
FEDERAL RELATIONS

Campus Sexual Assault Legislation Hearing

Before they adjourned for the 113th session of Congress, the Senate Judiciary Committee held a hearing on campus sexual assaults to explore the roles and responsibilities of law enforcement in handling these types of cases. This hearing was part of an ongoing effort to address issues of sexual assault and violence on college campuses. While the Campus Accountability and Safety Act was not considered in the remaining time of the 113th Congress, it is expected to be reintroduced next year.

Omnibus Spending Bill

Before the 113th Congress adjourned on December 16, 2014, Congress adopted an omnibus budget, called the “Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015.” This bill ensures that the government operates with budget certainty until September 2015. Among the provisions included in the last-minute budget agreement was an amendment to a provision in the 2010 Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (Dodd-Frank Act) that will provide banks with the ability to serve their customers and hedge associated risk by expanding the categories of allowable derivative transactions that can take place within a covered institution. These changes will narrow the types of derivatives transactions required to be “pushed out” from the depository institution and into affiliates not backed by the bank-supported FDIC deposit insurance fund.

Congress failed, however, to renew the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act (TRIA). After weeks of negotiations between the two chambers, the House passed a six-year extension of TRIA with a provision amending the Dodd-Frank Act’s application to commercial end-users who rely on derivatives to hedge risk by exempting certain energy and agricultural companies from posting collateral. As with the budget package, House Republicans tried to attach provisions to ease mortgage regulations and pare back the application of the “Volcker Rule,” which restricts banks proprietary trading activity and ownership in or sponsorship of certain hedge and private equity funds. However, these provisions were not included in the House-passed bill.

Ultimately, TRIA renewal failed because Senators could not resolve objections from retiring Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) over an unrelated provision regarding multi-state licensing for insurance agents and brokers. House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) has indicated TRIA will be one of the first issues the 114th Congress will address when it convenes in January, though the substance of the legislation may change to reflect the transition to a Republican-controlled House and Senate. Consideration of TRIA reauthorization early next year may soften the potential impact that the expiration may have on the insurance and other relevant industries relying on TRIA.

The maneuvers taken during the last days of the 113th Congress certainly preview the policy debates and legislative trajectory for the 114th Congress. The 114th Congress will feature a Republican-controlled House and Senate, with a change in leadership in the Senate and a new set of policy priorities from a new slate of Chairmen. Of course, President Barack Obama retains veto power over any legislation.

College Opportunity Summit

On December 4, 2014, the White House held its second College Opportunity Summit focused on helping more students prepare for and graduate from college. President Wilson attended on behalf of Wayne State University, joining other University presidents, school superintendents, business leaders and other education stakeholders. Those who attended the Summit made over 600 new commitments to expand access and opportunities for more students to enroll and succeed in college, particularly low-income and underrepresented students. The White House released a fact sheet that details the commitments which were focused in one of four areas: (1) building networks of colleges focused on promoting completion, (2) creating K-16 partnerships around college readiness, (3) investing in high school counselors as part of the First Lady's Reach Higher initiative, and (4) increasing the number of college graduates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Additionally, the President announced action would also be taken on the following commitments:

- Dedicate \$10 million to research college completion through the Institute of Education Sciences;
- Expand college access through the AmeriCorps Partnership Challenge to provide education awards for AmeriCorps members through public-private partnerships;
- Launch an experimental site to test the impact of making Pell grants available to high school students in dual enrollment programs;
- Expand the FAFSA completion initiative; and
- Produce new customized college access guides and resources through the White House Initiatives on Educational Excellence for Hispanics and Education Excellence for African Americans and the Center for Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

Department of Education College Ratings System

As part of the President's college affordability agenda announced last year, the Department of Education has been working to create a college ratings system that it planned to unveil before the end of the year. The Department has worked with stakeholders to develop the metrics that would be used to rate colleges and universities based on its three key principles – access, affordability, and outcomes – but many stakeholders – including Wayne State University -- have expressed concerns about how the ratings system may be structured. While President Obama originally proposed to tie federal financial aid to the college ratings system, it is unlikely to occur given that it would require Congressional action and Republicans in both chambers have noted their concerns over the proposed system.

WSU Partners with White House on Health Care Enrollment

At the invitation of Heather Foster, Public Engagement Advisor, White House Office of Public Engagement, Wayne State University is partnering with the White House initiative to assist citizens (students and community residents) with signing up for the Affordable Care Act.

The Detroit ACA Strategy Coalition, comprised of the Department of Health and Human Services, Detroit Department of Health and Wellness Promotion, Get Covered America, WSU and other community partners, is mainly driving this effort. Several entities within the university are participating – the Division of Government and Community Affairs, WSU Health Clinic, Mort Harris Fitness Center, the Dean of Students Office and the Schools of Pharmacy, Nursing and Medicine.

The partnership kicked off on Friday, November 14, 2014, and informational sessions and sign-ups will take place on campus each Monday through February 2015. WSU's Health Clinic and the Mort Harris Fitness Center are both providing space for information and sign-ups.

The Dean of Students Office is also canvassing for student volunteers to serve as community enrollment coordinators.

These events are open to all students, faculty and staff. WSU is also partnering with local community organizations to inform the public of these ACA informational and sign-ups events, and have citizens from Detroit and the region come on campus to participate.

WSU also partnered with Enroll America to coordinate a large-scale enrollment event for the White House in Detroit on December 13, 2014 at the Detroit Public Library. A similar event is being considered to take place in January 2015 on WSU's campus.

STATE RELATIONS

New Legislative Leadership

A following is a list of the new leadership for the coming legislature:

Senate

Senate Majority Leader	Arlan Meekhof (R-West Olive)
Senate Majority Floor Leader	Mike Kowall (R-White Lake)
Senate Minority Leader	Jim Ananich (D-Flint)
Senate Minority Floor Leader	Morris Hood, III (D-Detroit)
Senate Appropriations Chair	Dave Hildenbrand (R-Lowell)

House

Speaker of the House	Kevin Cotter (R-Mt. Pleasant)
Majority Floor Leader	Aric Nesbitt (R-Lawton)
House Minority Leader	Tim Greimel (D-Auburn Hills)
House Minority Floor Leader	Sam Singh (D-East Lansing)
House Appropriations Chair	Al Pscholka (R-Stevensville)

Please note that, at this time, many Appropriations Subcommittee members have not yet been named.

Budget/Revenue Update

According to recent news reports, the Senate Fiscal Agency has forecasted that the state's General Fund will end the year with a negative balance due to lower than projected revenue. Specifically, the forecast is \$212.2 million below the May 2014 consensus estimate, and that means the state would close the fiscal year with a negative balance of \$162.2 million based on current revenues and appropriations. The School Aid Fund, however, would end the year with a balance of \$172.7 million.

Governor Names New Director of Strategy

In late December, Governor Snyder named former State Representative John Walsh as his new Director of Strategy. Mr. Walsh will replace Bill Rustem, who retired in 2014.

State of the State

Governor Snyder will deliver his annual "State of the State Address" on January 20th at the State Capitol at 7 p.m.

Legislative Calendar

The House and Senate will resume session on January 14th. At this time, there are no committee meetings scheduled for that week.

Fire Drill Legislation

Legislation that would create new rules and regulations for fire drills on community college and university campuses (both public and private) passed the legislature during the lame-duck session in December. The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 37-0 and the House by a 104-5 vote. At the time of this writing, the bill has not yet been signed by the Governor.

While not a perfect bill, the public and private universities were able to work with the sponsor of the legislation, Sen. Mark Jansen, to make some significant improvements over current law.

Senate Bill 1142 would:

- Eliminate a requirement that fire drills be held on a monthly basis.
- Eliminate a requirement that at least eight fire drills be conducted in a dormitory each school year.
- Eliminate a requirement that at least two tornado safety drills be conducted each school year.

Instead, an institution would have to ensure that each dormitory held one fire drill in the fall semester and one in the spring semester. Additionally, if a dormitory was occupied by students during the summer semester, a fire drill would have to be conducted in that semester.

The one area we still have concerns about is the following language:

"...postsecondary educational institution shall ensure that all instructional staff are trained in fire drill procedures before the beginning of each academic year."

We believe the language is ambiguous and could pose issues. We have presented several different alternatives to the sponsor of the bill but were not able to get changes made to that section.

Overall, the legislation is much better than current law, and we are glad that we were able to make significant changes since its introduction.

Capital Outlay

In a surprising move during the lame duck session of the legislature, the Senate passed legislation to authorize planning for 29 community college and university capital outlay projects by a vote of 30-7. WSU's STEM laboratory classroom project was included in the list of projects.

Interesting to note is that this passage was done with strong objection by the Senate Chair of Appropriations. He claimed that the state could not afford the annual debt service on the projects of approximately \$25-30 million at this time. He, along with the next Senate Majority Leader, voted no on the bill.

Unfortunately, the legislation did not pass the House prior to the end of the calendar year. Therefore, the capital outlay process must start over at the beginning of 2015.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

2014 “Canstruction®” Competition

This is the third year Wayne State University partnered with Gleaners Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan, Kroger and the American Institute of Architects for “Canstruction®.” Canstruction® is a competition where teams design and build giant sculptures made completely of canned food. WSU hosted the Canstruction® Design and Build exhibit on campus at the Welcome Center during NOEL night; the display remained up a week after NOEL Night. Teams included Metro Detroit architects, engineers, contractors, designers and students with backgrounds in engineering, design or architecture.

The 2014 Canstruction® Detroit competition raised \$2,802.47 through the dedication and fundraising efforts of each of the 13 teams and their supporters. In addition to the donations received from the public during the Noel Night viewing and voting. Gleaners received 33,233 pounds of food. Combined, this donation will provide the equivalent of 35,991 meals.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute

Wayne State University will host its annual *Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute* at the Max M. Fisher Music Center on Friday, January 16, 2015. This year’s keynote speakers are Drs. Sampson Davis, Rmck Hunt and George Jenkins, fondly known as “The Three Doctors”. They are extraordinary role models for anyone who has been through any kind of life challenge or major hardship.

Event information:

- Friday January 16, 2015
- Max M. Fisher Music Center, 3711 Woodward Ave., Detroit, MI
- Doors open at 9:00 a.m.
- VIP reception, 9:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.
- Main program, 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
- Strolling lunch, 11:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. (pizza for the students)

Net proceeds from the Tribute support *Adopt-A-Classroom*. *Adopt-A-Classroom* is a nationally recognized organization that invites the community into classrooms to increase opportunity for student success by empowering teachers with community partnerships and funds to purchase resources for their classrooms. Since 2008, more than 35 classrooms in the Detroit area have been sponsored thanks to the support of our event sponsors.

My Brother's Keeper – Detroit Challenge

On December 1, 2014, WSU hosted the kick off to President Obama's My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Detroit Challenge on campus at St. Andrews Hall. This event was led by The Skillman Foundation, Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan and Former Mayor Dave Bing.

More than 130 people participated including a number of African American male students from local high schools. Director Green brought welcome remarks on behalf of the University.

Attendees of this event agreed to:

1. Accept President Obama's My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Challenge
2. Review preliminary data related to Detroit's Boys of Color (BOC)
3. Discuss the assets necessary to reach the MBK – Detroit Challenge's targets
4. Identify potential members of the Plan of Action Task Force & Teams
5. Ensure all BOC out of school are employed