



## Federal Advocacy & Public Policy Team

January 15, 2021

### NSBA Weekly Update

#### Congressional Update

##### **President-elect Biden Unveils Massive Pandemic Relief Plan**

On Thursday, January 14, President-elect Joe Biden unveiled details of a \$1.9 trillion pandemic relief package dubbed the “American Rescue Plan.” The [proposal](#), which must still be considered and approved by Congress, would provide a host of new resources for pandemic-related activities such as vaccinations, treatments for patients, and direct aid to struggling families. Of note, the plan proposes \$170 billion in additional emergency relief specifically for education. To help realize President-elect Biden’s pledge to reopen the majority of K-8 schools in his first 100 days in office, \$130 billion of this funding would be directed to the K-12 education community to support these efforts. This funding could be used for a wide variety of related activities to support students, teachers, schools, and districts return safely to in-person instruction and overcome the challenges created by the current pandemic. The plan also includes a \$5 billion proposal to supplement Governors’ ongoing efforts to help education systems in their states while the remaining \$35 billion in education funding would be directed towards the higher education community. The plan emphasizes that all these funds should be directed towards entities that have been the most impacted by the pandemic.

In addition to these education specific proposals, the American Rescue Plan envisions \$350 billion in state and local fiscal relief—a key priority NSBA has been [advocating](#) for since last year given that nearly half of all of these dollars are spent in support of education. Upon the plan’s release, NSBA leadership issued a [statement](#) in support of this proposal and will work with lawmakers in the coming weeks ahead to ensure these bold and much needed steps can be enacted into law.

##### **House Impeaches President Trump**

After inciting a violent mob to attack the capitol building last week, the House of Representatives has moved forward this week with the impeachment of President Trump. On Wednesday, January 13, Trump became the only President in United States history to be impeached twice after lawmakers in the lower legislative chamber voted 232-197 in favor of impeachment. Ten Republicans supported the effort making it the most bipartisan impeachment effort in American history. The [article of impeachment](#)—for inciting insurrection against the United States government—now moves over to the Senate which must consider whether to convict the President of this crime. However, until the results of the Georgia Senate elections are certified, Republican Majority Leader Mitch McConnell still controls the upper legislative chamber and has resisted calls to convene Senators from their ongoing recess before January 19. It therefore remains unclear when the Senate will conduct an impeachment trial of the outgoing President which now is likely to occur after he has left office on January 20.

## Administration Update

### HHS Issues Guidance on School Vouchers Executive Order

On Monday, January 11, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued [guidance](#) for state and local entities administering the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) in relation to a recent [Executive Order](#) issued by President Trump on December 28, 2020. The order seeks to allow the nearly \$700 billion in federal funds from the CSBG program, administered by HHS, to be used to pay for “private school tuition, home schooling, micro schooling, learning-pod expenses, special education services, or tutoring.” The guidance from HHS stipulates that while a grantee may use CSBG funds for this purpose, it must be justified via a statutorily-required community needs assessment which must take place at least once every three years. NSBA is opposed to this use of CSBG funding and will be advocating for it to be rescinded by the Biden administration.

### USED Civil Rights Office Annual Report

On Wednesday, January 13, the U.S. Department of Education’s (USED) Office of Civil Rights (OCR) released its [annual report](#) for the most recent 2020 fiscal year. The report provides an overview of OCR’s civil rights enforcement activities for the past year and highlights specific achievements for the office. In particular, the report highlights the recent creation of the Outreach, Prevention, Education, and Non-Discrimination (OPEN) Center to help OCR proactively investigate civil rights complaints. For the most recent 2020 fiscal year, 45 percent of complaints received by OCR were Section 504/Title II related while 23 percent were related to Title IX. The report also touts the reduction in time it has taken officials to investigate and close investigations.

## Bills

- [H.Con.Res.4](#) Supporting the goals and ideals of No Name-Calling Week in bringing attention to name-calling of all kinds and providing schools with the tools and inspiration to launch an ongoing dialogue about ways to eliminate name-calling, bullying, and harassment in their communities. **Sponsor:** [Rep. Lee, Barbara \[D-CA-13\]](#)
- [H.Res.33](#) Recognizing January 2021 as "National Mentoring Month", and for other purposes. **Sponsor:** [Rep. Scanlon, Mary Gay \[D-PA-5\]](#)

## NSBA Update

**CSALS Call on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 4:00 pm eastern:** Due to the Martin Luther King Holiday the next CSALS call is this Tuesday, January 19 at 4:00 pm eastern. We will be discussing the release of the Biden pandemic relief plan and other issues. The agenda will go out on Tuesday morning. The meeting logistics are below:

Topic: CSALS Meeting

Time: Jan 19, 2021 04:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/99925839494>

Meeting ID: 999 2583 9494

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