

The Who, What, and Where of Higher Education Advocacy

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Funding from the U.S. government to higher education

	2015	2025
Student Aid	\$116 billion	\$132 billion
• Pell Grants	\$29 billion	\$39 billion
• Loans	\$87 billion	\$93 billion
GI Bill	\$14 billion	\$13 billion
Research	\$113 billion	\$202 billion

How Higher Education Does Public Policy

- Advocacy organized around trade associations and campus lobbyists
- Includes Presidents, individual faculty, scientific societies, students, and others
- Advocacy around agencies, programs, funding, and policy
- Partnered with allied non-profits, research orgs, Chambers, state and local govts

How do we do that?

- Influence Congress and legislation
- Work with the Executive Agencies
- Submit amicus briefs to the Courts
- No PACs

Congress and Key Committees

Leadership: Majority Leader Thune (R-SD); Minority Leader Schumer (D-NY); House Speaker Johnson (R-LA), Minority Leader Jefferies (D-NY)

- Leadership is decided by the Caucuses

Authorization committees

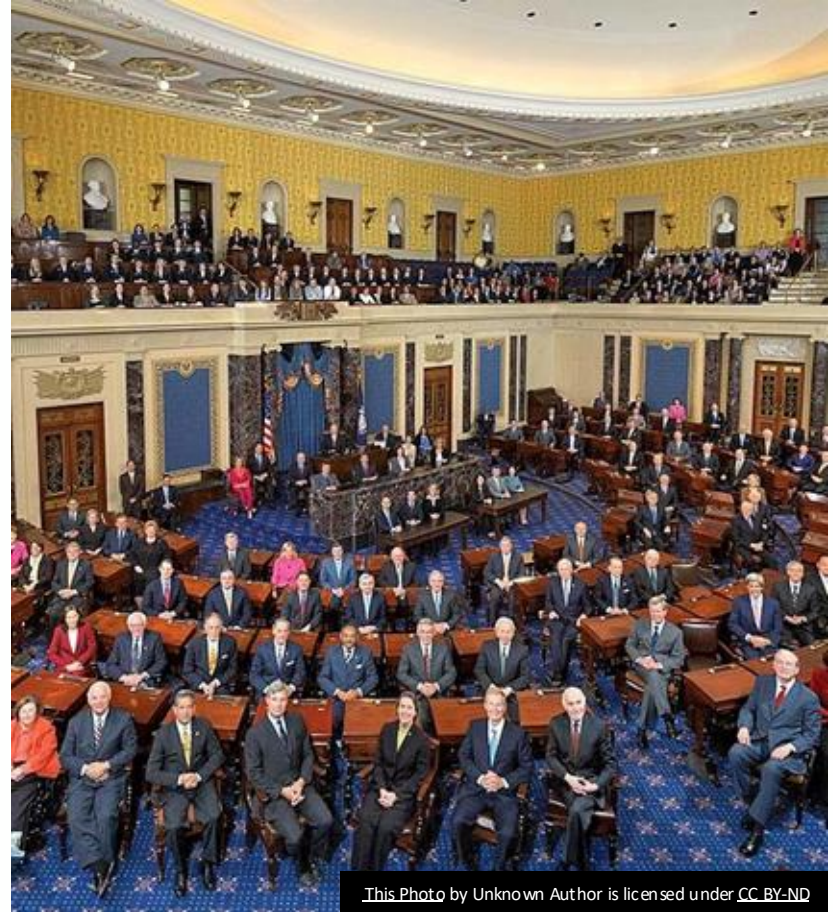
- Senate HELP, House Education and Workforce
- Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation, House Science
- House Energy and Water
- House Ways and Means
- Senate Foreign Relations, House Foreign Affairs
- Senate HSGAAC, House Homeland Security

Congress and Key Committees (cont.)

Appropriations Committees

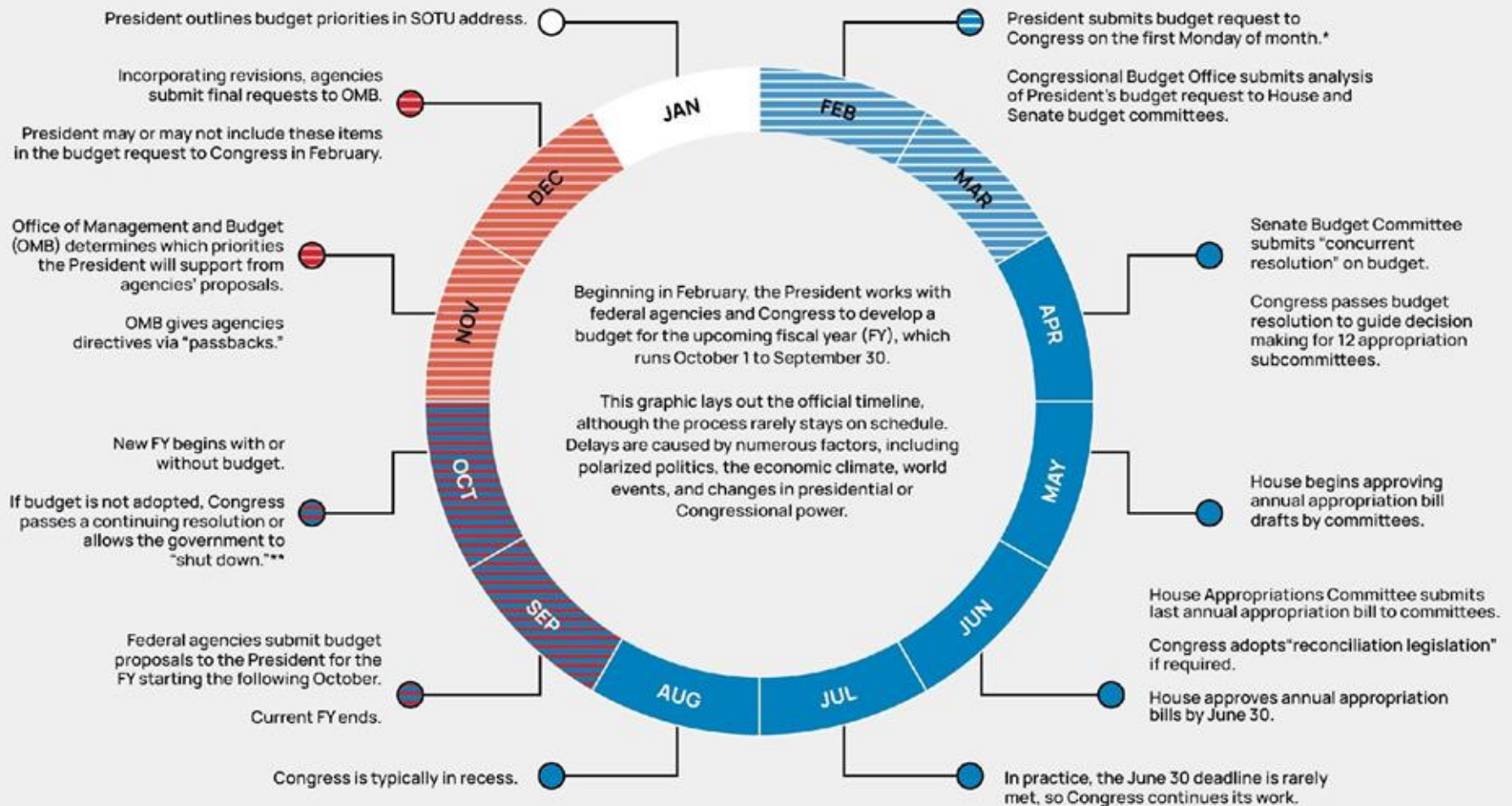
- 12 Committees
- President proposes Budget in February
- Federal Fiscal Year- begins October 1st
- Continuing Resolutions

Lots of challenges and opportunities!



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THE FEDERAL BUDGET TIMELINE



* in accordance with The Budget and Accounting Act of 1921.

** meaning all non-essential programs close and workers are furloughed.

CBG = Center for Business and Government

OMB = Office of Management and Budget

SOTU = State of the Union

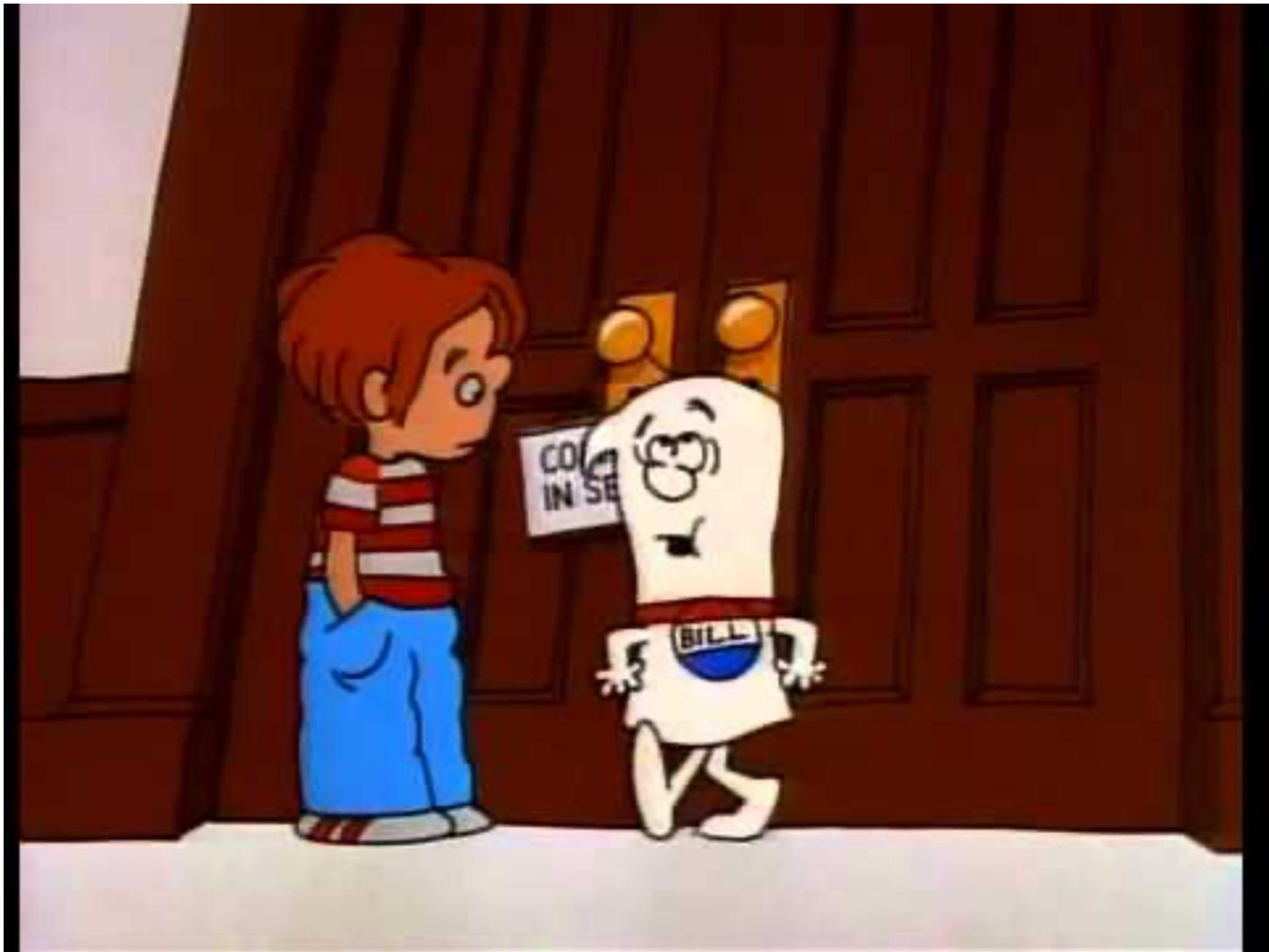
FY = Fiscal Year

● Congress

● Federal agencies

○ President / OMB

I'm just a bill- Schoolhouse Rock



What's missing?

- Hearings and markups
- Amendments
- Conference action
- White House and leadership input and activity
- Need for bipartisan support
- Courts after a bill becomes a law
- Reconciliation process and filibuster rules

What do you need to be an effective higher education lobbyist?

- You don't need a public policy degree or a law degree
 - Hill and/ or administration experience helps
 - Flexible enough to move among issues
- Need to be non-partisan
- You need to believe in the issues you are lobbying on
 - Representation of institutions
 - For higher education, some thorny issues

Two examples of higher ed lobbying

Example #1

- Ban on institutions hosting Confucius Institutes
- Opposing or improving the language
- Congress, the National Academies, Federal Agencies
- Outcome: Two year delay, and efforts to demonstrate importance of global partnerships

Example #2 (on-going)

- Proposed rule on Uniform Guidance to remake grant processes
- Learning from efforts to block indirect cost rates

Q&A

Two years into administration

- Higher Ed in crosshairs
- Record setting pace, “flood the field”
- Focus on social issues (DEI, gender definitions, anti-“woke”)
- Reshaping the federal government



How a bill does NOT become a law- SNL



What is different this time?

- Clear agenda and policy priorities
- OMB has plans and how to implement them
- Congress unwilling or unable to push back
- Litigation is slow, outcomes uncertain



Post 2026

- Higher ed is a lower priority, higher risk
- Structure, not noise
- Midterms & Congress- lots of panic



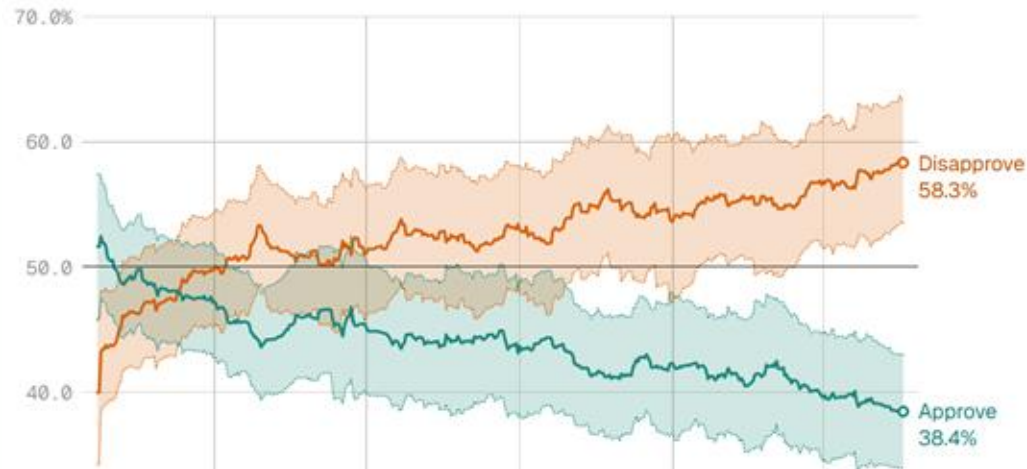
Trump's Approval Ratings

Do Americans **approve** or **disapprove** of Donald Trump?

An updating polling average of Donald Trump's approval rating and disapproval rating in his second term, accounting for each poll's quality, recency, sample size, and partisan lean

Approval/disapproval

Net approval



Midterms - House

House Elections 2026

			
Current	212	219	4 *
Consensus Forecast	205	211	19
Prediction Markets	224	206	5
Kalshi			

Midterms - Senate

Senate Elections 2026

				
Current	47  45  2	0	53	
Consensus Forecast	47  45  2	0	49	4
Prediction Markets Kalshi	50  48  2	0	49	1

What It Means for 2027

- If House flips, lots of oversight hearings
- Even fewer pieces of legislation
- Admin digs in, set up for 2028



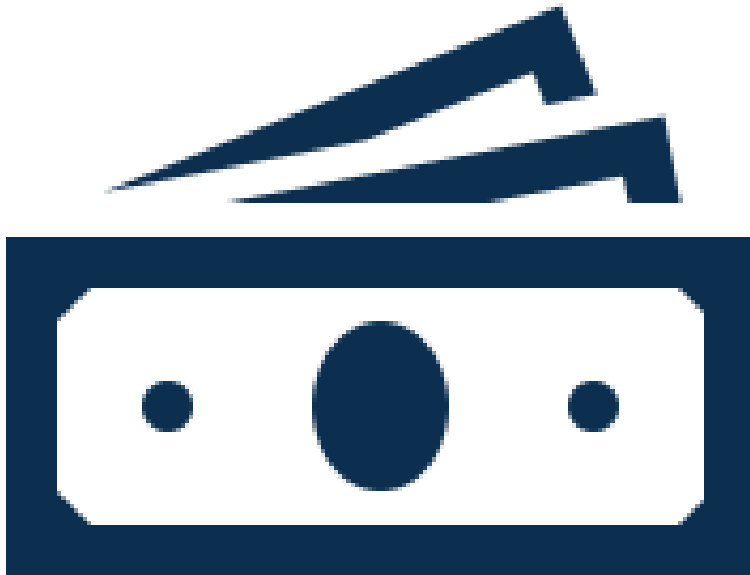
Congress

Continuing Trump agenda

- FY27 President's budget= massive cuts
- Congress still not supportive of PBR
- Reconciliation Part 3?
- SAVE Act, War funds



FY27: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly



- Funding for NIH, NSF, ED programs
- Pell shortfall
- What does it mean to be funded?
- Not likely to finish pre-midterms

Remaining Agenda



- Not a lot
- NDAA/ CR
- Hearings and political statements
- Shutdown?

Reconciliation

The Real HEA Reauthorization



- Massive impact
- Aid, lending and repayment
- Accountability

Rushed Implementation

- No master calendar
- Late arriving regs
- Pending litigation



Broad Impact Of Loan Changes

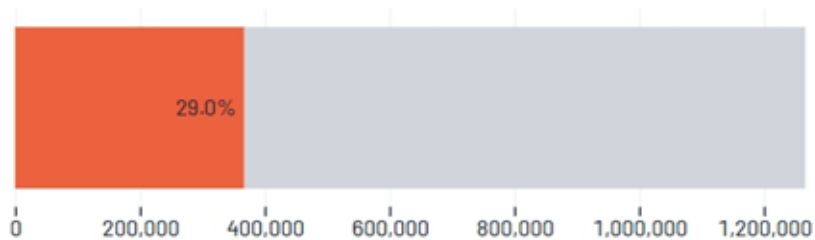
- Philly Fed analysis
- Role of private market
- Proration and student choice



Unmet Need

Borrowers

■ Borrowers Affected ■ Borrowers Unaffected



367,518

Borrowers Affected of 1,266,247

Loan Volume

■ Loan Volume Affected ■ Loan Volume Unaffected



\$8.7B

Loan Volume Affected of \$34.4B

\$23,633

Average Loan Volume Per Affected Borrower

Credit Availability

Table 3. Distribution of Risk Scores by Institution Control and Program Sector, Federal Loan Borrowers Only

			Risk Score Dist., Conditional on Borrowing Above New Fed. Limit						
	Above New Limits	Avg. Borrowing >New Limits	No Risk Score	300–619	620–669	670–739	740–799	800–850	Adverse Credit History
All borrowers	28%	\$21,700	6%	17%	15%	42%	18%	2%	16%
Loan volume above new lim.*			7%	16%	14%	42%	19%	3%	15%
Institution Control									
Public	25%	\$17,200	6%	17%	15%	42%	17%	2%	16%
Private not-for-profit	34%	\$24,900	6%	15%	15%	43%	18%	3%	15%
Private for-profit	14%	\$18,500	4%	40%	16%	25%	13%	2%	36%

Accountability Measure



- Earnings metrics
- Title IV eligibility
- At-risk fields

Administration

Remaking Accreditation

- Numerous steps
- Political process
- Foregone conclusion



Efforts to end Department of ED

- Numerous steps
- Political process
- Foregone conclusion



Admin Efforts on Diversity



- IPEDS ACTS
- GSA certification
- Resolution agreements
- HUD letter on college housing

Historic changes to grant processes



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- 2025 efforts on IDC
- August 2025 EO on grant making
- Proposed changes to Uniform Guidance

International Students & Scholars

- Huge drop in new students
- Rhetoric and policy
- Pending changes



What should institutions do?

- Prepare for the worst and hope for the best
- Understand federal budgets will be constrained/ uncertain for next 3 years
- Be flexible, don't immediately react
- Work with delegation to communicate priorities, and importance of higher ed

Questions?