



Congress Moves Closer to Tax Reform Negotiations

Congress is aiming to convene a conference committee around the [Tax Cuts and Jobs Act](#), following passage of the [House version](#) on November 16 and the [Senate version](#) on December 2. The conference committee, comprising members selected by leadership in the House and Senate, will be tasked with negotiating and compiling one comprehensive deal that reconciles differences between the proposals advanced by each chamber. Although the basic framework of the bills is the same, the House version includes four provisions that would repeal certain tax credits that support students and faculty. The Senate did not include these changes in their version. AACN has been [tracking tax reform](#) and sent a [letter](#) on November 29 to the Senate commending them for protecting key tax credits for students and asking they continue to be omitted in any final package.



PROSPER Bill to Reauthorize Higher Education

On December 1, Representatives Virginia Foxx (R-NC) and Brett Guthrie (R-KY) of the House Education and Workforce Committee released a comprehensive bill reauthorizing the Higher Education Act, which would significantly impact students and academic institutions. The bill, Promoting Real Opportunity, Success, and Prosperity through Education Reform ([PROSPER](#)) Act, addresses multiple aspects of the higher education sector, including simplifying student aid applications, consolidating existing loan programs into “one loan, one grant,” as well as a single income-based repayment plan, thereby eliminating the [Public Service Loan Forgiveness program](#). The bill would eliminate several Department of Education regulations that apply to schools and programs. AACN is currently reviewing this legislation from the lens of academic nursing and is concerned certain provisions do not uphold its [principles for higher education](#): affordability, accessibility, excellence, and efficiency.



House Expected to Pass Stopgap Spending Bill Avoiding Government Shutdown

As the December 8 deadline for passing Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 federal spending bill approaches, legislators are [still debating](#) potential deadlines for another short-term continuing resolution. This week, the House is expected to vote on a two-week resolution, [H.J. Res. 123 \(115\)](#), which would extend current spending levels until December 22 to avoid a government shut-down. A provision of the bill would allot leftover Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) funds to state child health plans through December 31, after which a longer-term funding solution for CHIP must be reached. The Senate is expected to take up the House’s measure, but it is unclear if other deals will make it into the spending bill, such as a solution for DREAMers. AACN and the Nursing Community Coalition are reiterating the importance to fund programs of interest to appropriators as they continue to work out a final spending bill for the remainder of FY 2018.