



CASFAA Federal Issues Committee Update

Summary of CASFAA Webinar held Spring 2021

Federal Student Aid Legislation: Process, Players, and Priorities

1. To understand a law (e.g., Higher Education Authorization) look at:
 - a. the law (the most general information);
 - b. Then U.S. Department of Education regulations (more specific information);
 - c. Finally, review guidance with the most impact on day-to-day operations (the most specific information):
 - i. Dear Colleague letters
 - ii. NASFAA AskRegs
 - iii. Executive orders
2. Important to understand that it is not enough for a program to be approved by Congress as it must also be funded.
3. Since bills can take months or even years, it is essential to find compromise in order to ensure passage. Congressional members need to identify points of agreement between parties. Co-sponsored bills from opposing parties are more likely to be passed.
4. Examining a Senate or House committee's conference report is illuminating in that it can:
 - a. Give insight into provisions that did not make it into law
 - b. Provide clarity of the intent of the law
5. Be aware that bills can be vulnerable to cuts when part of Budget Reconciliation Bills
6. Know who is who in the Congressional leadership to focus advocacy efforts
 - a. CA presently has leadership in House and has 3 members of House Committee on Education & Labor
 - c. One CA member is on Higher Education & Workforce Development Subcommittee (this should be starting point of effective advocacy efforts as this is where higher education work really gets done)
 - d. No Californians on Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions



7. Since bills do not automatically transfer with new congressional sessions, legislators must identify those bills from the past most deserving of reintroduction and reintroduce them.

8. Understand that support and passage of bills are not the same. Focus must be placed on details and costs, as well as understanding intra- and inter-party differences.

9. The failure of HEA reauthorization proposals to gain traction could prove instructive. Why did they fail to pass? This should be considered when advocating in future.

10. Double the Pell is a CASFAA priority and is gaining support. CASFAA advocacy efforts should focus on details and costs.

11. When advocating, look to “kill two birds with one stone” i.e. can two priorities be met with the same bill? For example, doubling the Pell could also ultimately serve to reduce student loan debt burdens and have students avoid taking out loan.