



Winter 2008

The ASTD Policy Brief is a quarterly report on Congressional activity and other public policy news that impacts the workplace learning and performance (WLP) profession.

Legislative Update – 110th Congress, Second Session

With national elections on the horizon, the 110th Congress returned from the winter break with a relatively short window for legislative action in 2008. Workplace learning and performance professionals should take note of several pieces of legislation that may see movement before the end of the year: Higher Education Act, Trade Adjustment Assistance, and the administration's FY 2009 budget proposal.

Higher Education Act

In early February, the House of Representatives passed the College Opportunity and Affordability Act of 2007. The legislation would reauthorize the Higher Education Act, the nation's primary higher education law, for the first time in a decade. The Senate passed similar legislation in July 2007.

Both the House and Senate bills revise and reauthorize Title IV student assistance programs, including the Pell Grant and Perkins loan programs; establish new workforce training grant programs for institutions of higher education; and create programs to enhance teacher quality.

The House bill includes a provision creating the National Center for Learning Science and Technology, a not-for-profit organization that will fund projects to develop, test, and promote innovative learning systems and technologies. The Senate bill does not include a similar provision.

The House and Senate must now proceed to a conference committee, where the chambers will reconcile differences and produce a final bill for a vote. The Bush administration issued a "Statement of Policy" expressing opposition to the House version of the bill, but without explicitly threatening a veto.

Trade Adjustment Assistance

The Senate still has not acted on reauthorizing legislation for the federal Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program, which provides training, health care, and other benefits for manufacturing workers who lose their jobs due to foreign trade. However, in January Senator Max Baucus (D-MT), chair of the Senate Finance Committee, announced that renewal of TAA would be his top priority in 2008, and that his committee would work to present a bill to the full Senate in the coming

weeks. The House passed a bill in October, expanding the program to include dislocated service sector and public sector employees and significantly increasing funding for training programs. The Bush administration threatened to veto legislation containing the proposed expansion, citing concerns about costs.

Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Request

With the release of his Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 budget proposal, President Bush once again called for a significant restructuring of the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to emphasize individual choice in training. The proposal calls for consolidating a number of current programs under the law into single state block grants, and further requests the creation of Career Advancement Accounts (CAA), which would provide individuals with up to \$6,000 over two years for job training. At the same time, the administration recommended a cut of about \$1 billion in overall funding. While it now seems unlikely that Congress will pass reauthorizing language this term, the suggested budget cuts bear watching: Congress rescinded \$250 million in WIA funding in FY 2008.

ASTD Government Relations Sessions at ASTD's 2008 International Conference and Exposition

Are you a learning professional working in the public sector, or would you like to know what's happening in Washington? Please join ASTD Government Relations during the ASTD 2008 International Conference & Exposition in San Diego, CA, June 1-4. The Government Networking Room, located in the Sails Pavilion of the San Diego Convention Center, will feature sessions for learning professionals working in the public sector and for all professionals interested in the intersection between WLP and public policy.

The session schedule is included below. All sessions will take place in Government Networking Room unless otherwise noted.

SUNDAY, June 1st

3:30 p.m. – 4:45 p.m.

Building a Partnership with the Public Workforce System

Presenter: C. Michael Ferraro, Training Solutions, Inc.

Concurrent session SU306, Room 9

MONDAY, June 2nd

10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.

"An Unprepared Workforce: Calculating the Cost to Business"

Presenters: Mike Czarnowsky, ASTD *and* Mary Wright, The Conference Board

11:15 a.m. - 12:15 a.m.

Ensuring the Transfer of Vital Skills

Presenters: J.P. Orlando, Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network *and* Scott Brown, North Carolina Justice Academy

4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Community of Practice Roundtable: Public Sector

Presenter: Anthony Hill, Veterans Benefits Academy

Concurrent session M305, Room 6F

TUESDAY, June 3rd

11:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Power Steps: 10 Principles for Leadership Success

Presenter: Percy Thomas, National Fair Housing Training Academy

12:30 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Common Nexus: The Intersection of Public Policy and the Learning Profession

Presenter: Jeanette Harrison, American Express

3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

The WLP Scorecard and Public Sector WLP Professionals

Presenter: Ray Rivera, ASTD

WEDNESDAY, June 4th

8:00 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.

A Federal Family Portrait: Boomers Pass the Torch to Gen X/Y

Andrew P. Krzmarzick, The Graduate School, USDA

Employee Learning Week 2007 Highlights

ASTD celebrated Employee Learning Week (ELW) December 3-7, 2007, and we are pleased to announce that proclamations in support of ELW were issued in nearly fifty cities, counties, and states. Illinois, Michigan, Nebraska, Ohio, and Pennsylvania all issued proclamations or resolutions in support of ELW, as did the cities of Atlanta, Charlotte (NC), Chicago, Detroit, Kansas City, and San Diego.

And, ASTD partnered with the American Management Association's Federal Learning Institute to present a series of events for public sector learning professionals during Employee Learning Week. "APPRECIATE • PROMOTE • PROVIDE • LEARNING •

EVERYDAY" (APPLE) was a free public service to provide tools, resources, and information to public sector learning professionals.

Details about these and other ELW activities may be found at:
www.employeelearningweek.org.