



# Capitol News!

National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

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Dear Susan,

Welcome to *Capitol News!* In this issue you will find information on legislation introduced by members of Congress. We are still asking members to assist in recruiting co-sponsors and support for H.R. 1098, the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Reauthorization Act of 2013. For further information on H.R. 1098 and other key issues visit the NASHIA website ([www.nashia.org](http://www.nashia.org)). Should you wish additional information about the bill or to visit about your representative's support of brain injury, please do not hesitate to contact Susan Vaughn, Director of Public Policy, at [publicpolicy@nashia.org](mailto:publicpolicy@nashia.org) or call 753-636-6946.

## This Week in Congress

Congress is in recess this week for the July 4th holiday. While members are at home, they are often visible in their communities, participating in parades, community picnics, and fairs, presenting an excellent time for talking about TBI Act reauthorization and funding. Congress will return to Washington, D.C. next Monday, July 8, to resume work on critical issues.



## Budget and Appropriations

### Budget

The Senate Appropriations Committee has approved the funding allocations for the 12 subcommittees which make recommendations for spending for federal programs. Overall, the Senate allocations provide \$91 billion more than the House Committee for discretionary programs. The Senate committee allocated \$164.3 billion to the Labor, Health and Human Services and Education bill, nearly \$43 billion more than the \$121.8 billion approved by the House Appropriations Committee. The Senate allocations assume that Congress will act to repeal and replace the sequester (across the board cuts) that began March 1 with targeted cuts, similar to the President's recommendations.

On June 20th, Senate Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) announced that Senator Chris Coons (D-DE) has been selected to replace the late Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) who passed away earlier this month.

### FY 2014 Appropriations

Meanwhile, the House and Senate appropriators are currently marking up FY 2014 spending bills using different overall discretionary limits as reported above. The Senate Committee plans to approve individual bills throughout late June and July, with most programs likely to see at least modest increases in funding over current levels. The House and Senate both intend to hold votes on their respective appropriations bills; however, the two chambers are \$91 billion apart in spending amounts.

#### **CDC Issues Release on Effect of Sequestration (FY 2013)**

Last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released the [impact of sequestration on CDC programs](#). As required by the Budget Control Act of 2011, sequestration requires CDC to cut 5 percent, or \$285 million of its FY 2013 budget. CDC must apply the cut evenly across all programs, projects, and activities (PPAs). CDC reductions due to sequestration include \$160 million less in funding to on-the-ground public health entities in the United States, \$33 million in cuts to State and local preparedness, a \$40 million reduction in HIV prevention efforts, and substantial cuts to global disease protection and chronic disease prevention. Funds for injury and violence prevention were also cut by \$7.2 million for FY 2013.

#### **Other Legislation**

##### **Senators Introduce Bill to Improve Rehabilitation Research**

This week, Senators Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Tim Johnson (D-SD) introduced S. 1027 to improve, coordinate, and enhance rehabilitation research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The bill is designed to enhance coordination within NIH and with other federal agencies, update and streamline rehabilitation research priorities, and facilitate implementation of recommendations published in December 2012 by a distinguished NIH Blue Ribbon Panel on Rehabilitation Research. That panel concluded that rehabilitation research is not thriving at NIH and offered a comprehensive set of recommendations for the agency to address.

The legislation is supported by the Disability Rehabilitation and Research Coalition (DRRC), which is a national coalition of nearly 30 consumer, disability, provider and scientific organizations with the mission to promote and enhance rehabilitation research across the federal agencies. NASHIA is a member of the DRRC and signed on to a letter in support of the bill.

##### **Illinois Senators Introduce Rehabilitation Centers Bill**

Last week, Senators Mark Kirk (R-IL) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) introduced S. 1220, the Preserving Rehabilitation Centers Act of 2013. The bill designates a national network of unique inpatient rehabilitation facilities that are national leaders in research and innovative care for individuals with complex rehabilitation needs. These designated rehabilitation facilities are often a last resort for people with wartime injuries from burns and amputations, spinal cord injuries, rare neurological diseases, traumatic brain injury, and stroke.

On Monday, Senators Kirk and Durbin attended the groundbreaking of the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago's massive state-of-the-art medical facility that will feature cutting-edge technology meant to change the way physical medicine and rehabilitation is delivered in the United States. The facility will feature five interdisciplinary Innovation Centers to dedicated brain, spinal cord, nervous system and limb impairments in adults and children.

##### **Elementary and Secondary Education Act**

On June 19th, the House Education and the Workforce committee passed the Student Success Act, H.R. 5, reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The Student Success Act (H.R. 5), introduced by John Kline (R-MN), Chairman of the House Workforce and Education Committee, would eliminate more than 70 education programs and consolidate others; eliminate federal accountability standards for students with disabilities; and eliminate requirements for "highly qualified teachers". The purpose is to restore local control, reduce the federal role in the classrooms, support more effective teachers, and empower parents. The bill eliminates federally mandated actions and interventions currently required of poor performing schools, giving States and districts maximum flexibility to develop appropriate school improvement

strategies and rewards for their schools. The bill supports opportunities for parents to enroll their children in local magnet schools and charter schools, and enhances statewide parental engagement.

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pension (HELP) Committee has also passed its version, the Strengthening America's Schools Act, introduced by Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA). It confirms performance targets for schools, eliminates alternate assessments based on modified achievement standards (AA-MAS) and limits the use of alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) to 1% of students. This change reflects research that almost all students with disabilities can achieve at grade-level standards and only the 1% of students with the most significant disabilities require AA-AAS. The bill also includes other evidence-based practices such as universal design for learning, multi-tier assessments, and positive behavioral interventions and supports. NASHIA signed on to the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Education Task Force's [Principles](#) for Reauthorization of ESEA. The legislation is in line with these principles.

Senate HELP Committee Ranking Member Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) also introduced a bill to the committee called "Every Child Ready for College or Career Act." It tracks closely with the bill by Rep. John Kline in eliminating federal accountability systems in favor of State standards. Like the House version, the bill would also block grant most federal education spending in order to increase State and local flexibility and allow much broader use of alternate and modified achievement standards for students with disabilities.

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## Congressional Hearings and Briefings

### Workforce Investment Act Hearing

On June 20th, the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee held a hearing called "Developing a Skilled Workforce for a Competitive Economy: Reauthorizing the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)," which also includes the Rehabilitation Act. Testimonies were given by David Mitchell (Administrator, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services), Steve Partridge (President and CEO, Charlotte Works), Alan Rosenberg (Vice President, Chief of Staff, and Chief Administrative Officer, Temple University Health Systems), and Beverly Smith (Assistant Commissioner and State Director for Adult Education, Office of Adult Education, Technical College System of Georgia). Chairman Tom Harkin spoke about his desire to improve transition services for youth with disabilities exiting high school to ensure that they have the more integrated employment opportunities.

### Cong. Neuroscience Caucus Holds Briefing on the BRAIN Project

On June 12, 2013, the Congressional Neuroscience Caucus held a briefing that explored the recently-announced Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative to provide researchers with new tools to identify ways to treat prevent and even cure brain disorders. The American Brain Coalition organized the briefing, which was sponsored by the American Academy of Neurology and the Society for Neuroscience. Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Congressional Neuroscience Caucus co-chair noted the importance of NIH research and introduced the speakers: Dr. Francis Collins, Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Dr. Story Landis, Director of the National Institute for Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS).

The Congressional Neuroscience Caucus was established in 2010 by co-chairs Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) and Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) to promote a better understanding of how the brain develops, functions, and ages. The Caucus also seeks to raise awareness about the millions of Americans affected by neurological disorders or mental illnesses.

### Congressional Members Form Kids Safety Caucus

In May, four Members of Congress formed the bi-partisan Congressional Kids Safety Caucus around the issue of how to prevent unintentional injuries. Congressional co-chairs are Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), Rep. Jon Runyan (R-NJ), Rep. Grace Meng (D-NY) and Rep. Kevin

Cramer (R-ND).

### **USICD Holds Hill Briefing on the U.N. Disability Treaty**

The U.S. International Council on Disabilities (USICD) held a Hill briefing on the Disability Treaty on June 5. The briefing was focused on the impact of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on global commerce and the international accessibility. Each of the panelists agreed that ratification of the CRPD will create global business opportunities, especially in the realm of assistive technology. The global involvement that would result from U.S. ratification of the CRPD would create numerous opportunities for enhanced business and leadership to remain at the forefront in areas of accessible technology and disability policy.

Meanwhile, on June 30th, Palau became the 131st country to ratify the CRPD, while disability advocates continue to meet with key U.S. Senate offices to discuss the need for the United States to jump on board. The CRPD is the first international treaty to address disability rights and was inspired by the leadership of the U.S. in enacting the Americans with Disabilities Act. This treaty will extend the values of the ADA abroad and improve access for Americans with disabilities, including veterans, who live, work, or travel abroad. U.S. ratification of the CRPD costs no additional funds and will require no change to U.S. law. Over 350 American disability organizations, 21 veterans service organizations, and 26 faith organizations support the CRPD. To learn more about how you can support the treaty, see the Materials for Advocates page on [disabilitytreaty.org](http://disabilitytreaty.org).



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*The National Association of State Head Injury Administrators assists State government  
in promoting partnerships and building systems to meet the needs  
of individuals with brain injuries and their families.*

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