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**NEWS: Senate Committee Clears FY2019 Labor, HHS, & Education Appropriations Bill**

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**Appropriations GOP Press (Appropriations)**

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RICHARD SHELBY OF ALABAMA, CHAIRMAN

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**SENATE COMMITTEE CLEARS FY2019 LABOR, HHS, & EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS BILL**

***Panel Supports Increased Funding for NIH Research, Opioid Abuse Fight, Pell Grants***

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Senate Committee on Appropriations today **advanced** the FY2019 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (Labor-HHS) Appropriations Act, which continues investments in critical medical research, opioid abuse prevention and treatment, and education.

The committee-approved funding measure contains \$179.3 billion, an increase of \$2.2 billion above the FY2018 level, in base discretionary funding for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies. In addition, the bill includes \$711 million pursuant to the 21st Century Cures Act. The measure was advanced by a vote of 30-1.

“This legislation continues investments in programs that affect the health and well-being of all Americans. The bill includes important funding increases for medical research and initiatives to fight the opioid epidemic, while also prioritizing education and job training opportunities,” **said Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Ala.)**. “Senators Blunt and Murray worked diligently to craft this bipartisan bill. I am pleased to recommend it to the Senate.”

“This bill prioritizes resources for programs that touch the lives of every American and address the biggest challenges facing our nation,” **said U.S. Senator Roy Blunt (R-Mo.)**, chairman of the Senate Labor-HHS Appropriations Subcommittee. “Working within the limits of the budget agreement, we were able to continue our commitment to advancing medical research, fighting the opioid epidemic, improving rural health care, and ensuring students have the education and job training to be successful. These are all areas where federal investment is needed to strengthen communities, promote economic growth, and increase U.S. competitiveness.”

“Every taxpayer dollar the government spends should be spent wisely or not at all. That means we need to continue efforts to crack down on waste, fraud, and abuse, and this bill does so. The resources provided in the bill will save taxpayers billions over the next decade. I’m proud we were, for the third year in a row, able to come together in a bipartisan way to advance a bill that merits the support of the full Senate,” **continued Blunt**.

### **Bill Highlights:**

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- **National Institutes of Health (NIH)** – \$2 billion increase. Since Republicans took back the Senate starting with the FY2016 appropriations cycle, the Committee has increased funding for NIH by \$9 billion or 30 percent.
- **Fighting Opioid Abuse** – \$3.7 billion, an increase of \$145 million. Funds are targeted towards improving treatment and prevention efforts; finding alternative pain medications;

workforce needs, especially in our rural communities; and behavioral health. Funding for opioids has increased by \$3.5 billion, or nearly 1,300 percent, since FY2015.

- **Access to High Quality Early Childhood Care and Education** – Includes a \$250 million increase for Head Start and maintains the historic increase provided last year for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, to help improve the quality of child care programs and expand access to high-quality child care for working families.
- **Mental Health** – As a critical part of both combating opioid abuse and ensuring safety in our schools and communities, the bill provides \$3.4 billion, a \$195 million increase, for mental health treatment, prevention, and research.
- **Public Health Preparedness** – \$3.5 billion, an increase of \$113 million, to help communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from public health and medical disasters.
- **Elementary and Secondary Education** – The bill prioritizes formula grants that provide the most flexibility for states and school districts to decide how to best use limited resources to meet the educational needs of students and families. The bill includes a combined \$400 million increase for: Title I Grants to school districts; IDEA/Special Education State grants; Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants; and Impact Aid.
- **College Affordability and Completion** – Includes a \$100 increase, or 1.6 percent, for the maximum Pell grant award, to \$6,195 for the 2018-19 academic year. The bill continues support for Year Round Pell, and continues significant increases provided last year for campus-based aid programs, TRIO, Public Service Loan Forgiveness, and other higher education programs.

## **DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**

The bill provides \$12.1 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Labor, \$92 million below FY2018.

**Veterans Employment Training (VETS) Programs** – \$300 million, an increase of \$5 million above FY2018. VETS funding provides for intensive employment services to veterans and eligible spouses, transitioning service members, wounded warriors, and disabled veterans. This increased funding will support veterans in transition from the military to the civilian workforce.

**Rural Workforce Training Initiative** – \$30 million for the dislocated worker training initiative to provide reemployment and training assistance to dislocated workers in rural areas of the country hit hardest by the recession and recovering more slowly. Funding is devoted to training those who have lost their jobs in the Appalachian and Delta regions to ensure they can adapt existing skills and learn new skills demanded by other growing industries and return to work as soon as possible. \$5 million of these funds are directed to support workforce training activities for individuals affected by an opioid use disorder.

**Apprenticeship Opportunities** – \$160 million, an increase of \$15 million, for training programs utilizing the flexible and effective apprenticeship model.

**Workforce Training Programs** – \$2.8 billion distributed by formula to states and localities to meet each state’s unique job training and reemployment needs.

**Governor’s Statewide Reserve** – The bill once again allows the full 15 percent state training grant funding reserve for governors to address a variety of statewide training needs, projects, expanded partnerships, emergency response, and other services as needed throughout their states.

**Job Corps** – \$1.7 billion to support the nation’s largest career technical training and educational program for at-risk youth, with centers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Approximately 95 percent of Job Corps students successfully attain industry-recognized certifications.

**YouthBuild** – \$89.5 million to help at-risk high school drop-outs develop skills and knowledge to obtain industry-recognized job credentials, apprenticeships, and employment.

## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

The bill provides \$90.1 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Health and Human Services, a \$2.3 billion increase above the comparable FY2018 level.

**National Institutes of Health** – \$39.1 billion, an increase of \$2 billion, or 5.4 percent, above FY2018. The bill includes:

- \$2.3 billion for Alzheimer’s disease research, a \$425 million increase. For the first time, funding in this year’s bill meets and surpasses the \$2 billion funding goal for research laid out in the National Plan to Address Alzheimer’s disease.
- \$500 million for research on opioid addiction, development of opioids alternatives, pain management, and addiction treatment.
- \$429.4 million for the BRAIN Initiative to map the human brain, a \$29 million increase;
- \$361.8 million for the Institutional Development Award, a \$11.2 million increase;
- \$376 million for the *All of Us* precision medicine study, a \$86 million increase;
- \$550 million to Combat Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria, a \$37 million increase;
- \$560 million for the Clinical and Translational Science Award, a \$17.32 million increase;
- \$12.6 million for the Gabriella Miller Kids First Research Act;
- \$120 million for research on the universal flu vaccine, a \$20 million increase;
- Increases to every Institute and Center to continue investments in innovative research to advance fundamental knowledge and speed the development of new therapies, diagnostics, and preventive measures to improve the health of all Americans.

**Fighting Opioid Abuse** – \$3.7 billion, an increase of \$145 million. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), opioid overdoses now surpass motor vehicle accidents as the number one cause of accidental death in the country with over 42,000 deaths from an opioid overdose in 2016. The bill includes investments for the following activities:

- \$200 million for Community Health Centers to support and enhance behavioral health, mental health, or substance use disorder services.
- \$120 million focused on responding to the opioid epidemic in rural communities. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, drug-related deaths are 45 percent higher in rural communities, with rural states more likely to have higher rates of overdose deaths.
- Maintains \$476 million at CDC for opioid overdose prevention and surveillance as well as a public awareness campaign. The bill includes \$5 million for a new initiative in CDC to combat infectious diseases directly related to opioid use;
- \$500 million for research related to opioid addiction, development of opioid alternatives, pain management, and addiction treatment;
- \$1.5 billion for SAMHSA’s State Opioid Response Grant, which continues a 15 percent set-aside for states with the highest mortality rate related to opioid use disorders and a \$50 million set-aside for Indian tribes and tribal organizations. Funding replaces \$500 million expiring from 21st Century CURES;

- \$150 million, an increase of \$50 million for Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers;
- \$60 million, the same as the FY2018 level, for child abuse prevention and treatment programs to support the development and implementation of plans of infant safe care to improve and better-coordinate services for newborn children exposed to substances and their families or caregivers;
- \$40 million, the same as the FY2018 level, for mental health and substance use prevention and treatment for children and families in, or at-risk of entering, the foster care system;
- In addition to these amounts specifically directed to address the opioid crisis, the bill also provides \$1.9 billion for the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant.

**Mental Health** – \$1.6 billion, \$79 million above FY2018, for mental health programs at Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Within this total, the bill provides \$748 million for the Mental Health Block Grant, an increase of \$25 million, and \$150 million, an increase of \$50 million, for new grants to Certified Community Behavioral Health Centers that meet the standards set forth in the Excellence in Mental Health and Addiction Treatment Expansion Act.

**Community Health Centers (CHCs)** – \$1.63 billion for CHCs that serve more than 24 million patients per year through 10,400 health centers nationwide. \$200 million is provided for CHCs to expand behavioral health and substance use disorder prevention and treatment services, including opioid abuse, and provide access to overdose reversal drugs and recovery support services.

**Obamacare** – The bill does not provide new funding for the Affordable Care Act (ACA). In addition, several oversight provisions are included in the agreement:

- **Risk Corridor** – Continues a provision requiring the Administration to operate the ACA Risk Corridor program in a budget neutral manner by prohibiting any funds from the Labor-HHS Appropriations bill from being used as payments for the Risk Corridor program.
- **ACA Congressional Notification** – Directs the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to notify the appropriate Congressional committees two business days before any ACA-related data or grant opportunities are released to the public.
- **Health Exchange Transparency** – Includes bill language requiring the Administration to publish ACA-related spending by category since its inception.

- **ACA Personnel** – Includes bill language requiring the Administration to publish information on the number of employees, contractors, and activities involved in implementing, administering, or enforcing provisions of the ACA.

**Rural Health Care** – \$318.8 million, \$28 million above FY2018, for rural health programs. The obstacles faced by patients and providers in rural communities are unique and often significantly different than those in urban areas. The bill focuses resources toward efforts and programs to help rural communities, including \$25.5 million, \$2 million above FY2018, for Telehealth. The Telehealth program expands the use of telecommunications technologies within rural areas that can link rural health providers and patients with specialists.

**Children’s Hospitals Graduate Medical Education (CHGME)** – \$325 million, \$10 million above FY2018. The CHGME program protects children’s access to high quality medical care by providing freestanding children’s hospitals with funding to support the training of pediatric providers.

**Global Health Security** – \$98 million, maintaining current funding for the global health security agenda.

**Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)** – \$5.2 billion, level with FY2018, which maintains the historic \$2.4 billion increase provided last year to help states fully implement the 2014 reauthorization of the CCDBG Act. This will help states improve the quality of child care programs, including increasing provider rates and ensuring health and safety standards are met, and expand working families’ access to quality, affordable child care.

**Head Start** – \$10.1 billion, \$250 million above FY2018. This includes \$215 million to help all Head Start programs keep up with costs, recruit and retain highly qualified staff, maintain enrollment, and provide high-quality early childhood services for children and families. An additional \$35 million is provided to expand the length of Head Start programs’ day and year to increase the duration of services provided to children and families.

**Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)** – \$3.7 billion, a \$50 million increase, for home heating and cooling assistance for low-income households.

**Medicare Appeals** – \$182 million, maintaining the \$75 million new investment from fiscal year 2018, to reduce the Medicare appeals backlog. Reducing the backlog is critical providing timely resolution to Medicare appeals for the medical community.

**Public Health Preparedness and Response** – The bill includes additional funding for critical preparedness and response activities:

- **Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA)** – \$562 million, \$25 million above FY2018. BARDA is responsible for advanced research and development of medical countermeasures for national preparedness efforts.
- **Project BioShield** – \$735 million, \$25 million above FY2018, to enhance national preparedness activities by procuring medical countermeasures against chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats.
- **Pandemic Influenza** – \$285 million, \$35 million above FY2018, to improve the response and enhance the effectiveness of current pandemic influenza capabilities.
- **Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP)** – \$680 million, \$10 million above FY2018, to help states to prepare, respond, and recover from emerging threats such as natural disasters, disease outbreaks, and chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats.

**Area Health Education Centers (AHECs)** – \$40.25 million, \$2 million above FY2018. These centers develop and maintain a diverse health care workforce, broaden the distribution of the health workforce, enhance health care quality, and improve health care delivery to rural and underserved areas and populations.

**Victims of Trafficking** – \$27 million, \$3 million above FY2018, for services for victims of human trafficking.

## **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

The bill provides \$71.4 billion in discretionary funding for the Department of Education, a \$541 million increase above the comparable FY2018 level.

**Promoting college access, completion and affordability**



- **Pell Grants** – Increases the maximum Pell grant award to \$6,195, an increase of 1.6 percent or \$100, to help students keep up with rising costs, limit the need for student loans, and ultimately graduate with less debt. The bill also continues support for Year Round Pell.
- **Campus-Based Aid Programs** – \$840 million for Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants and \$1.1 billion for Federal Work Study, both level with FY2018. These programs provide funding for college and universities to design financial aid programs to best meet the needs of their students.
- **TRIO** – \$1.01 billion, level with FY2018, for TRIO programs that provide services to students from disadvantaged backgrounds and first generation college students to help them enter and complete college and postgraduate education.
- **Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF)** – The bill continues funding and authority provided last year that modifies eligibility for the PSLF program, and makes student borrowers eligible for PSLF if they were enrolled in an ineligible repayment plan, but otherwise would have been eligible for PSLF.

**State and Local Flexibility in Elementary and Secondary Education** – The bill prioritizes funding for programs that provide the most flexibility for states and local school districts to decide how to best use limited resources, including support for STEM education and ensuring safe learning environments.

- **Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies** – \$15.9 billion, a \$125 million increase, for this foundational Federal support for school districts and schools with a high percentage of low-income students to help all students succeed and meet challenging state academic standards.
- **Title IV Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants** – \$1.2 billion, an increase of \$125 million, to support activities to provide students with a well-rounded education, including STEM education and computer science; ensure safe and supportive learning environments, including to help prevent and respond to school violence; and use technology to improve instruction.
- **IDEA Grants to States** – \$13.3 billion, a \$125 million increase, for grants to states under parts B and C of the IDEA, to support special education services for children with disabilities, including grants for infants and families and children in preschool.
- **Impact Aid** – \$1.4 billion, a \$25 million increase, to provide flexible support to local school districts impacted by the presence of federally-owned land and activities, such as military bases.
- **Adult Education State Grants** – \$642 million, a \$25 million increase.
- **Career and Technical Education State Grants** – \$1.2 billion, level with FY2018.

**Charter Schools** – \$445 million, a \$45 million increase, for grants to states, charter management organizations, and other related entities for the start-up, replication, and expansion of high-quality charter schools, including funding for facilities. This includes \$7.5 million to expand charter schools in rural areas.

**STEM Education** – \$65 million, an increase of \$15 million, in dedicated funding for evidence-based STEM education programs, including computer science education, within the Education Innovation and Research program. The bill also includes a \$125 million increase for Student Support and Academic Enrichment formula grants, flexible funding that all school districts can use for a wide-range of activities including STEM education.

**21st Century Community Learning Centers** - \$1.2 billion, level with FY2018, for grants to states to support academic enrichment activities for students before school, after school, and during the summer.

**Rural Education** – \$180 million, level with FY2018, for additional support to meet the unique needs of small rural schools and school districts.

**School Safety and Safe Learning Environments** – \$95 million, a \$5 million increase, at the Department of Education for activities that include evidence-based programs to improve school climates, prevent violence, and provide services for students in response to incidents of violence. In addition, the bill includes a \$125 million increase for Student Support and Academic Enrichment formula grants that can be used by every school district to support a wide range of activities including school counseling and school-based mental health programs. Funding is also maintained at the Department of Health and Human Services for programs that provide mental health support to schools and school-age children.

## **RELATED AGENCIES**

**Institute of Museum and Library Services** – \$242 million, a \$2 million increase above FY2018. This agency supports programs for museums and libraries that encourage innovation, provide life-long learning opportunities, promote cultural and civic engagement, and improve access to a variety of services and information.

**Corporation for Public Broadcasting** – \$445 million for FY2021, level funding with FY2020. An additional \$20 million is provided for the current year (FY2019) to continue the process of upgrading the public broadcasting interconnection system.

**Corporation for National and Community Service** – \$1.1 billion, a \$6 million decrease, including: \$415 million for AmeriCorps grants, an increase of \$3 million, and \$202 million for Senior Corps and \$32 million for the National Civilian Community Corps, both level with FY2018.

## **OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Increasing the Efficiency and Cost Effectiveness of Government** – The bill provides funding for activities aimed at reducing fraud, waste, and abuse of taxpayer dollars, including:

- **Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessments** – \$150 million to conduct enhanced, in-person assessments to accelerate the reemployment of Unemployment Compensation recipients to reduce the duration of their time receiving benefits and the likelihood of exhausting benefit coverage. These actions would also help protect the integrity of the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund by reducing improper payments. This program has been shown to save \$2.60 for every \$1.00 spent.
- **Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control (HCFAC)** – \$765 million, a \$20 million increase above FY2018, is provided by utilizing the cap adjustment provided in the Budget Control Act. For every \$1.00 spent on HCFAC, \$2.00 is recovered by the U.S. Treasury. This will create over \$10.2 billion in savings to the Treasury over 10 years.
- **Preventing Social Security Disability Fraud, Abuse, and Improper Payments** – \$1.7 billion. This funding supports periodic reviews to ensure that individuals receiving Social Security disability benefits are still eligible under program rules. This funding is estimated to save approximately \$9 billion over 10 years for the Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid programs.

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