



StraightA's

Public Education Policy And Progress



SOUND AND FURY?: With Legislative Days Running Short, House Committees Get Moving on Education Bills

With the U.S. House of Representatives set to adjourn for August recess this week, the chamber saw a flurry of education-related activity last week that could result in significant legislation later this year ... or it could signify nothing, with members of Congress choosing to delay any further action until a new Congress—and a new president—is sworn in early next year.

House Committee Passes Bill to Revamp Career and Technical Education

On July 7, the House Education and the Workforce Committee passed bipartisan legislation to rewrite the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins), the nation's largest federal investment in secondary and postsecondary career and technical education (CTE). The bill, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, would provide states with more flexibility in how they use federal funds, improve alignment between CTE, challenging state academic standards, and in-demand jobs through better partnerships with communities and employers, and promote innovation by replicating promising practices.

“Career and technical education has placed countless individuals on the path to success, and this bipartisan legislation will empower more individuals to follow that same path,” [said House Education and the Workforce Committee Chairman John Kline \(R-MN\)](#). “It includes numerous reforms to prepare students for high-demand jobs that exist today, not the jobs that existed years ago.”

U.S. Representative Bobby Scott (D-VA), top Democrat on the Committee, agreed, noting that the bill will “ensure that students, especially historically disadvantaged and underserved students, are prepared for success in high-demand jobs that offer living wages, employer benefits, and opportunities for meaningful career advancement.”

Tight Timeline Working Against CTE Rewrite

With few legislative days left in the 2016 congressional calendar, the prospects of a final bill making its way to the president's desk appear dim. But as seen with the fast-moving Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) last year, anything is possible when Republicans and Democrats can find common ground on an issue. With a 39–0 vote in favor, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act certainly has strong bipartisan support—at least at the House committee level. Across the Capitol, key senators, including **Senate education committee chairman Lamar Alexander (R-TN)**, have [expressed a strong interest in rewriting the Perkins Act](#).

Some [smaller CTE bills have already been introduced](#) while larger, more comprehensive legislation to rewrite Perkins could be introduced as soon as this week.

Annual Education Spending Bill Also Running Behind Schedule; Short-Term Funding Fix Likely

Also racing against the clock—the start of the new fiscal year is October 1—is work to pass the annual education spending bill. Last month, the [Senate Appropriations Committee passed](#) a spending bill that would fund the U.S. Department of Education at \$67.8 billion for Fiscal Year 2017—\$500 million less than the previous year. Last week, a House appropriations subcommittee went even further, cutting funding to \$67 billion—a \$1.3 billion reduction.

While acknowledging that it was not what she would have written, [U.S. Representative Nita Lowey \(D-NY\), top Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, said](#) the Senate bill “reflects Republican and Democratic compromise on critical issues that I wish we could achieve in the House.” She derided the House bill’s funding cuts and policy changes and said it stood “in stark contrast” to the Senate’s bipartisan bill.

On a positive note, the House bill provides \$1 billion to fund the new Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant (SSAEG) program that was created in ESSA. The amount is significantly higher than the \$300 million included in the Senate bill, but it is still less than the \$1.6 billion that ESSA authorizes for the program.

In the [July 7 episode of “Federal Flash,”](#) the Alliance for Excellent Education’s five-minute video series on important developments in education policy, **Alliance Senior Policy and Advocacy Associate Rachel Bird Niebling** notes that funding for SSAEG is expected to cover everything from access to a well-rounded education, to improving school conditions for student learning, to digital learning.



“If the program receives less than the \$1.6 billion authorized for it, the funding will be spread more thinly across many priorities,” she notes, “and if districts received less than \$30,000 to implement the program, they do not have to adhere to the priorities of the program.”

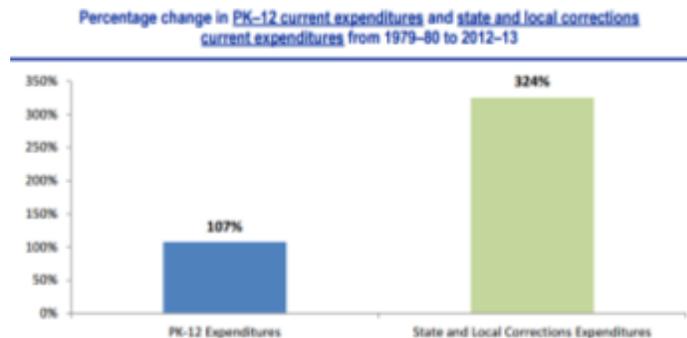
The full House Appropriations Committee is expected to vote on the subcommittee-passed bill this week, but the bill may not go much farther. Already, some of the House’s most conservative members are pushing for a six-month continuing resolution (CR) that would delay any funding decisions until March 2017, well after a new Congress and a new president takes office. While a six-month CR may not happen—**House Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers (R-KY)** is one person against such an approach—a series of shorter CRs that could extend funding decisions until after the election is certainly possible.

Because a CR would reflect funding decisions made prior to ESSA’s passage, it is unclear how funding would be allocated for the new or consolidated programs created under ESSA.



CRIME DOESN'T PAY—INVESTING IN EDUCATION DOES: As State and Local Spending on Corrections Escalates Rapidly, Reports Call for Investments in Education

Over the last thirty-five years, state and local government spending on prisons and jails has increased more than three times faster than spending in education for pre-kindergarten through grade twelve, according to a new report from the U.S. Department of Education (ED). At the postsecondary education level, spending on corrections grew nearly *twenty* times faster over a shorter time frame (School Years (SYs) 1989–90 to 2012–13).



The report partly attributes the increase in corrections spending to the “enactment of additional, often lengthy mandatory minimum sentence laws.” As a result, the number of people incarcerated in state and local correctional facilities more than quadrupled, rising from about 490,000 in 1980 to more than 2 million in 2014—even as crime rates declined by more than 50 percent between 1980 and 2014.

Linkages Exist Between Poor Educational Outcomes and Incarceration

Of the people who are incarcerated, a large percentage are high school dropouts. According to a [2013 report from the Alliance for Excellent Education](#), 56 percent of federal inmates, 67 percent of inmates in state prisons, and 69 percent of inmates in local jails did not complete high school. Additionally, the report finds that the number of incarcerated individuals without a high school diploma is increasing over time.

“If the nation made a comparable investment in effort and dollars in schools as it does in jails and prisons, the return would be decreased levels of criminal activity and incarceration as well as significant and life-changing impacts on the individual,” reads *Saving Futures, Saving Dollars*.

The return would also be significant from a financial standpoint. In fact, the nation could save as much as \$18.5 billion in annual crime costs if the high school male graduation rate increased by only 5 percentage points.

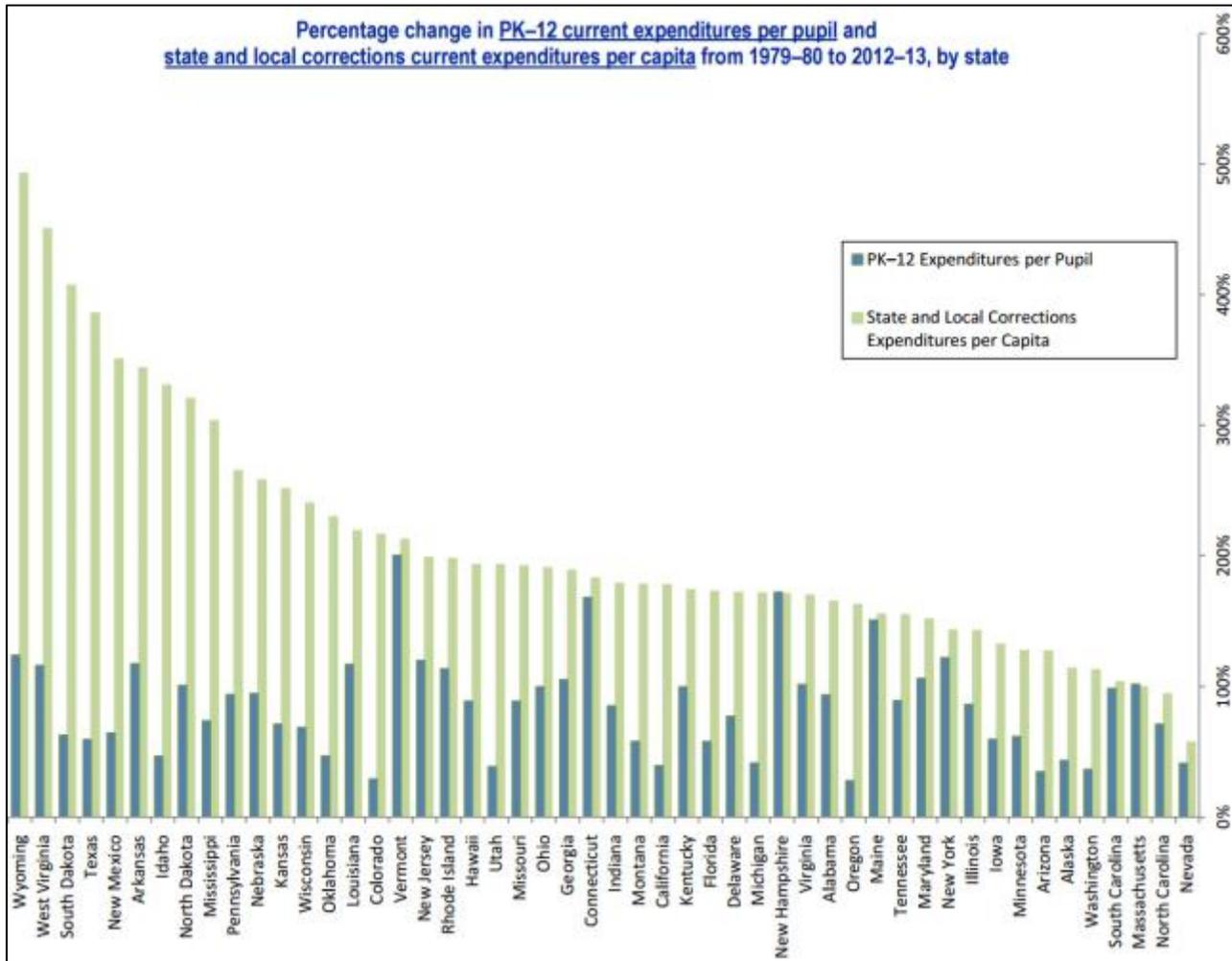
Among Individual States, Dramatic Differences in Spending on Education and Corrections

Upon examining individual states, the ED report finds spending differences that exceed 500 percentage points in the five states shown in the table 1 below. In total, twelve states posted differences of 300 or more percentage points. The states with the smallest spending differences were Massachusetts (63 percentage points), Connecticut (87 percentage points), and New York (88 percentage points).

Table 1. Changes in Spending from SY 1979–80 to SY 2012–13

State	Increase in Pre-K–12 Spending	Increase in Corrections Spending	Difference
Texas	182%	850%	668 percentage points
New Mexico	102%	704%	602 percentage points
Wyoming	114%	712%	598 percentage points
Idaho	106%	701%	595 percentage points
South Dakota	59%	566%	507 percentage points

When reporting the data on a per-capita basis to adjust for increases in the population, the report finds smaller percentage increases in spending, but gaps between education spending and corrections spending that remain very large. As shown in the image below, four states (South Dakota, Texas, West Virginia, and Wyoming) continue to post differences that were greater than 300 percentage points. Notably, only two states (Massachusetts and New Hampshire) saw spending on pre-K–12 grow at a faster pace than spending on corrections.



“All too often, children growing up in poor communities not only do poorly in school, but also are disproportionately arrested and incarcerated during their teenage and young adult years,” the report notes. “Even for offenses for which there are few differences by race or ethnicity in the likelihood

of committing a crime, individuals of color—black youth in particular—are more likely than white individuals to be arrested and receive longer sentences for the same offenses.”

Citing a “large body of research,” the report notes that incarceration’s effectiveness in reducing future crime is “particularly weak,” with a 10 percent increase in incarceration accountable for only a 2 percent reduction in crime. Investments in education, however, can “reduce criminal activity by altering student behavior and improving labor market outcomes,” the report notes.

The Alliance report backs up this finding. In addition to saving \$18.5 billion in annual crime costs, *Saving Futures, Saving Dollars* finds that increasing the male high school graduation rate by 5 percentage points would decrease overall annual incidences of assault by nearly 60,000; larceny by more than 37,000; motor vehicle theft by more than 31,000; and burglaries by more than 17,000. It would also prevent nearly 1,300 murders, more than 3,800 occurrences of rape, and more than 1,500 robberies.

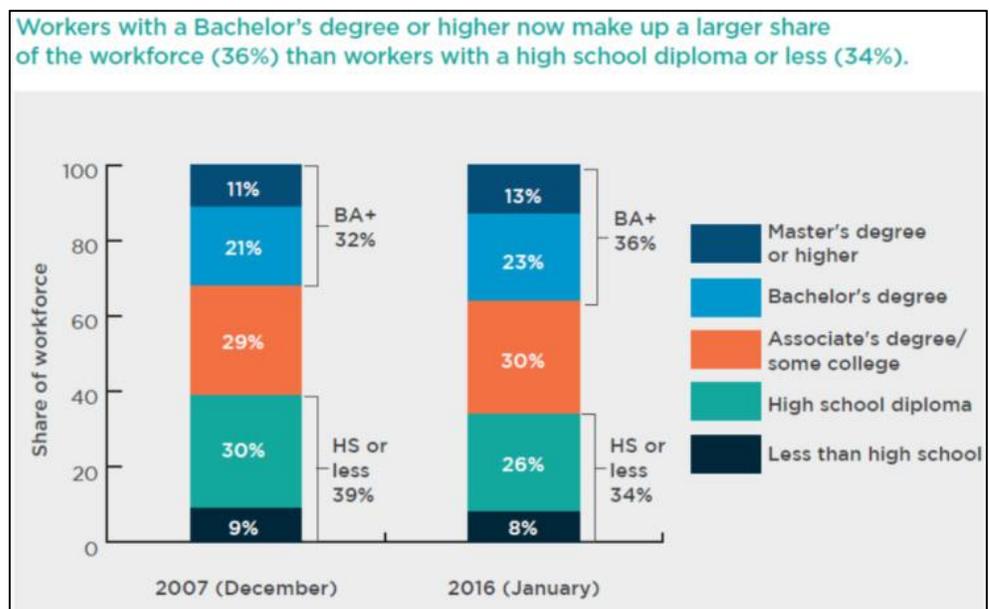
A life of crime might not pay, but as these studies show, investments in education do.



HAVES AND HAVE-NOTS: Ninety-Nine Percent of Jobs Created Since the Great Recession Have Gone to Workers with at Least Some College, Says New Georgetown University Report

For the first time in U.S. history, college graduates outnumber high school-educated workers in the labor force, highlighting a national shift in employment opportunities that now favors workers with postsecondary education. That finding comes from *America’s Divided Recovery: College Haves and Have-Nots*, a new report from Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce (CEW).

As shown in the graph to the right from the report, workers with at least some postsecondary education now represent two-thirds of the workforce, compared to workers with a high school diploma or less who represent just 34 percent of the labor force—a percentage that has declined steadily during the last decade.



“The modern economy continues to leave Americans without a college education behind,” says [Anthony P. Carnevale, CEW director and lead author of the report](#). “For decades, we’ve witnessed this growing split that parallels the divide in the current electorate.”

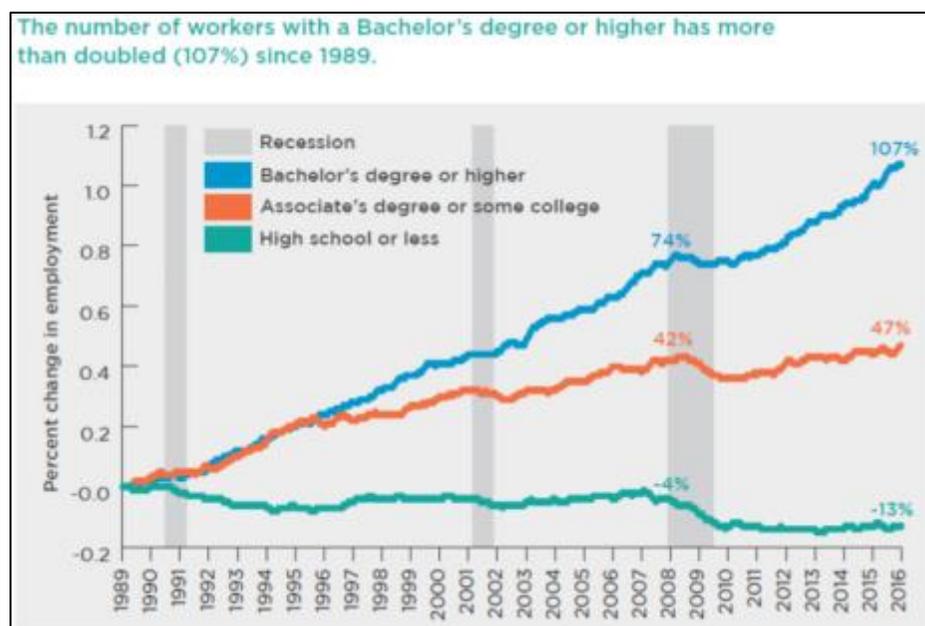
Ninety-Nine Percent of Jobs Created Post–Great Recession Go to Workers with Some Postsecondary Education

Since the end of the Great Recession, the economy has added 11.6 million jobs and 99 percent of them—11.5 million—have gone to workers with at least some postsecondary education, according to the report. Workers with at least a bachelor’s degree have fared the best, gaining 8.4 million jobs since January 2010, when the nation began its post-recession economic recovery. Workers with a high school diploma or less, though, essentially have experienced no job recovery, the report says. These workers lost 5.6 million jobs during the recession but gained back only 80,000 jobs during the recovery.

These employment disparities illuminate changes in the job market that began even before the recession took hold in 2007. Since the second half of the twentieth century, job creation has shifted *toward* industries such as healthcare, consulting, business, finance, education, and government services that employ a high share of workers with postsecondary education and *away from* production industries, such as construction and manufacturing, that historically employed workers with lower levels of educational attainment, the report explains. For instance, in 1947, production industries employed nearly half of the workforce, but today, these industries employ only 19 percent. Meanwhile, industries that employ managerial and professional workers accounted for only 28 percent of the workforce in 1947 and they now account for 46 percent.

This shift accelerated in the early 1980s “when the wage premium for college graduates began its meteoric rise,” the report says. Since that time even declining industries, like manufacturing, have shifted toward hiring workers with more education. Although overall employment in manufacturing has declined 32 percent since the mid-1980s, employment of workers with at least a bachelor’s degree has grown by 70 percent in that industry alone, according to the CEW.

In fact, across all industries the number of jobs for bachelor’s degree holders has more than doubled since 1989, while jobs for workers with a high school diploma or less have declined 13 percent—a loss of 7.3 million jobs for those individuals. (See the report’s graph to the right.)



“Cyclical changes and structural changes have led to a shift from an economy driven by high school-educated labor to one in which almost two in three jobs require some form of postsecondary education or training,” the report explains. “Recessions and economic recoveries only strengthen and accelerate the economically divisive effects of these long-term structural changes.”

In the past decade, management occupations and healthcare professional and technical occupations (such as registered nurses, physicians, surgeons, therapists, and others) have added the most jobs—1.6 million and 1.5 million respectively for these fields. Meanwhile, the number of jobs available in construction, manufacturing, and office and administrative support—fields that traditionally have hired large numbers of workers without a college degree—still lags behind prerecession levels. Today, the economy has 1.6 million fewer construction jobs, 1 million fewer manufacturing jobs, and 1.4 million fewer office and administrative support positions than before the Great Recession.

“These recent economic trends have made it clearer than ever that a college degree continues to be the most important economic asset for those who want to succeed in the labor market,” the report says. “The economy is seeing a continuing scouring out of low-skill jobs in favor of high-skill jobs. This makes the acquisition of postsecondary education an essential prerequisite to participate in the twenty-first-century labor market.”

America’s Divided Recovery: College Haves and Have-Nots is available at <https://cew.georgetown.edu/cew-reports/americas-divided-recovery/>.

Straight A’s: Public Education Policy and Progress is a free biweekly newsletter that focuses on education news and events in Washington, DC, and around the country. The format makes information on federal education policy accessible to everyone from elected officials and policymakers to parents and community leaders. Contributors include Jason Amos, editor; Kristen Loschert; Caroline Waldman; and Kate Bradley.

The Alliance for Excellent Education is a Washington, DC-based national policy and advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that all students, particularly those traditionally underserved, graduate from high school ready for success in college, work, and citizenship. For more information, visit www.all4ed.org. Follow the Alliance on Twitter (www.twitter.com/all4ed), Facebook (www.facebook.com/all4ed), and the Alliance’s “High School Soup” blog (www.all4ed.org/blog).