUPPORT CLEAN ENERGY SMALL BUSINESSES AND ENTREPRENEURS
• NIST SEeks MEMBERS FOR THREE NEW CLOUD COMPUTING WORKING GROUPS
• U.S. HOUSE BUDGET BILL WOULD NIX STEVEN CHU’S BRAINCHILD

**RESEARCH POLICY**
• WHY SCIENCE? AN UNEMOTIONAL ARGUMENT FOR FEDERAL INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH
• HOUSE SCIENCE COMMITTEE APPROVES “SECRET SCIENCE” BILL

**SEXUAL ASSAULT POLICY**
• CONGRESS EXPLORES PROPOSALS TO COMBAT SEX ASSAULT AT COLLEGES
• SEXUAL ASSAULT BILL AHEAD
• ROUND TABLE REVEALS PROBLEMS OF REPORTING, PROSECUTING CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT
• SENATORS EYE NEW FINES FOR COLLEGES VIOLATING SEX ASSAULT LAWS

**SOCIAL SCIENCES, THE ARTS & THE HUMANITIES**
• LIBRARY ACQUIRES AFRICAN-AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY VIDEO COLLECTION
• ISSA: MUSIC COPYRIGHT LAWS DON’T FOLLOW CONSTITUTION
• REQUEST FOR NOMINATIONS OF MEMBERS TO SERVE ON THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RACIAL, ETHNIC, AND OTHER POPULATIONS
• NEW VERSION OF COBURN AMENDMENT IN WINGS

**STUDENT AID**
• Q. AND A. ABOUT STUDENT DEBT

**TAX POLICY**
• WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE MARKS UP BILL TO CONSOLIDATE EDUCATION TAX BENEFITS
AGRICULTURE RESEARCH BOARD FACES FULL SLATE OF ISSUES
By Ellyn Ferguson, Roll Call, June 20, 2014

Agriculture officials will soon name a board of directors for the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research that Congress created in this year’s farm bill and launch a program they hope will draw more money into the kind of basic scientific study that made the United States an agriculture powerhouse. The bill authorized $200 million in mandatory spending to attract matching amounts from the private sector to finance research. It is modeled after foundations established to help the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

MIKULSKI CONSIDERS OPTIONS ON AGRICULTURE SPENDING
By Philip Brasher, CQ.com, June 25, 2014

The Senate’s Agriculture spending bill remains stuck in limbo as Appropriations Chairwoman Barbara A. Mikulski searches for an alternative strategy for moving at least some of her bills. A three-bill minibus (HR 4660) that contains Agriculture is sidetracked because of Republicans’ objections to a 60-vote threshold for amendments. Mikulski, D-Md., says she hasn’t given up on the minibus, but she may look at bringing a different group of bills to the floor after the Fourth of July recess, reports CQ Roll Call’s Tamar Hallerman. Democrats are in a bit of a quandary. They would probably love to get some bills enacted in the event that they lose control of the Senate, but Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., also needs to protect vulnerable Democrats from tough votes on issues like the proposed rule defining the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act (PL 95-217). The prospects for an Agriculture bill are probably better in the House. Its version (HR 4800) is stalled, too, but Agriculture Appropriations Chairman Robert B. Aderholt, R-Ala., is expressing optimism this week that the chamber will resume debate on the legislation after the recess. Still, the Senate standoff means it’s very likely Congress will have to move a continuing resolution again this year to keep the government operating into the new fiscal year.

* This is the complete news article.

WHIP CHANGE TO FURTHER DELAY AG SPENDING BILL
By Caitlin Emma, Politico’s Morning Agriculture, June 27, 2014

"Rep. Steve Scalise's imminent transition to House majority whip is likely to delay action on the
fiscal 2015 agriculture spending bill and other controversial measures while the Louisiana Republican gets up to speed on the new job, Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-Ala.) told POLITICO on Thursday, "Pro Agriculture's Bill Tomson reports. "Legislation that doesn't need a strong whip presence will probably be voted on in the near term, said Aderholt, who chairs the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee. But that doesn't include the USDA-FDA appropriations bill (HR 4800), which drew strong partisan fighting over proposed changes to school nutrition standards during debate, among other things. "'I really don't think the nutrition issue is something that brings down the bill,' Aderholt said. 'It's just these little things that we just want to make sure - I think the whip's office wants to make sure - that everything is running smoothly.'"

* This is the complete news article.

NOTICE OF SOLICITATION OF MEMBERS TO THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, EXTENSION, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS ADVISORY BOARD

* Federal Register, June 23, 2014

In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C. App., the United States Department of Agriculture announces solicitation for nominations to fill 8 vacancies on the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board.

USDA TAKES STEPS TO AID NEW FARMERS

* By Philip Brasher, CQ.com, June 23, 2014

The Department of Agriculture is taking a series of new steps using authority under the new farm bill (PL 113-79) to coax more people to go into farming. The department is trying to reverse a steep drop in beginning farmers that has continued despite strong consumer interest in locally grown foods. The measures announced Monday include waiving the service fees for non-insured crop disaster assistance programs, a risk management tool for commodities for which there is no federal crop insurance policy. Farmers and ranchers who already signed up for the program can get a refund. USDA soon will be announcing discounted insurance premiums, waivers of administrative fees and other benefits for beginning farmers. USDA also is eliminating payment reductions for beginning farmers who use Conservation Reserve Program acreage for emergency grazing. The reduction can be as high as 25 percent. Beginning farmers also can qualify for higher payment rates under a livestock disaster assistance program. The department also has set up a new website for new farmers that’s supposed to be a one-stop shop for information.

* This is the complete news article.

THE $15 BILLION BEE IN PRESIDENT OBAMA’S BONNET

* By Isabelle Khurshudyan, The Washington Post, June 23, 2014
Honeybees have a sweet new ally: President Obama. Plans for a “Pollinator Health Task Force” to help save bees from their mysterious decline were announced Friday in a presidential memorandum. Why Obama’s worried: The decline of bees could sting the economy. “Honeybee pollination alone adds more than $15 billion in value to agricultural crops each year in the United States,” the administration said in the release.

**BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES**

**BIR/STTR GRANTEES: APPLY TO THE NEW I-CORPS AT NIH PROGRAM**
NIH NCATS e-Newsletter, June 26, 2014

I-Corps at NIH is a collaborative initiative with the NSF I-Corps program. This nine-week immersion program is designed to help participants commercialize their innovations. Active NCATS SBIR or STTR grantees are eligible to apply for this new funding and mentorship opportunity. The deadline to apply for I-Corps at NIH is August 7, 2014. To learn more, register for the informational webinar featuring experts from NIH and NSF on Wednesday, July 2, 2014, 12:30–2:00 p.m. ET.

* This is the complete news article.

**NIH PUTS MASSIVE U.S. CHILDREN’S STUDY ON HOLD**
By Jocelyn Kaiser, ScienceInsider, June 20, 2014

After more than a decade of costly delays, a controversial plan to study the health of 100,000 U.S. babies to age 21 is in limbo again, in the wake of a critical outside review released on 16 June. At best, researchers will need to rethink their plans yet again. At worst, the NIH may cancel the study.

**NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR HEALTHCARE RESEARCH AND QUALITY: REQUEST FOR NOMINATIONS FOR PUBLIC MEMBERS**
Federal Register, June 17, 2014

42 U.S.C. 299c establishes a National Advisory Council for Healthcare Research and Quality (the Council). The Council is to advise the Secretary of Health & Human Services (Secretary) and the Director of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality on matters related to activities of the Agency to improve the quality, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of health care for all Americans. Seven current members’ terms will expire in November 2014.

**NFL GIVES NIH $30 MILLION FOR HEALTH RESEARCH**
Supporters of the new agriculture research foundation created by this year’s farm bill often point to the Foundation for the NIH as a model. Congress created the NIH foundation 18 years ago to identify and develop partnerships with industry, academia and philanthropies in areas such as clinical research. The foundation says that over those years it has raised $700 million for health and biomedical projects. The institution is a nonprofit that receives less than $1 million from the federal government for its work. The bulk of its support comes from a mix of foundations, corporations and some individuals. In its most recent annual report, the NIH foundation details a new sports and health area of research funded by a $30 million donation from the National Football League (NFL). At the time of the report, no definitive areas of study had been selected in sports and health, although the foundation mentioned brain injury, chronic pain, sudden cardiac death and heat- and hydration-related illnesses as potential areas of research.

SENATE PANEL ADVANCES AUTISM RESEARCH BILL
By Elise Viebeck, The Hill, June 25, 2014

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee quickly approved legislation Wednesday to reauthorize federal autism research and services for five years. The bipartisan bill, which now advances to the Senate floor, is identical to a measure passed by the House on Tuesday night and has a strong likelihood of becoming law this summer.

FEDERAL BUDGET PROCESS

MIKULSKI WEIGHS A SHIFT IN STRATEGY FOR SPENDING BILLS
By Tamar Hallerman, CQ.com, June 25, 2014

Faced with an ongoing impasse over a three-bill spending package, appropriators may need to turn to a different strategy in the coming weeks to have a chance at moving any spending bills ahead of the October 1 start of the next fiscal year. Top appropriators and their staffs are continuing discussions with leadership ahead of the July Fourth recess to try to forge an agreement that sets terms of debate for the so-called minibus (HR 4660). Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid pulled the $126.2 billion package from the floor late last week due to a stalemate over amendments with his Republican counterpart, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky. But with little progress to report by mid-week, appropriators said they may have to look at other options in order to salvage at least some of their fiscal 2015 work and avoid a continuing resolution for nearly all federal agencies come the end of September. “I don’t know if we’ll pass any bills,” said the panel’s ranking Republican, Richard C. Shelby of Alabama. “I’d like to see us pass some of them before we go home for August, but if we don’t it looks like we might be headed for a CR until Nov. 15 or something like that and then come back, but who knows.” Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Barbara A. Mikulski said she has not given up on the minibus, which incorporates the fiscal 2015 Commerce-Justice-Science (S 2437), Transportation-
passing appropriations bills in the Senate at all before the end of the fiscal year. But with only three other spending bills ready for floor consideration and the number of legislative days available quickly dwindling, Mikulski does not have many options, particularly if she is looking to avoid combinations of measures that could attract controversial GOP amendments, such as those related to EPA’s carbon standards, that could be considered germane. **Individual Bills:** Some appropriators suggested if the chamber’s leaders cannot forge an agreement on the minibus in the days ahead, Mikulski might find more success shepherding single, noncontroversial spending bills on the floor next month. “That’s exactly what the best case” scenario would be under that circumstance, said Democratic appropriator Jon Tester of Montana. “I’d hope we could move more than a single bill, but it’s always a thought,” said Shelby. Moving bills through the labyrinth of the Senate floor individually would eliminate at least one procedural hurdle, since leaders would not need to get unanimous consent to combine multiple measures into one legislative vehicle — one factor that contributed to the political gridlock on the floor last week. **Military Construction-VA:** By moving broadly popular bills such as Military Construction-VA, which funds military bases and veterans’ health care, senators might be deterred from offering as many controversial amendments. “It’s going to come up sometime. It’s the easiest one to do,” said Tim Johnson, D-S.D., chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee that oversees that bill. “If anything can be done, it will be done.” Mikulski said she is not ready to consider moving only single bills but indicated she plans to move Military Construction-VA on its own regardless of what happens with the minibus negotiations. Any floor action, though, would likely wait until after House-Senate conference committee completes work on emergency VA health care legislation (HR 3230), negotiations that could easily stretch through the summer months. The spending bill could also be a strong candidate for piggybacking a continuing resolution to fund the federal government come October 1, which will likely be needed. But that doesn’t yet mean such bills would be inoculated from all controversy, particularly related to the EPA. A McConnell spokesman said late last week to expect the Kentucky Republican to look for “every opportunity possible to protect American families and jobs from the president’s EPA regulations.” Tom Harkin of Iowa, a senior Democratic appropriator who is retiring at the end of the year and saw committee-level consideration of his own Labor-HHS-Education spending bill postponed indefinitely earlier this month, said he would not be satisfied if Congress only enacts one or two spending bills this year. “I would be greatly disappointed if the only thing that we can ever fund is the military. What does that say about our Congress, our country?” Harkin said.

* This is the complete news article.

**EPA FIGHT JEOPARDIZES MULTIPLE SPENDING BILLS**
By Tamar Hallerman and Lauren Gardner, *CQ.com*, June 26, 2014

The [Environmental Protection Agency] EPA has become such a flashpoint this year, ahead of the midterm elections, that environmental issues are now one of the single biggest obstacles to passing appropriations bills in the Senate at all before the end of the fiscal year. Partisan battles
over the EPA have for years stymied debate on the Interior-Environment spending bill, but the agency’s recently announced draft limits on carbon emissions from existing power plants have upped the ante and the Senate fight has spilled over into several other appropriations titles. At the center of it all stands President Barack Obama — who has made climate change-related regulations a central pillar of his presidential legacy, along with the Senate Democrats who support him — and the chamber’s top Republican, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, who has been fighting for political survival in a state where the coal industry is still a major employer ad economic force. Despite the considerable political heft of Appropriations Chairwoman Barbara A. Mikulski, D-Md., the EPA tussle and the timing of it appears to have stunted work on spending bills and neutered much of the political momentum that’s been generated in the appropriations process in the months since the budget agreement. “The politics of greenhouse (gas) emissions and coal are very complicated because they’re regional, not partisan,” Mikulski said. “We’re just sorting it out.” Limitation Amendment: The trigger for the gridlock has been a limitation amendment sponsored by McConnell that would effectively block the promulgation of the EPA power plant regulations, even though the portion of which affecting the existing fleet is not expected to be finalized until the summer of 2015. McConnell aides have been able to tailor the provision in different ways in order to make it germane to several of the annual spending bills, and they have said they are confident such provisions would likely attract majority support both in the Appropriations Committee and on the Senate floor from both Republicans and politically vulnerable Democrats from fossil fuel-reliant states. “You can expect to see Sen. McConnell looking for every opportunity possible to protect American families and jobs from the President’s EPA regulations,” said one McConnell aide. And Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., said Thursday on C-SPAN’s “Newsmakers” that Senate Republicans should be expected to try to get a vote on an amendment restricting the EPA’s proposal regarding emissions from existing power plants at every opportunity on must-pass legislation, including a vehicle to fund the government. The threat has drawn swift reactions from top Senate Democrats and the White House, who have moved to clip consideration of the spending bills where McConnell has been able to feasibly offer the limitation amendment. Senior Democrats punted a planned Appropriations markup of the generally noncontroversial Energy-Water spending bill last week after the White House apparently threatened to veto the measure if the McConnell provision was included. Hours later, Reid yanked a three-bill spending package (HR 4660) from the Senate floor due to a tussle with McConnell over the terms of amendment debate that was centered, in part, on a similar McConnell EPA amendment that was reportedly crafted in a way that was germane to the Commerce-Justice-Science title. The Senate Appropriations panel this week did not even schedule a full committee markup of the Financial Services spending bill, which funds the implementation of the Dodd-Frank financial regulatory overhaul (PL 111-203), the District of Columbia and the executive branch. Aides from both parties said that was also due, in part, to an expected GOP-sponsored EPA amendment. Many GOP appropriators have said that while they are disappointed that the appropriations process appears to have slowed, they do not plan on getting in McConnell’s way on the issue, boosting the likelihood that the appropriations standstill may stretch through the rest of the summer. Many have pointed the blame at Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada for insisting on a 60-vote threshold for amendments because of the EPA provision. “It appears maybe they are protecting some of these environmental issues that the president is pushing, but if a majority in the Congress supports legislation, we should have the vote. We represent the people. That’s how the process works, so we should be going through regular order and voting on these bills, and I hope we do,” said
John Hoeven of North Dakota, a Republican appropriator who also sits on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Talks between Reid, McConnell and top appropriators are expected to continue in the days ahead in an attempt to revive the appropriations process, but the standoff over the carbon regulations does not bode well for the balance of fiscal 2015 appropriations. If Mikulski and leadership are unable to find a path forward in the days ahead, it effectively puts an end to what was widely considered Congress’ best chance in years to enact multiple spending bills ahead of the October 1 start of the fiscal year. It also significantly ups the likelihood that the EPA — as well as most other federal agencies — will be operating under a continuing resolution for at least the first months of fiscal 2015. “We’ll have to have a lot of bipartisan determination to get back to regular appropriations,” said Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., an appropriator. *Legacy Issues:* Over the last year, Obama has implemented a series of executive-level actions aimed at cutting back on greenhouse gas emissions, circumventing a gridlocked Congress that has not built a consensus on the issue and outraging Republicans. Democratic leaders, meanwhile, have staunchly supported the president’s actions, rebuffing a steady stream of GOP challenges to stymie various EPA actions in recent years. McConnell has positioned himself as the coal industry’s champion and chief EPA foe in the Senate, a role that he has played up in his reelection bid, reminding voters back home that the administration’s regulatory priorities will do little to boost jobs in the coal industry. While McConnell has had little luck advancing legislation to rein in the EPA’s authority, his persistence in trying to force votes on agency regulations — particularly over the past few weeks — has put moderate Democrats who might support those measures in an awkward spot in this winner-take-all election year, much to Republicans’ delight. “I think people are scared of losing a big vote like the coal EPA” amendment, said Richard C. Shelby of Alabama, the ranking Republican on Senate Appropriations. “Reid is going to protect the president and the environmental lobby, and a lot of the members probably don’t want to vote either way that are running,” Shelby added.

* This is the complete news article.

**HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY**

**FAULT LINES SURFACE**

Sharper divisions are emerging between Democrats and Republicans over how Congress should go about reauthorizing the Higher Education Act. House Republicans released an outline Tuesday of their priorities for rewriting the massive law. Their plan includes streamlining and consolidating federal student aid programs as well as eliminating many regulations affecting colleges. Meanwhile, Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa, the Democrat who chairs the Senate education committee, unveiled an outline of the Higher Education Act legislation he is drafting.

**3 CHANGES IN FINANCIAL AID THAT DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS AGREE ON**
Many of the ideas being trumpeted as part of the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act are going to fall by the wayside amid partisan disagreement. Republicans want to kill President Obama's controversial college-ratings systems. controversial college-ratings system. Democrats want to impose stringent rules for doling out student aid to for-profit colleges, a measure largely opposed by Republicans. But there are substantial areas of overlap between the competing proposal.

**EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WILL ‘PAUSE’ ON STATE AUTHORIZATION RULE**
*Inside Higher Ed, June 26, 2014*

The Obama administration is delaying its plan to develop a controversial rule that would require online programs to obtain approval from each and every state in which they enroll students, a top Education Department official said Wednesday. Under Secretary of Education Ted Mitchell said that the administration would not develop a new “state authorization” regulation for distance education programs before its November 1 deadline. “We, for all intents and purposes, are pausing on state authorization,” Mitchell said during remarks at the Council for Higher Education Accreditation conference. “It’s complicated, and we want to get it right.”

**A SLEW OF STUDIES, SUMMARIZED**
*By Doug Lederman, Inside Higher Ed, June 25, 2014*

Hardly a day goes that doesn't bring the release of some analysis or another about higher education. But an unusually large number of reports and studies about college financial aid and finances were released Tuesday (or are being made public today). The following are brief summaries of them, with links for those who want to dig deeper.

**SENATE HELP COMMITTEE MAKING PROGRESS ON HIGHER EDUCATION ACT REAUTHORIZATION**
*Association of American Universities (AAU) Weekly Wrap-Up, June 20, 2014*

Leaders of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee have begun developing legislation to reauthorize the Higher Education Act (HEA). Committee Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) is expected to introduce a comprehensive HEA reauthorization bill next week. Based on preliminary discussions with staff, the bill is divided into four thematic categories: affordability, student debt, institutional accountability, and transparency. The bill will likely include a new state and federal block grant program to encourage states to reinvest in higher education, a streamlined student loan repayment program, a new student default rate index, new protections against low-performing for-profit institutions, and new consumer disclosures. A provision to create a unit-record system for tracking individual students in order to improve data collection may be added later. Earlier this week, Committee Ranking Member Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Committee member Michael Bennet (D-CO), introduced bipartisan legislation to simplify the process of applying for and receiving federal student financial aid. In addition to simplifying the financial aid application process, the legislation would allow families
to use income data from two years prior and receive information earlier than is possible under the current system. The measure also would authorize year-round Pell Grants; consolidate the six federal loan programs into three: one each for undergraduates, graduate students, and parents; simplify repayment options to one income-based plan and one standard 10-year plan; and limit borrowing. No timeline is available for action on either bill.

* This is the complete news article.

DUELING HIGHER EDUCATION ACT REWRITES EMERGE IN BOTH CHAMBERS
By Carolyn Phenicie, CQ.com, June 25, 2014

Congressional education leaders in both chambers released proposals Tuesday and Wednesday for an upcoming reauthorization of the Higher Education Act that, although in agreement in several areas, also reveal likely points of conflict ahead. House Education and the Workforce Chairman John Kline, R-Minn., and Virginia Foxx, R-N.C., released a white paper detailing their conference’s priorities for an update of the law (PL 110-315). Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Chairman Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, also released a summary of his proposed bill text. There’s little chance, though, that Congress will reauthorize the law before a deadline at the end of the session. The dueling proposals are similar in at least three areas: modifying income-based student loan repayment programs, expanding the availability of Pell Grants and overhauling teacher training programs. Both proposals call for reducing the eight existing income-based loan repayment options to just one; Harkin’s also would call for automatically enrolling “severely delinquent” borrowers into the program. They also both called for expanding Pell Grant availability. Year-round Pell Grants were available from 2008 to 2010; summer-term grants particularly help “non-traditional” older adult students who may also work full-time and want to complete their degrees as soon as possible. Harkin wants to make the grants available for study during the summer term, while the Republicans propose a flexible program that would inform students of their total Pell eligibility over six years and allow them to draw down funds when necessary. Additionally, both proposals call for overhauling teacher training, something included in Title II of the Higher Education Act. The House Republicans advocate streamlining Education Department data collection from teacher training programs and focusing on output-based data rather than input-based. The summary from Harkin’s office doesn’t detail how he proposes to overhaul the programs. Kline said he will begin introducing a series of bills to promote the ideas laid out in the white paper. “A step-by-step approach will help us keep the public informed of the policies we’re developing and allow us to begin strengthening higher education today,” he said. Notable Differences Remain: Despite the areas of agreement, differences, which largely reflect broader themes that have been raised throughout the reauthorization process, remain. Senate Democrats, led by Harkin, have focused on affordability and student loan debt. Republicans in both the House and Senate, meanwhile, have narrowed their sights on reducing the federal footprint and maintaining student choices. In a move sure to be rebuked by for-profit colleges and their congressional supporters, Harkin proposes reducing the limit of total profits a for-profit school may earn from federal financial aid from 90 percent, the so-called “90-10” rule, to 85 percent. A summary released by the HELP Committee does not indicate if Harkin’s proposal also includes making veterans’ education benefits part of that limit. They currently aren’t, and Senate Democrats say
that has led to inappropriately aggressive marketing toward veterans by unscrupulous for-profits. The proposals are also at odds in terms of the federal role in rising college costs, one reason for rapidly increasing student loan debt. Harkin calls for creating a state-federal partnership to increase investment in higher education; decreasing state investment in public colleges is one factor responsible for rising prices. He also wants a commission to explore risk-sharing, an idea under which colleges would incur some financial penalty if their students graduate with massive debt or don’t complete their degrees in large numbers. For their part, Republicans assert that “the responsibility for controlling cost rests with the leaders of each institution” and “it has never been the role of the federal government to dictate college costs or set price controls over tuition and fees.” Republicans also propose limiting Education Department regulations on higher education, particularly preventing a government ratings system and tying student aid eligibility to those ratings. The GOP opposes requiring for-profit colleges to meet certain debt limits for their graduates and dropouts, the so-called “gainful employment” rule. Limiting implementation of the ratings system or gainful employment regulations — which are hallmarks of the Obama administration’s higher education policy and have wide but not universal support among congressional Democrats — is sure to be a sticking point for the president’s party. One other potential flash point, however, may be avoided.

Harkin had said he would consider including in the reauthorization a proposal (S 2432) by Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., to allow borrowers with older loans to refinance at the current lower interest rates, paid for by closing tax loopholes for the very wealthy. That proposal, which would have been a nonstarter for Republicans, does not appear in Harkin’s summary.

* This is the complete news article.

**IMMIGRATION**

**HOW IMMIGRATION REFORM DIED**

President Barack Obama paused for what felt like an eternity to the immigration reform activists seated around the Roosevelt Room…The best chance in three decades to rewrite immigration laws has slipped away just one year after the Senate garnered 68 votes for sweeping reform of the system, 20 months after strong Hispanic turnout for Democrats in the 2012 election sparked a GOP panic, and five years after Obama promised to act.

**BLEAK PROGNOSIS FROM BOTH SIDES OF AISLE IN HOUSE FOR IMMIGRATION OVERHAUL**

Two leading House lawmakers — one Republican and one Democrat — declared efforts to overhaul the nation’s broken immigration system all but dead for the year, the result of hardening Tea Party opposition and growing mistrust of President Obama among congressional Republicans.
E-RATE TOPS THE JULY 11 FCC AGENDA
By Erin Mershon, Politico’s Morning Tech, June 23, 2014

FCC chief Tom Wheeler's new plan to revamp the E-Rate program includes $2 billion over the next two years to support Wi-Fi connections for schools and libraries -- but the plan's specifics had advocates on edge nearly as soon as they saw it. The plan begins to transition away from funding for non-broadband services, which education groups say could hurt schools in rural and remote areas. Advocates also worry that the plan doesn't guarantee funding after the first two years, and it projects savings that just may not appear. Rep. Greg Walden, who heads a House panel that oversees the FCC, praised Wheeler for his proposal. 'It] appropriately reflects the advice of the committee to pursue improvements to the E-Rate program within its current funding,' he said in a Friday statement.

* This is the complete news article.

PHYSICAL SCIENCES & ENGINEERING

PROGRESS REPORT: PRESIDENT OBAMA’S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN
White House Report, June 25, 2014

Today – one year after the President laid out his comprehensive Climate Action Plan – the White House released a new report detailing progress towards cutting carbon pollution and protecting our communities and public health.

ADMINISTRATION HESITANT ON ENERGY-WATER NEXUS BILL
By Randy Leonard, CQ.com, June 25, 2014

While federal agencies are moving to take a deeper look at water issues in energy production and energy issues in water treatment, the administration is not fully embracing a Senate measure to create an interagency committee to evaluate those issues. If enacted, the bill (S 1971) may present challenges to the Interior Department, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Tom Iseman told lawmakers Wednesday, while welcoming some of the intentions of the measure. “The department supports interagency collaboration and information sharing to support sound decision making, leverage resources and reduce duplication,” he said in prepared testimony at a Senate Energy and Natural Resources subcommittee hearing. “But the administration believes this can be done through more effective and efficient collaboration and program management, rather than an unduly and potentially ineffective reporting requirement.” Last week the Energy Department rolled out a report drawing attention to the energy-water nexus but has not taken a position on the bill, said Jonathan Pershing, principal
deputy director of energy policy, adding that the department identifies with the issues behind the legislation. “We share a mutual interest and concern,” he said in his prepared testimony. “Many operations in the energy sector rely on water, and many operations in the water sector rely on energy,” he said. “They are inextricably linked.” While agreeing broadly with the coordination needed between agencies, “we would like to continue working with the committee on preliminary concerns regarding the details of the collaborative structure and reporting provisions” in the bill, he said. Energy Secretary Ernest J. Moniz said earlier Wednesday that he saw intense interest in energy-water issues from his international counterparts. “They’re all very, very concerned about this,” he said. “That’s an area that of course will require lots of multi-agency collaboration.” Ranking Republican Lisa Murkowski of Alaska introduced the measure in January with then-committee-Chairman Ron Wyden, D-Ore. Current Chairwoman Mary L. Landrieu, D-La., has signed on to the bill.

* This is the complete news article.

**LAWMAKERS BUILDING OFFSETS FOR SCALLED-DOWN MANUFACTURING MEASURE**

By Alan Ota, *CQ.com*, June 27, 2014

A downsized version of President Barack Obama’s vision for a network of manufacturing innovation hubs appears to be gaining traction in both chambers. House Science, Space and Technology Chairman Lamar Smith, R-Texas, said he hoped to build bipartisan consensus for a proposal (HR 2996) by Rep. Tom Reed, R-N.Y., to support development of more new manufacturing centers. “I hope to mark up in July,” Smith said in an interview. Reed and Smith said funding in the bill had been reduced by roughly half to about $300 million, and that they were continuing to discuss offsets with key players, including a Democratic co-sponsor, Joseph P. Kennedy III of Massachusetts. “The discussions on the offsets are ongoing. I’m optimistic. It’s a big bill with broad industry support. A lot of people have gotten behind it,” Kennedy said. Smith said he was focusing on possible cuts to Commerce Department programs. “That’s what we’re thinking about. Funds that may be better used for something else,” Smith said. The Smith bill roughly matches the size of a committee-approved Senate version of the proposal (S 1468) sponsored by Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio. The funding in the Senate bill was cut from $600 million to $300 million in a Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee markup in April. Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., a supporter of the Brown bill and vice chairman of the Senate Republican Conference, said both sides were trying to finish an agreement on $300 million in offsets for the Brown bill, similar to those being discussed in the House — Commerce Department cuts, including reductions in some training programs. “We are trying to finalize the offsets. They will not be budget gimmicks,” said Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., who is the point person for his caucus on manufacturing issues. If the offsets can be worked out, Sen. Mark Begich, D-Alaska, said there is a good chance the Brown bill would be on the floor before the August recess. Despite the deep divisions between the parties on economic priorities, both sides agree on the need for better training and research to promote hiring in the manufacturing sector. Coons said both sides hoped to build on the bicameral agreement (HR 803) on workforce training. The measure won Senate passage, 95-3, Wednesday, and is expected to clear the House. The manufacturing may face tough going with leadership, however, particularly in a Senate that has ground to a halt due to procedural disputes. Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., ranking member on Commerce, has
balked at the initiative, for instance. Opponents have expressed concerns about the cost and one of the potential offsets: an expansion of online access to government documents that could save on publishing and distributions costs for the Government Printing Office. Four manufacturing hubs already are being developed in Detroit, Chicago, Youngstown, Ohio, and Raleigh, N.C. Obama originally envisioned a National Network for Manufacturing Innovation network encompassing 45 regional centers. With the reduced funding in the House and Senate bills, the size of the network is likely to be smaller.

If the funding is authorized, the projects would be selected by the Commerce Department based on whether they are likely to have an economic impact and have commitments for support from state and local government, schools and businesses.

* This is the complete news article.

**BIG DATA, OPEN DATA & THE FEDERAL AGENCIES**
By Nicole Wong and Nick Sinai, White House Office of Science and Technology Blog, June 23, 2014

Open data and big data -- and the responsible management and protection of that data -- are key components of the President's agenda to drive innovation and economic growth. On Thursday, June 19, leaders from civil society, industry, academia, and 40 Federal departments and agencies met at Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy's Massive Data Institute to discuss how Federal agencies can continue to unlock government data to drive innovation and improve services. Drawing from the White House Working Group report, *Big Data: Seizing Opportunities, Preserving Values*, this event focused on opening and using government data, while appropriately protecting privacy and preventing the use of data to discriminate against vulnerable populations in our society.

**ADVANCED REACTOR RESEARCH: DOE SUPPORTS MULTIPLE TECHNOLOGIES, BUT ACTIONS NEEDED TO ENSURE A PROTOTYPE IS BUILT**

The DOE’s Office of Nuclear Energy's (NE) approach to advanced reactor research and development (R&D) focuses on three reactor technologies—high-temperature gas-cooled reactors, sodium-cooled fast reactors, and fluoride-salt-cooled high-temperature reactors—but NE is also funding research into other advanced reactor technologies. NE’s approach is to conduct research in support of multiple advanced reactor technologies, while collaborating with industry and academia, with the ultimate goal for industry to take the results of NE's research to the next step of development and commercialization. This approach provides several advantages, including flexibility in responding to changes in future U.S. energy policy. Many representatives that GAO talked to from the nuclear power industry and the National Academy of Sciences agree with NE’s approach, saying that current policies on controlling greenhouse gas emissions and disposing of nuclear waste do not make a compelling case for choosing a reactor technology to develop. However, others GAO talked to are critical of some of the reactor technologies NE chooses to research, citing economic and technological challenges. The
Nuclear Energy Advisory Committee has criticized NE’s approach, recommending that NE focus its efforts on a smaller number of technologies to help ensure that a reactor prototype is deployed. To remain aware of industry’s R&D needs and international nuclear energy developments, NE regularly collaborates with industry and international organizations.

**NASA LAUNCHES EARTH SCIENCE CHALLENGES WITH OPENNEX CLOUD DATA**
*NASA News Release, June 24, 2014*

NASA is launching two challenges to give the public an opportunity to create innovative ways to use data from the agency’s Earth science satellites. The challenges will use the Open NASA Earth Exchange. OpenNEX is a data, supercomputing and knowledge platform where users can share modeling and analysis codes, scientific results, knowledge and expertise to solve big data challenges in the Earth sciences. A component of the NASA Earth Exchange, OpenNEX provides users a large collection of climate and Earth science satellite data sets, including global land surface images, vegetation conditions, climate observations and climate projections...The first "ideation" stage of the challenge, which runs July 1 through August 1, offers as much as $10,000 in awards for ideas on novel uses of the datasets. The second "builder" stage, beginning in August, will offer between $30,000 and $50,000 in awards for the development of an application or algorithm that promotes climate resilience using the OpenNEX data, based on ideas from the first stage of the challenge. NASA will announce the overall challenge winners in December.

**NASA’S SCIENCE MISSION DIRECTORATE CUBESAT INITIATIVE**
*Space Mart, June 24, 2014*

Beginning in October 2013, the NASA Science Mission Directorate, or SMD, started a new CubeSat Initiative -- a cross divisional project to develop scientific CubeSats for all four science divisions within SMD. CubeSats offer a low-cost option for enabling scientific discovery related to astrophysics, heliophysics, Earth and planetary sciences, addressing space technology and exploration systems development needs, and extending important hands-on experience to undergraduate and graduate students.

**ENERGY DEPARTMENT INVESTS $3.2 MILLION TO SUPPORT CLEAN ENERGY SMALL BUSINESSES AND ENTREPRENEURS**
*DOE News Release, June 20, 2014*

Secretary Moniz today announced $3.2 million to launch the National Incubator Initiative for Clean Energy, which will create a national support network to serve the clean energy small business and entrepreneur community, providing critical technical assistance and training services in order to bring these businesses and entrepreneurs closer to market readiness. The Initiative will establish a suite of technological and training resources, connect critical industry and energy sector partners, enhance incubator best practices, and increase access to information about industry resources to advance innovative clean energy technologies...
emerging from universities and federal laboratories.

**NIST SEEKS MEMBERS FOR THREE NEW CLOUD COMPUTING WORKING GROUPS**

*NIST Tech Beat, June 23, 2014*

The NIST Cloud Computing Program (NCCP) is forming three public working groups to provide solutions to cloud computing challenges...NIST's cloud computing public working groups bring together industry, government and academic experts from across the world to address requirements laid out in the NIST U.S. Government Cloud Computing Technology Roadmap, Release 1.0 (Draft)...For more information on participating in the new public working groups, including call-in numbers, go to http://www.nist.gov/itl/cloud/announcement-of-three-new-wg.cfm.

**U.S. HOUSE BUDGET BILL WOULD NIX STEVEN CHU'S BRAINCHILD**

By Adrian Cho, *Science Insider*, June 20, 2014

Fifteen months after Nobel Prize-winning physicist Steven Chu stepped down as secretary of energy, budgetmakers in the U.S. House of Representatives have moved to kill the project perhaps most emblematic of Chu's vision for reshaping research in the DOE. In their version of the proposed DOE budget for fiscal year 2015, which begins October 1, House appropriators zero out funding for the Joint Center for Artificial Photosynthesis, which seeks to develop a technology to convert sunlight to a fuel such as hydrogen gas.

**RESEARCH POLICY**

**WHY SCIENCE? AN UNEMOTIONAL ARGUMENT FOR FEDERAL INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH**


What is so special about science? And why should the federal government invest in it? As Congress emerges from years of making spending decisions largely through continuing resolutions and sequestration, last year's budget agreement enables it to actually prioritize discretionary spending. To succeed in this process, advocates for scientific research must answer two important questions: Does science justify spending taxpayers' hard-earned dollars? And is it "better" spending than other federal outlays? We believe the case for science spending is solid and clear, because science is an investment that pays enormous dividends. Right now our nation faces an innovation deficit because federal spending on research has been lagging, while our international competitors have been pouring resources into this vital investment.

**HOUSE SCIENCE COMMITTEE APPROVES “SECRET SCIENCE” BILL**

The House Science, Space, and Technology Committee yesterday approved the “Secret Science Reform Act of 2014” (H.R. 4012), legislation that would prohibit the EPA from proposing or issuing regulations unless the scientific information on which they are based is “specifically identified and publicly available in a manner that is sufficient for independent analysis and substantial reproduction of research results.” The bill was approved on a party-line vote of 17 to 13.

* This is the complete news article.

**SEXUAL ASSAULT POLICY**

**CONGRESS EXPLORES PROPOSALS TO COMBAT SEX ASSAULT AT COLLEGES**

Congress is exploring proposals to combat sex assault at colleges, months after taking action to overhaul how the military responds to sexual violence. “This is an issue that has for far too long been swept under the rug,” Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, said Thursday at a hearing on campus sex assault.

**SEXUAL ASSAULT BILL AHEAD**

Two Senate Democrats who are working on legislation to combat campus sexual assault said Monday that they expect to introduce a bipartisan bill when Congress returns from its August recess. Wrapping up a series of roundtable discussions to solicit input on legislation, Senator Claire McCaskill of Missouri said that while she's open to incorporating the proposal into the coming reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, she's also prepared to advance it separately and more quickly.

**ROUND TABLE REVEALS PROBLEMS OF REPORTING, PROSECUTING CAMPUS SEXUAL ASSAULT**

It’s no surprise that there are serious problems with reporting and prosecuting campus sexual assaults. The details of why began to emerge during the third round table convened by Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.) on Monday to look at the issue that is complicated by “a system that is multijurisdictional,” as she called it.

**SENATORS EYE NEW FINES FOR COLLEGES VIOLATING SEX ASSAULT LAWS**
By Carolyn Phenicie, *CQ.com*, June 26, 2014
An Education Department official Thursday expressed skepticism that the department needs new penalty options to enforce sexual assault regulations on college campuses, one of the primary congressional responses senators have thus far proposed. Under existing law, the Education Department’s only available punishment for schools that fall out of compliance with Title IX is to completely revoke a college’s eligibility for federal funding. That penalty has never been instituted in higher education. Senators have called it the “nuclear option” because it would unfairly penalize thousands of innocent students and is unlikely to ever be applied. Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., and others, have said alternative penalties — likely fines, based on the size of a school’s student body or endowment — are needed for the department to have a credible penalty option. McCaskill has taken the lead in drafting a legislative proposal on curbing a rise in sexual assaults. Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Catherine Lhamon, however, said at a Senate hearing that the department has the enforcement tools it needs. The threat of withholding federal funds has worked to bring schools into compliance, she said. Specifically, the department threatened to begin the process of withholding funds from Tufts University after it backed out of a Title IX compliance agreement, and two weeks later the school re-entered the agreement. Title IX broadly bans sex discrimination in education, and schools must maintain an atmosphere free of sexual violence by providing appropriate disciplinary procedures for perpetrators and accommodations for victims of sexual assault. “It’s a pretty good nuclear option,” she said. “My concern would be not having the nuclear option.” Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Chairman Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, appeared surprised that Lhamon did not see the need for additional penalty options and doubtful that the existing structure is sufficient. When pressed by Harkin on whether or not the Education Department needs additional authority from new legislation, Lhamon conceded there may be more things that can be done, but said the importance of the threat of withholding federal funds should not be undermined. Harkin returned to the issue again later in the hearing, clarifying that he was not asking about taking away the “nuclear option,” but rather providing the additional options for lesser penalties. Lhamon reiterated that she is wary of anything that may undermine the penalty of total loss of federal financial aid. “I have a worry that if we have a lesser tool, then it would be harder for colleges and universities to believe us that we will use the nuclear option,” she added. McCaskill — who routinely lists fines for noncompliance among proposed changes to be included in a legislative solution — said after a hearing June 23 that although senators are close to an agreement, they may not introduce legislative language until after the August recess. Although a broad reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (PL 110-315) is in the works — and Harkin said Thursday that sexual assault reforms will be part of his HEA reauthorization — McCaskill said she will be prepared to move a separate bill solely focused on sexual assaults. Republican Skepticism: The HELP Committee’s top Republican, while expressing support for some federal interventions, said states and colleges, not the federal government, should take the lead in preventing sexual assaults. “I think we need to make sure that we don’t suggest to anybody that we in Washington should be primarily responsible for making the campuses safe,” said Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn. “I mean I don’t think the country would want to look up here and say the United States Senate that can’t even balance a budget, and can’t even agree on how to consider an appropriations bill, ought to be the one who you look to be responsible for campus safety.” He also questioned how the Education Department issued a Title IX question and answer compliance document for schools earlier this year. The document amounts to a regulation but
did not go through a traditional negotiated rulemaking and comment period, unlike just-released proposed regulations that require new reporting under the Clery Act (PL 101-542) and require new training for students and faculty, he said. “What you’re doing is writing out detailed guidance to 22 million students on 7,200 campuses and it just could be your whim, your idea. We make the law, you don’t make the law. Where does such a guidance authority come from?” he asked. Alexander’s skepticism is not, however, universal among his caucus. McCaskill said June 23 that she is working with Republicans Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire, Dean Heller of Nevada and Marco Rubio of Florida on a bill. She also has discussed ways to streamline and simplify reporting with Alexander.

* This is the complete news article.

**SOCIAL SCIENCES, THE ARTS & THE HUMANITIES**

**LIBRARY ACQUIRES AFRICAN-AMERICAN ORAL HISTORY VIDEO COLLECTION**

The Librarian of Congress, James H. Billington, announced today the donation of a video archive of thousands of hours of interviews—The HistoryMakers—that captures African-American life, history and culture as well as the struggles and achievements of the black experience.

**ISSA: MUSIC COPYRIGHT LAWS DON'T FOLLOW CONSTITUTION**
By Erin Mershon, Politico’s Morning Technology, June 26, 2014

Rep. Darrell Issa said Congress "screwed up" the music copyright arena relative to the Constitution at a packed Wednesday hearing. "What we do in the way of granting you exclusive rights for a limited time is for the purpose of enhancing commerce," he said. "I don't think the founders ever thought [it] would exclude the performer from being paid."

* This is the complete news article.

**NEW VERSION OF COBURN AMENDMENT IN WINGS**
Social Science Space, June 20, 2014

In an echo of his efforts he’s been making for half a decade, Sen. Tom Coburn is trying to restrict federal funding for political science research to projects that promote national security or the economic interests of the United States. The Oklahoma Republican on Thursday filed an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2015 funding bill for Commerce, Justice and Science, the bureaucratic bucket that includes the NSF. While last year’s successful push to tack the amendment onto a vital continuing budget resolution drew howls from the social science community, don’t expect to see Coburn’s latest measure — or any others attached to the CJS bill — move forward or back soon.
REQUEST FOR NOMINATIONS OF MEMBERS TO SERVE ON THE NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON RACIAL, ETHNIC, AND OTHER POPULATIONS

Federal Register, June 17, 2014

The Bureau of the Census (Census Bureau) is requesting nominations of individuals and organizations to the National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic, and Other Populations. The Census Bureau will consider nominations received in response to this notice, as well as from other sources.

STUDENT AID

Q. AND A. ABOUT STUDENT DEBT

Dire warnings about student debt have become so common that many people may have a hard time believing that the problem is often exaggerated, as I wrote in my column Tuesday. Sure enough, readers raised several thoughtful questions about the research in the column, which found that large student debts are rarer than widely believed. I asked Beth Akers and Matthew Chingos, the Brookings Institution fellows who did the research, some of those questions via email. Our exchange appears below.

TAX POLICY

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE MARKS UP BILL TO CONSOLIDATE EDUCATION TAX BENEFITS
AAU CFR Update, June 25, 2014

The House Ways and Means Committee, by a party line vote of 22 to 13, today approved legislation to consolidate four higher education tax provisions into one. The Student and Family Tax Simplification Act (H.R. 3393) would combine the Hope Credit, the American Opportunity Tax Credit (AOTC), the Lifetime Learning Credit (LLC), and the tuition deduction into a single AOTC and make it permanent. The opening statement by Rep. Diane Black (R-TN), lead sponsor of the bill with Rep. Danny Davis (IL), is available here. AAU and many other higher education organizations generally support consolidating current student tax credits and making the AOTC permanent. The community appreciates the provisions in the Black-Davis bill that accomplish this and that make an important fix to the interaction between the AOTC and the Pell Grant. The Committee-approved version of the bill includes an important improvement to the bill, raising the income eligibility thresholds in the bill to current levels for the AOTC. Unfortunately, consolidation of the tax provisions comes at the expense of graduate students who use the tuition deduction or the LLC, as well as for some low- and middle-income undergraduate students who are part-time students or take longer than four years to complete their
educational programs.

* This is the complete news article.