

## Federal Relations Report

- Meeting with Senator Tester for Montana coffee the morning of the 29<sup>th</sup> from 8:15 – 9am? And meet with Tester at 9:30
- With the great possibility that Rep. Zinke will be in his new appointment, we have a scheduled meeting with his Legislative Assistant Tripp McKemey at 11:30. Tripp stated that in the event Mr. Zinke is confirmed as the Secretary of the Interior, his office becomes non-partisan until filled. He will, however, pass our information on to the new appointee.
- I have also been in contact with Daines' office and am still trying to set a time to meet with him.
- NAESP has been working diligently on ESSA and helping states with their state plans. For states that continue to need support, they have shared a webinar series put out by the US Department of Education that breaks down each section of ESSA and gives additional clarity on the role of States, districts, and schools under ESSA guidelines. States, have until April 3 to submit their plans. A final accountability report on ESSA rules was put out and NAESP prepared a summary of the report. That is the handout that was passed out.
- NAESP has been watching the confirmation hearing of Betsy DeVos and providing feedback on the outcome as well as how we can be involved as state affiliates. During the confirmation hearing NAESP prepared three questions for DeVos. Those questions were:
  - Over the past decade, a large body of evidence has amassed that now proves principals are second only to effective teachers when it comes to improving student achievement, particularly in struggling schools. What is your vision for empowering leadership in the school building and helping every school have an effective principal?
  - The bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) places a new emphasis on supporting school leadership through increased professional development, mentoring, residency, and other evidence-based programs that support the recruitment and retention of effective school leaders. Given the extensive research that shows principals are second only to effective teachers when it comes to improving student achievement, what will you do as Secretary of Education to improve the pipeline for school leadership and provide the support school leaders need to stay in the profession and lead school change and improvement efforts that establish a positive culture so they stay in their schools long enough to increase student achievement?
  - As a matter of priority, what is your view of how to help public schools systemically meet the needs of every child? What are the interventions and supports that you believe are necessary for schools to improve in providing a well-rounded education per ESSA?
- SAM also submitted a letter to Senator Tester stating:
  - School Administrators of Montana's (SAM's) core purpose is *Visionary leaders united in providing, advocating, and creating education excellence for Montana students! The Secretary of Education is our nations' representative and advocate for every public school child's education all across the United States. A review of the responses to questions of Ms. DeVos during the confirmation hearings reveals that she lacks a commitment to accountability and transparency that is the hallmark of the work in our Montana rural schools; and that she portrays an agenda contrary to the vision for creating excellence for Montana students. For these reasons, SAM is thankful for the vote of Senator Tester against the confirmation of Ms. DeVos as the representative of Montana's (and the nation's) public school children. Our nation deserves a secretary of education who clearly understands the needs and the challenges of our public schools and will work tirelessly to encourage, promote and engage all powers that be to support the nation's public school children.*
- Senate Democrats asked Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) to have a second confirmation hearing for Betsy DeVos, arguing that they need an opportunity to further scrutinize her potential conflicts of interests and preparedness to lead the Education Department. Alexander had initially scheduled a committee vote on DeVos's confirmation for Jan. 24, but decided to delay the vote a week, until Jan. 31, to give Senators an opportunity to examine the ethics paperwork. But Democrats don't just want more time — they want another chance to publicly question DeVos. This is being argued that she has already undergone more questions and time than Obama's appointments.
- To help principals directly engage in the ESSA discussions across states and districts, NAESP will be releasing a comprehensive set of materials in partnership with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) "Principals Action Plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act: Providing all Students with a Well-Rounded and Complete Education". This policy and action guide will help principals engage in deeper advocacy around ESSA at the state and local level using research and a theory of action surrounding what is needed in schools to provide a well-rounded education for every student. Stay tuned for the release of this important

publication. NAESP will hold a special training session for Federal Relations Coordinators on use of the tools and materials in advocacy.

- NAESP's National Leaders Conference will be held March 26-29, 2017 in Washington, DC.
- After failing to approve any appropriations bills prior to the end of the federal fiscal year and again in the lame duck session in December, Congress passed a Continuing Resolution (CR) to fund government operations at current levels through April 28th. Senate and House Appropriations Committee staffers are now beginning to work on a package of spending bills – or a small number of “minibus” measures – that may be necessary to fund the entire federal government through September 30, 2017. To avoid a government shutdown in the spring, Congress must complete the spending process or approve another temporary spending legislation to buy more time for negotiations. NAESP is working hard to secure a strong funding commitment for programs that fall under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), such as Title I, Title II and Title IV, Student Support and Academic Enrichment Block Grants, which fund technology and programs to provide “well-rounded” educational opportunities. The spending levels in this budget resolution will be replaced by a fiscal year 2018 budget resolution later this spring, but these figures are what NAESP will start with as the 2017 advocacy agenda is developed and launched at the National Leaders Conference in March.
- SAM also supported NDD United in signing onto a letter to help ensure nondefense discretionary funds are protected. NDD stated, “Now sequestration is upon us again as the temporary and partial relief of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 expires FY 2017. In the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, our unity will be more important than ever as threats to nondefense discretionary programs abound—proposals that if enacted, will reduce domestic spending to levels never before seen. Our best chance to prevent further cuts and have any chance of restoring funding for these programs is to speak with one voice.”
  - Dear Representative/Senator: The undersigned XXXX national, state, and local organizations urge you to help ensure adequate funding for programs funded through annual appropriations, by continuing the bipartisan practice of providing relief from sequestration budget cuts and opposing any new efforts to cut these programs more deeply. These “nondefense discretionary” (NDD) programs serve many vital national needs but have been subject to repeated cuts over the past six years, including through the appropriations caps and sequestration process established by the 2011 Budget Control Act. Full sequestration returns in fiscal year (FY) 2018, when the two-year relief provided by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 expires. Congress should avoid making further reductions in these programs and work to replace the scheduled sequestration cuts through a package that is balanced—both in how such relief is paid for and how it is applied to defense and NDD programs. In doing so, we ask that you consider the following: 1. NDD programs are essential to national security. The fundamental job of the federal government is to secure the safety of its citizens at home and abroad. But America’s day-to-day security requires more than military might. NDD programs support our economy, drive our global competitiveness, and help Americans lead healthy, productive lives. Both the Budget Control Act and the Bipartisan Budget Acts of 2013 and 2015 recognized that defense and nondefense programs both contribute to the American way of life and to our security. In FY 2018, lawmakers should continue to adhere to this “parity principle” in fiscal policies, including a sequestration relief package. 2. NDD programs have already been cut too much. Despite the vast array of important, effective services provided through these programs—infrastructure and housing, veterans services, education and job training, National Parks, medical and scientific research, and public health, safety and security, to give just some examples—overall NDD appropriations have been cut dramatically and disproportionately in recent years as lawmakers work to reduce the deficit, even though experts across the political spectrum agree these programs aren’t a driving factor behind our nation’s mid- and long-term fiscal challenges. As a result of sequestration and other austerity measures enacted beginning in 2011, the cap on NDD funding in FY 2017 is 13.4 percent below 2010 levels, adjusted for inflation. Without action to stop sequestration, in FY 2018 NDD programs are projected to decline to 3.1 percent of GDP—equal to the lowest level in more than 50 years. 3. NDD cuts have consequences. As illustrated in the NDD United impact report, *Faces of Austerity*, and other accounts from across the NDD sectors, Americans are feeling the negative effects of the Budget Control Act’s austere spending caps and sequestration. These cuts are dragging down our economic recovery, hampering business growth and development, weakening public health preparedness and response, reducing resources for our nation’s schools and colleges, compromising federal oversight and fraud recovery, hindering scientific discovery, eroding our infrastructure, and threatening our ability to address emergencies around the world. Simply put, these cuts are bad for the country and are not sustainable. Deficit reduction measures enacted since 2010 have come overwhelmingly from spending cuts, with the ratio of spending cuts to revenue increases far beyond those recommended by bipartisan groups of experts. And there is bipartisan agreement that sequestration is bad policy and ultimately hurts our nation. Congress and the President must work together to protect NDD programs from further cuts and end sequestration. Such sequestration relief must be equally balanced between nondefense and defense programs, as strong investments in both NDD and defense are necessary to keep our country competitive, safe, and secure. We appreciate your consideration of this recommendation, and are eager to work with you to help produce another bipartisan budget agreement to protect critical discretionary-funded programs. If you have questions about this letter, please contact the NDD United Co-Chairs.