
FEDERAL RELATIONS

House/Senate Tax Cut Resolution for FY18

The House on Thursday, October 26, 2017 adopted a fiscal 2018 budget resolution by a narrow margin, with supporters acknowledging it was little more than a vehicle for a still-developing tax measure. The budget was adopted, 216-212, with all Democrats and 20 Republicans voting against the measure. The Senate adopted this same measure last week. Rep. Justin Amash was the only Michigan Republican who voted against the measure. Its reconciliation instructions allow for up to \$1.5 trillion in revenue losses over the next decade. It would also allow the cap on defense spending to be raised to \$640 billion for fiscal 2018, without the need for offsets.

Since this bill was the exact version passed by the Senate, it will be signed by the President without the need for a conference committee. The details in the legislation will be given by the House Ways and Means Committee on Wednesday, November 1, 2017.

Some of the Republicans voting “no” had concerns over the possible elimination of the state and local tax deduction, or the SALT deduction, as part of the GOP’s tax overhaul. This legislation, because it was adopted under budget reconciliation rules, has eliminated the possibility of a filibuster in the Senate. As such, it only a simple majority to be adopted when the legislation comes from the House Ways and Means Committee, probably before the end of the year. The bill was passed in the Senate because Vice President Mike Pence cast the deciding tie-breaking vote.

President Donald Trump has promised that middle-class Americans will be the biggest beneficiaries of the tax overhaul. However, it remains to be seen which groups will lose their advantages -- a necessary step to help pay for cutting tax rates. Even Republican members of the Ways and Means Committee say they don’t know whether any decisions have been made.

Details about the bill will not be revealed until next week. A key test will be how House leaders deal with the state and local tax deduction, the first flash point in the debate. President Trump and congressional leaders have proposed abolishing that break, which benefits high-tax states that tend to vote Democratic. But several Republican House members from such states want to preserve the break in some form.

The tax framework that the White House and GOP leaders released on Sept. 27 calls for tax rate cuts for individuals and corporations, and is estimated to raise the deficit by \$2.4 trillion. Republicans need to get that number down to \$1.5 trillion under their budget parameters -- a difficult balancing act as they have promised a more generous Child Tax Credit and bigger tax breaks for middle-income families.

On the individual side, the treatment of state and local deductions remains in question. At least 12 Republicans from high-tax states, whose constituents stand to lose if the tax break is repealed, voted no on the House budget Thursday. The most vocal among them have demanded a compromise on the issue.

Chairman Brady has so far resisted pressure to embrace Trump's call for making no changes to the tax-protected status of 401(k) retirement plans. Five Democratic senators -- Debbie Stabenow of Michigan; Sherrod Brown of Ohio; Ron Wyden of Oregon; Ben Cardin of Maryland; and Bob Casey of Pennsylvania -- on Thursday signed a letter warning Republicans against "reducing the opportunities that millions of Americans have to save for their retirement."

The tax cut battle will take place amid a mad dash to complete a tax overhaul by the end of the year. House and Senate leaders hope to pass bills through their chambers by Thanksgiving. As a point of reference, it took about 10 months from when a tax bill was introduced until it was signed by President Ronald Reagan in 1986 -- the last time the U.S. tax code was revamped.

There are, of course, other issues on the congressional agenda. Congress must fund the government to avoid a shutdown by December 8. That could turn ugly, as the White House has signaled it will demand funding for a border wall, and Democrats say they want a solution to protect young undocumented immigrants. Congress also faces impending business to shore up health-care markets, extend flood insurance and revisit the Iran nuclear deal -- all of which could soak up valuable time.

Higher Education Act

Congress has made absolutely no progress on the reauthorization of the 1965 Higher Education Act. Due to the press of legislation as stated earlier, it is highly unlikely that Congress will get to this legislation until the beginning of next year, if at all. This act has not been fully reauthorized since 2008. No hearings, legislation or anything are planned in either of the House or Senate committees of jurisdiction.

Math Corps

We have been working to expand the influence and basis of Wayne State University's successful Math Corps program to universities in the Washington, D.C. region. Specifically, Howard University and the University of DC have expressed interest in Math Corps. We will pursue discussions with Steve Kahn and Darryl Gardner of Math Corps. in this regard.

TRIO Program Funding

Thanks to the intervention of Reps. John Conyers, Jr. and Brenda Lawrence's offices, Wayne State University was able to secure grants totaling more than \$1 million for our TRIO program. The TRIO program includes eight programs targeted to serve and assist low-income individuals, first-generation college students, and individuals with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to post-baccalaureate programs.

STATE RELATIONS

President's Meetings in Lansing

On October 11th, President Wilson came to Lansing to talk with members of the House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee about the state's performance funding metrics and ideas we have to modify them. Vice President Lindsey, David Gregory of Kelly Cawthorne and I accompanied the President in these discussions.

We met with Representatives Kim LaSata (R-St. Joseph, Chair of the Subcommittee), Rob VerHeulen (R-Walker), Jon Hoadley (D-Kalamazoo), Larry Inman (R-Traverse City) and Yousef Rabhi (D-Ann Arbor).

Overall, the meetings went very well. The members were very interested in the topic, receptive to our issues, and generally agreed on the need to have some type of review and/or assessment done on the performance based funding formula.

House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee Hearings

The House Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee held four hearings in the months of September and October, the last two of which discussed performance funding in Higher Education.

In their first hearing, the subcommittee heard testimony from the state's Department of Treasury on the financial aid and scholarship opportunities that are available to college students.

The following week, the subcommittee discussed enrollment outreach to in-state students. The hearing particularly focused on helping at-risk, low income, or first-generation students realize a college education. The subcommittee invited the Michigan College Access Network (MCAN) to present. MCAN's mission is to "increase college readiness, participation, and completion in Michigan, particularly among low-income students, first-generation college-going students, and students of color." While universities were not asked to present, we were able to submit information to the subcommittee on Wayne State's efforts in enrollment outreach.

In the third hearing, the subcommittee received testimony on the state's current performance funding metrics. The subcommittee heard from the House Fiscal Agency (HFA), the Michigan Association of State Universities (MASU) and the Business Leaders for Michigan (BLM)

The HFA's Higher Education analyst walked the subcommittee through the metrics one by one and discussed how much funding (both by percentage and dollar amount) that each metric received as a whole. He discussed when the metrics were implemented and when certain changes to the metrics have been made (the addition of Pell for example).

Dan Hurley of MASU then testified and gave a more global view of the metrics - in Michigan and in other states. He mentioned a couple of studies that have been performed on metrics in other states like Ohio and Tennessee and said that the studies showed that the implementation of metrics didn't really drive results - but that it was the marketplace that drove institutions to improvements. Rather than talking about specific metrics and whether or not there needed to be changes, he impressed upon the subcommittee the need for overall investment in the Higher Education budget.

Finally, Tim Sowton of BLM testified. He gave a more historical view of how the metrics came about and why the BLM supported them and overall investment in Higher Education. He said that their involvement in the metrics was primarily in the Carnegie metrics and their peer comparison. He stated the metrics were good but that he would welcome an opportunity to work with the members if they felt there needed to be changes. Tim mentioned two examples of why the metrics are working. He pointed to GVSU and said the metrics were clearly working because they are amongst the best within their peers and have been rewarded financially for it. Then, he mentioned Wayne State and said that since the metrics have been implemented, our graduation rate has increase dramatically. It was clear that through the questioning from the members on both sides of the aisle, that there would be support to conduct a review of the metrics. Tim did say that he felt that reviewing the metrics, from time to time, to see if they are producing the outcomes the state wants, was a good thing.

In their last of four hearings, the subcommittee talked about performance funding formulas in other states across the country.

Testifying at the hearing were representatives from the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS).

The NCSL gave the subcommittee a brief history of performance funding formulas in states across the country. They then discussed five states and their specific funding formulas: Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, Minnesota and Pennsylvania.

Of the states discussed, none of them allocated more than 20 percent of funding to metrics. NCSL said that was good due to the volatility of state revenues.

The NCSL representative also recommended, as most states do, that these formulas have some type of recognition of the mission differentiation between the universities in a state. She said that it is important to have buy-in from the stakeholders (including the institutions) involved, and that it is important to have stability and not change the metrics every year.

The NCSL representative was asked if any other state used a form of tuition restraint. She responded by saying none that she could think of.

During the testimony from NCHEMS, the representative recommended if there were changes, especially pertaining to a large amount of funding swings, that those changes be phased-in.

He mentioned a newer trend in metrics and one that they might recommend - encouraging collaboration between institutions rather than competing against each other. I would assume in this case, our URC relationship would be one to point to as an example.

The representative from the NCHEMS also said that the pool of performance funding needs to be large enough to matter to the universities. He went on to say that regional goals might need to be accounted for. For example, the regional goals of the Upper Peninsula are different from the Detroit region.

He also agreed with the NCSL on accounting for mission differentiation within the state. Finally, he said that many formulas give recognition for the non-traditional student: low-income; first generation, and older students. He felt this was good, as well, because of the fact that the number of traditional students was in decline.

“Freedom of Speech” Resolution

The House Oversight Committee held a hearing recently on House Joint Resolution P, which would allow the Legislature to provide by law for the protection of free speech, expression, and assembly rights at public institutions of higher education. This legislation would only affect the state’s public universities and community colleges.

The constitutional amendment sponsored by Rep. Jim Runestad (R-White Lake), is similar to the legislation that received a hearing a couple months ago in the State Senate sponsored by Patrick Colbeck (R-Canton).

Unlike Colbeck’s legislation, as a constitutional amendment, Runestad’s resolution requires a two-thirds vote in the full chamber to pass.

The heads of MASU and the Michigan Community College Association testified in opposition to the resolution as they did during the Senate committee recently.

SRO Retreat

The Michigan Association of State Universities (MASU) held a State Relations Officers (SRO) retreat on October 25th. Vice President Patrick Lindsey and Director Greg Bird attended on behalf of WSU.

We heard a presentation from David Winston of the Winston Group in Washington, D.C. The Winston Group is a strategic planning and survey research firm. Winston has served as a strategic advisor to Senate and House Republican leadership for the past 10 years. He was formerly the Director of Planning for Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich.

David discussed the 2016 Presidential election and why he felt the electorate voted the way it did. He then thoroughly discussed his four focus groups from North Carolina and Texas regarding the state of Higher Education. It was a very interesting presentation.

We then had several sessions on what we could do as a group to improve our lobbying practices as well as a session on what we can do personally to improve ourselves.

The other outside presenter we heard from was Lisa Rudgers, who prior to being a partner in her firm (Rudgers Peterson) was the University of Michigan's vice president for global communications and strategic initiatives. She talked to us about crisis communication efforts on college campuses.

CRC Public Policy Dinner

Members of the Division of Government & Community Affairs attended the Citizens Research Council's Annual Public Policy Dinner in late September in East Lansing. Former Speaker of the House and Wayne State Board member emeriti Paul Hillegonds was honored. Other state officials, legislative staff and association members were present.

AASCU Legislative Call

The Division of Government & Community Affairs took part in a country-wide conference call in early October sponsored by AASCU, NCSL and the Education Commission of the States on "Higher Education Policy and the States: A Review of the 2017 Legislative Sessions."

It was interesting, but not surprising, that Michigan, like many other states, is facing similar campus free speech issues; gun issues and performance funding issues (among others).

GOVERNMENT HEALTH AFFAIRS

Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC)

Along with our sub-contractor, Navigant, we have begun to work with MDOC on developing a state plan for 340b drug pricing. 340b is a federal program that allows health care providers to leverage lower prices on prescription drugs for underserved populations. It could save the state of Michigan more than \$20 million per year and potentially provide access to new Hepatitis and HIV/AIDS drugs.

We are also working on a contract to provide MDOC with medical administration support. The prison patient population is directly linked to our mission and gives us an opportunity to be further value added to the state.

Opioid Task Force

The task force recently met and discussed a few new opportunities to avail us to both the community and our student population. We will be partnering with the Youth Connection on a program to bring health science students together to learn better prescribing practices. We will also be hosting a training session with medical students in January on proper prescribing and stigma related to addiction.

Psychiatry Residency Training Grant

We are now working on FY18 contract and have been in contact with Tenet to begin the process. Unlike last year's late process, we anticipate having this contract executed by the end of the year.

Graduate Medical Education (GME) Reform – MIDOCS

MIDOCS hosted its summit in September. The gathering received very positive feedback and was very helpful in designing the proposal. At the last minute, the University of Michigan informed us that they were dropping out of MIDOCS. They indicated that primary care was not a priority for them, especially as it related to FQHC's and the statewide coalition. We are now putting final touches on the proposal and will be submitting it to the state by early November.

Lycaki-Young Fund

We are proud to report that the Lycaki-Young Fund has been fully funded at \$5.6 million for FY18. It took a great deal of effort by the WSU Department of Psychiatry and the government affairs office to get this done. We are now looking to FY19 to shore up this funding. We have a meeting with Michigan Department of Health and Human Services in November to begin the process anew.

Medical School Advocacy Day – November 29th

The medical school will host its advocacy day on November 29th. We will be working with the MPAC-LEAD students to organize the day. It is likely that the students will be advocating on graduate medical education funding, but that is yet to be finalized. BOG members are welcome to join us for the day.

Poison Control Center

WSU is collaborating with DMC to run the state's poison control center for SE Michigan. Unfortunately, the DMC has failed to pay WSU for these services and has refused to execute a new contract. This has deeply concerned the State of Michigan. We are looking into alternative arrangements with the State to resolve this issue.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

National Make-a-Difference Day

Partnering with the AmeriCorps Urban Safety Program, WSU's Center for Urban Studies, and the WSU Dean of Students Office, Government and Community Affairs coordinated the University's participation in Make-A-Difference Day 2017. More than 120 students attended Carver STEM Elementary and Middle School: Safer Pathways to School Event, which secured 17 vacant properties, painted 5 classrooms, and removed a block of graffiti from a vacant property in Carver's school vicinity. This project has increased directly the safety of students walking to and from school.

AmeriCorps secured materials and trained volunteers, WSU's Dean of Students Office supplied student volunteers, supplies, and shuttles from campus to the site, and the Detroit Police Department cleared all properties and provided support throughout the day. Children's Education Division Neighborhood Legal Services provided lunch for the volunteers. University Television filmed the event to use as footage for the 2018 MLK Tribute Program.

Combined Charitable Contributions Campaign

Every year Community Affairs hosts the United Way for Southeastern Michigan (UWSEM) and the Black United Fund (BUF) combined charitable contributions fundraiser. United Way provides our community with an independent safety net of health and human services by supporting a number of community service agencies. The Black United Fund is a community-based resource center that assists community efforts through referrals, funding, consultation and/or technical assistance. Both organizations provide numerous community service programs through a large network of volunteers and donors. The 2018 campaign is scheduled to begin mid-November and end in early December, with the goal of raising \$70,000.

2018 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute Program

Wayne State University will host its annual *Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Tribute* at the Max M. Fisher Music Center on Friday, January 12, 2018. Community Affairs is confirming final details for the keynote speaker. Additional information forthcoming regarding this event.

OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY

Spirit of Community Awards

Nominations are open for the 2018 WSU Spirit of Community Awards. This will be the 2nd annual event honoring members of the WSU community who best exemplify WSU's commitment to community engagement. Nominations will close Friday, November 17. The event will take place March 29, 2018, and is being sponsored by the offices of Government and Community Affairs, the President, Provost, Development, and Dean of Students. Our planning committee met in October and November and will meet three more times prior to the event.

Cision Government Relations Software Update

All testing is complete and Cision Government Relations software is up and running. Once final approval is secured from the Vice President, we will send out our introductory email. Advocacy emails will be sent to more than 400,000 members of the Wayne State community.

Thanksgiving Preview Party

WSU's 3rd Annual Thanksgiving Parade Preview reception will take place on Wednesday, November 22, 2017, at the Tierney Alumni House. This festive fall event will once again give the President and the Division an opportunity to thank community leaders and partners for their continued support of the University.

Meeting with WSU HIGH Program & Dept. of Education

On Tuesday, September 19, Brianna Ellison accompanied First Lady Jacqueline Wilson and James Williams, WSU's director of federal relations, in Washington D.C. to attend a meeting with Department of Education Undersecretary James Manning. Mrs. Wilson led the meeting, introducing the HIGH Program, its goals and progress. Undersecretary Manning was particularly interested in the program's fundraising goals, whether other universities across the U.S. have similar programs, and wanted to know more about other happenings around Wayne State. Undersecretary Manning indicated that he would be following up with some ideas for potential resources for the HIGH Program.

WSU Community Engagement Meeting

The quarterly community engagement team meeting was held on October 3. This was our first off-site meeting. We were hosted at the District Detroit offices downtown. In addition to the regular meeting updates and announcements, we discussed the form and role of the group moving forward. The group decided that we will meet three times annually and that we will not establish formal committees unless needed for a specific purpose. There was also much conversation and interest in a coordinated approach to collecting metrics on engagement and impact from across the University.