

Howdy, Aggie Advocates.

While the 86th Texas Legislature wraps up its work in Austin, the focus of this update will be on higher education issues at the federal level.

There is still hope that a bipartisan compromise can be reached in order to pass a reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. As a reminder, the HEA serves to strengthen the provision of educational resources for colleges and universities and provides financial assistance for students pursuing higher and post-secondary education. Although the HEA is intended to be renewed every five years, the last reauthorization was enacted in 2008.

As reauthorization efforts continue, members of Congress are working to ensure that their wishes — and those of various advocacy groups and member institutions — are reflected in the final iteration of the bill. These efforts primarily have been directed by Chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN) of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and Chairman Bobby Scott (D-VA) of the House Education and Labor Committee. Multiple hearings have been scheduled to ensure that key items, such as FAFSA simplification, college costs, and strengthened accountability, are addressed.

Congressional committees are busy working on the federal budget for 2020. The House Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations subcommittee has completed its markup, proposing small to moderate increases in federal funding for higher education. The subcommittee's version would include additional funding for Pell Grants, federal work-study programs, The Institute of Education Science, and the National Institute for Health. We expect the Senate to work on their version of related appropriations as the House subcommittee's bill works its way through committee.

Texas A&M is fortunate to have three former students serving in the U.S. House of Representatives and representing the constituents of their districts in Texas. For just a brief snippet of some of their work, please read the articles below.

As always, thank you for your interest in, and support of, the Texas A&M Advocacy Network.

Gig 'em,

Dave Fujimoto '17
 Director of Strategic Engagement

House, Senate Hold HEA Reauthorization Hearings

"The House and Senate committees that oversee higher education policy held their first hearings in 2019 on reauthorizing the Higher Education Act (HEA). The HEA authorizes various programs within the Department of Education, including the federal aid programs that support students pursuing a postsecondary education, and has not been renewed since 2008."

For more on the status of this important federal legislation, please click [here](#).





Rep. Louie Gohmert '75 Honored by The United Negro College Fund

"U.S. Congressman Louie Gohmert '75 was honored by The United Negro College Fund for his work to support Historically Black Colleges and Universities and their students in the 115th Congress. Gohmert made the following statement on being designated to the 'Honor Roll,' a title reserved for members who have produced measurable impacts on campuses:

"UNCF has a powerful mission: to advocate for the importance of minority education and community engagement. I have seen and learned first-hand that these institutions contain a huge percentage of students who are the first in their family ever to attend college. Once that first family member attends, it blows the ceiling off for following generations who so often go on to do extraordinary things."

Read more about his recognition [here](#).

Rep. Bill Flores '76 Presents Veteran Commendations for Constituents of CD-17



"U.S. Congressman Bill Flores '76 presented 12 local men and one woman with the Congressional Veteran Commendation, honoring the group for its military service and for good deeds in the civilian realm.

"The veterans were applauded by an audience of more than 200 supporters at the American Legion Post 159 in Bryan and were each presented with symbolic keepsakes including a folded American flag and a challenge coin."

Read more about this ceremony in the Bryan-College Station Eagle [here](#).



Rep. Will Hurd '99 Selected as College of Engineering 2019 Outstanding Alumnus

"Will Hurd '99 is the first member to serve the 23rd District of Texas in Congress for three consecutive terms in a decade. He serves on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, where he serves as the top Republican on the Subcommittee on Intelligence Modernization and Readiness. He was also selected by Republican leader Kevin McCarthy this year to serve on the House Appropriations Committee, where he is a member of the Subcommittees on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs along with Transportation, Housing and Urban Development."

Read more about Rep. Hurd and the rest of the College of Engineering's Outstanding Alumni [here](#).

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