



WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

April 27, 2020

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House and Senate to return May 4 unless there is urgency to return earlier.
House and Senate holding *pro forma* sessions.

Washington Update

Coronavirus Relief

On Tuesday, April 21, the Senate passed a \$484 billion coronavirus relief bill that sets the stage for negotiations on an even bigger package - one that will possibly be in the trillions. With three coronavirus relief bills now passed, and little to no relief aimed directly at local government, congressional leaders are discussing what a fourth bill might look like and how it will provide fiscal relief to state and local governments. Democrats have identified multiple funding priorities for the next major legislative package, including states, local governments, mail-in voting, hazard pay for health care workers and the Postal Service. However, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (KY) has made it clear that lawmakers will not pass "Phase Four" legislation by unanimous consent, so it will have to wait until the Senate reconvenes. McConnell has expressed his concern over the growing amount of debt the U.S. is adding.

Secretary Scalia Joins Special G20 Meeting on COVID-19

U.S. Secretary of Labor Eugene Scalia participated in a virtual meeting of the G20 Labor and Employment Ministers to discuss the G20 members' labor and employment response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Secretary Scalia emphasized President Trump's swift response to the hardships faced by American workers, as well as the Administration's actions to lay the groundwork for an economic rebound once the virus is turned back. Secretary Scalia added: "As we look forward, following this period of exceptional and essential government intervention, we in the States will bear in mind also the policies underlying the robust economy we have recently enjoyed. Those were policies that recognized the value of free markets and free people."

[Click here](#) to read the full article.

Second Chance Pell

On Friday, April 24, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos announced 67 more colleges that will participate in Second Chance Pell — the experimental initiative that allows incarcerated students to receive Pell Grants to pay for their education. Roughly 130 schools in 42 states and D.C. are currently participating in the effort. This increase would more than double the number of colleges permitted to enroll incarcerated students using the program.

[Click here](#) for the full list of schools.

Unemployment Claims

On Thursday, April 23, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported the jobless claims were 4,427,000, a decrease of 810,000, in the week ending April 18. The previous week's level was revised down by 8,000 from 5,245,000 to 5,237,000. The 4-week moving average was 5,786,500, an increase of 280,000 from the previous week's revised average of 5,506,500 - down by 2,000. The advance seasonally adjusted insured unemployment rate was 11 percent for the week ending April 11, an increase of 2.8 percentage points from the previous week's unrevised rate.

[Click here](#) to read the DOL BLS report.

DOL/ETA

Employment Resources for People on the Autism Spectrum

National Autism Awareness Month in April is a time to highlight how the talents and skills of workers on the autism spectrum benefit employers and bolster the American economy. More and more employers are recognizing that having a neurodiverse workforce makes them more competitive. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has created major barriers for youth and adults on the autism spectrum by disrupting not only employment but also the routines of everyday life. While stressful for all Americans to manage, these disruptions can have a disproportionate impact on people on the autism spectrum, who may not be able to access critical support and services.

[Click here](#) to read the full article.

WDC in the News

Use the Coronavirus Shutdown to Train Workers

In manufacturing, plant shutdowns occur frequently. Sometimes they are scheduled for planned maintenance. In other instances, equipment fails. The best manufacturers use shutdowns not only to fix what's broken but also to upgrade their entire system. This is how we need to approach our economy right now. American workers have been hit by both a pandemic and the largest wave of unemployment since the Great Depression. Nearly 23 million new unemployment claims have been filed, increasing the jobless total eightfold in four weeks. Some believe that the U.S. economy will shrink by 35 percent this quarter and that total unemployment could rise to 50 million, roughly one-third of the work force. The hardest hit will be workers in jobs that don't require a college education or advanced degree. While social distancing remains a necessity, this moment also gives us an opportunity to increase the skills of America's labor force in ways that will benefit workers — and our economy — for years to come.

[Click here](#) to read the full article.

Will They Return? Surveys Suggest Tough Times For Most Colleges

Thursday was the day Ivy League and other highly competitive institutions extended admissions offers. We learned that Yale University admitted 6.54 percent of applicants. The University of Pennsylvania admitted 8.1 percent of applicants. Not much has changed in elite higher education. But for everyone else, these are scary times. No one knows what yields -- the percentage of admitted applicants who enroll -- will be this

year. But everyone is worried and checking out the latest national surveys, which suggest their concern is valid.

The various surveys placed an emphasis on speed, and so their pools of respondents do not necessarily amount to a scientific sample of the United States. They tend to skew in favor of wealthier and whiter applicants. But we share them here (along with available information about the pools). Most are by companies that advise colleges on their admissions strategies. In general, they portray problems for higher education.

[Click here](#) to read the full article.

Reports & Articles

New from New America

Young Adults Need Targeted Support in Recovery Efforts

Congress has acted fast to provide relief to America's workers in the wake of the Coronavirus pandemic, and with good reason: already, more than 17 million Americans have filed for unemployment and there's reason to believe things could get worse before they get better. But just as economic chaos affects different segments of the population differently, so too will the \$2 Trillion CARES Act provide uneven relief. Right now, America's young people are poised to be on the short end of both sticks.

Already, young people are beginning to disconnect en masse. The first waves of layoffs have left many young workers jobless. Colleges and universities across the U.S. are already bracing for significant declines in fall enrollments, as students complain about the quality of online courses and high school seniors rethink plans to enroll next semester. And as school districts move classes online, many teens are unable or unwilling to connect. Already, Los Angeles Unified School District has reported that 15,000 high school students have gone AWOL since schools closed there on March 16; another 40,000 are struggling to connect and are at risk for disappearing from class rolls.

[Click here](#) to read the full article.

Strengthening the Health Care Workforce in a Time of Crisis

As the COVID-19 pandemic reshapes the health care landscape in the US and across the world, it's also exposing the numerous barriers and inequities that stand in the way of meeting America's emergency and long-term health care workforce needs. Health care professions in the United States are both hard to get into and hard to advance

through. Moving up the ladder from a support role to better-paid jobs in nursing and respiratory therapy, which require higher credentials, can be prohibitively costly and time-consuming for working learners. And even with mass layoffs and unemployment looming, the United States struggles to train enough workers for the critical support roles performed by nursing assistants, community health workers, and a wide array of medical technicians.

[Click here](#) to read the full article.

New from MDRC

Ensuring Equity in Future Subsidized Employment Programs

Experts are warning that the economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis is likely to persist well beyond the point when social distancing rules begin to loosen. In particular, the unemployment rate is likely to remain unusually high for many months to come. Subsidized employment — which, broadly, uses public funds to create jobs for the unemployed — has been a useful tool for addressing mass joblessness during recessions. Most recently, states used funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) to put more than 250,000 people to work in subsidized jobs. Earlier subsidized employment programs during the Great Depression and in the 1970s were even larger. A similar program will likely be needed if COVID-19 leads to a severe recession.

[Click here](#) to read the full report.

New from National Skills Coalition

State Policy Covid-19 Response Toolkit

The Covid-19 pandemic has illuminated gaps in our public systems, including healthcare, human services and social assistance, and workforce. States are already experiencing unprecedented job loss and strain on public assistance programs ranging from unemployment insurance to cash and nutrition assistance and Medicaid. The State Policy Covid-19 Response Toolkit is designed to give states examples of state policy actions they can endorse or enact immediately to support workers who need immediate assistance in the face of Covid-19-related economic disruptions. It also provides examples of how states are responding to rapid re-employment and upskilling needs in impacted industries.

[Click here](#) to download the toolkit.

How Will the U.S. Respond to Unprecedented Job Loss?

Workers who have lost their jobs because of Covid-19 deserve a comprehensive, inclusive re-employment strategy that prioritizes their ability to build in-demand skills and leads to good-paying jobs. The lack of a comprehensive re-employment strategy hinders economic mobility and economic growth. Addressing re-employment is more important now than ever, as we expect the long-anticipated shift to more automated forms of work will be abrupt because of this crisis, meaning millions of workers who could have been retrained on new technologies over the long term will need to be rapidly retrained after losing jobs. Our 21st Century Reemployment Accord is a commitment to workers and businesses to prepare workers for the new jobs of the 21st century, whether this job loss occurs because of the impact of trade, automation, natural disaster, or our current health pandemic.

[Click here](#) to read the full article.

Fast Fact

In the United States, around 88 percent of adults think COVID-19 is a major threat to the domestic economy, while 49 percent feel it is a threat to their personal financial situation.



THE U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS
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