



Federal Policy Update **March 10, 2025**

Shutdown Averted (Narrowly): At the start of the week, a government shutdown looked imminent. But on Tuesday, Speaker Johnson managed to get a funding bill that would largely keep the government on autopilot through the House. House Republicans passed a continuing resolution that would fund the government through the end of fiscal year 2025, which ends on September 30, 2025 along mostly party lines of 217-213—with one Democrat voting in favor of it and one Republican voting against it. The bill includes several provisions that would give Congress and the Administration unprecedented discretion to increase or decrease funding levels for programs Congress specifically appropriated. It includes no provisions that Democrats wanted, such as one that would limit DOGE's power to alter funding decisions made by Congress. Senate Democrats remained opposed to the merits of the bill itself. However, the politics of allowing a government shutdown led to intraparty showdowns all week. Democrats were torn between allowing a highly partisan bill that hands more power to the Administration and cuts programs from moving forward and the impact of a government shutdown. Senators across the aisle expressed frustration with deciding between the CR and a shutdown. Senator Murkowski (R-AK) expressed disappointment with the funding measure, stating "Now senators face "a choice between two equally untenable positions...this is our job under the Constitution. It's not the executive's. It's not the president's. It's our job." Ultimately, enough Democrats voted to move forward with the CR, averting a shutdown with just a few hours to go.

Education Department Gutted: While the rumored Executive Order to dismantle the Department of Education (ED) has not yet been issued, newly confirmed Secretary Linda McMahon's email titled "Our Final Mission" from last week foreshadowed a mass reduction in force (RIF) that occurred this week at the Department of Education. The RIF cut more than 1,300 Department staff. When combined with the number of Department of Education employees who took the offered resignation and probationary employees that were laid off, the Department has lost more than half of its staff since January. In addition to entire offices being shuttered, like the Office of Education Technology (OET) and the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA), the RIF severely gutted staff from ED's research divisions, offices of evaluation and planning, and regional civil rights offices. While the impacts of these cuts will take weeks—if not months or years—to be fully known, some are immediately evident: The Department will have 1) limited to no research and evaluation that helps show promising teaching practices and identify where there are areas that need more attention; 2) less lawyers to enforce civil rights laws; 2) less support for state and local agencies that depend on the Department for guidance and implementation assistance; and 4) a reduction in student aid administration and support. It is unclear what is next for ED, including whether or not President Trump will issue his Executive Order or if additional layoffs are still coming.

Authored by Ally Talcott, Founding Partner, Allied for Progress, NSLA Policy Consultant