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National Legislative Seminar

March 8-11, 2026

Embassy Suites Hotel, Alexandria, VA

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN: [dkgusforum.org](https://www.dkgusforum.org)

For best rates, register prior to Dec. 31, 2025

Hotel reservations by Feb. 6, 2026 for guaranteed room rate

See details on the [dkgusforum.org/NLS](https://www.dkgusforum.org/NLS) website



<https://www.dkgusforum.org/nls>

Taking Your Place at NLS : Why YOU Should attend

The DKG U.S. Forum National Legislative Seminar (NLS) is rapidly approaching and now is the time for YOU to register. The event, held every two years, is scheduled for March 8-11, 2026, in Alexandria, Virginia and on “the Hill” in Washington, D.C. **Registration is now open** on the Forum website: <https://www.dkgusforum.org>.

Why should YOU attend? This event is one of the most meaningful of all DKG events. Over the four days of NLS, participants experience in-depth learning from experts on critical legislative issues. They have the unparalleled opportunity to advocate in-person with their Congressional representatives “on the Hill” about issues they care about. Training sessions give participants enhanced skills in advocacy. NLS participants enjoy extended bonding with other DKG members from around the U.S., practicing skills, sharing legislative efforts from their states, and socializing with others who share your interests. NLS allows participants to immerse themselves in the rich heritage of Washington, D.C. and vicinity, visiting sites that have shaped our nation’s history and culture. Old Town Alexandria is also a fascinating place to tour.

Like other total immersion programs, such as DKG Ignite, the National Legislative Seminar (NLS) can be a transformative experience for attendees. The level of training and information acquired energizes participants, gives them confidence and enhanced proficiency in advocacy work. Having authentic interactions with members of Congress and their staff is empowering and builds commitment. The chance for extended collegial relationship building with members from other states reinforces a core value of DKG.

So, join us! Bring someone else from your state to make your experience even more valuable! Registration fees include all meals (except when “on the Hill” on Tuesday) and transportation to the Capitol. Registration by December 31, 2025 is \$425.00 per person. From January 1, 2026 until February 6, 2026, registration is \$475.00. Late registration after February 6th is \$500.00. We encourage you to register early at [dkgusforum.org/nls](https://www.dkgusforum.org/nls).

Hotel rooms at the Embassy Suites, Old Town Alexandria, may be booked now on line today at: <https://book.passkey.com/go/DGK2026>. Guests preferring to call in their reservation can reach the hotel at 1-(800) 362-2779 and will need to provide the group code “DKG”. The Embassy Suites is across the street from the Old Town yellow line Metro stop, a short 10 minute ride south of Reagan National Airport. The two room suites have two queen size beds in the bedroom and a queen size hide-a-bed in the living room. Room rates are \$285/night for single or doubles (\$305 for a triple and \$325 for quads) and include a full size breakfast, including cooked to order omelets, and an evening reception (snacks and beverages).

Watch the U.S. Forum website for information on speakers, excursions, pre-conference workshops and other need-to-know details. See you in Alexandria in March! Learn more by attending the Dec. 3rd **NLS & YOU** workshop. See page1 for a look at the event announcement flyer.

Register for the workshop at <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/registration/DLGwoSY0Qx-pTUIUUspcDQ>.

Special Education Update

Just prior to the Government shut-down 121 of 135 employees in the Office for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) received reduction-in-force (RIF) notices. A court injunction delayed the RIF and the recent funding resolution to reopen the government guaranteed those individuals their jobs – at least until January 30, 2026. But there appears to be little protecting them after that provision expires.

Parents, school personnel and advocates are concerned because the OSERS plays a vital role in monitoring state compliance with federal special education laws (IDEA) and in managing federal grants to special education and vocational rehabilitation programs. It also provides legal and technical guidance, funds research and training, and coordinates transition services from school to community programs.

Former OSERS employees, state leaders and advocates worry that, without the office's oversight and guidance, states will fall out of compliance. Because of a risk of ending up with 50 different approaches to serving students with disabilities, a student's right to education may become dependent on where that student lives.

States will also have to pick up more of the costs for educating disabled students, a cost which is already challenging state budgets. States may, for example, have to handle OCR complaints, nearly 70% of which relate to disability complaints. Are they prepared to do that? Where will the funds come from?

READ ALL ABOUT IT!!

"Advocacy from the Chapter Level: Three Program Ideas to Enhance Member Advocacy Skills and Engagement" in the latest edition of the *Collegial Exchange* (www.dkg.org/publications), provides step-by-step ideas for programs the make a difference.

U.S. Forum News

Elections 2026-2028 Biennium

NOW is the time to begin to consider how you can help move the U.S. Forum forward in the upcoming 2026-2028 biennium.



Steering Committee representatives and the chair of the committee will be elected at the U.S. Forum Meeting in Colorado next July 2026.

Application forms will go on-line at the beginning of January. Roles and responsibilities for each position may be found in the U.S. Forum Guidelines on the website.

Be a part of this special DKG group and help the Forum demonstrate its relevancy to DKG members and perspective members.

Resolutions and Position Statements

U.S. Forum Guidelines, the governing document for Forum activities, were amended in August 2025 to include a provision for any Forum member, chapter, state, or Forum Committee to submit resolutions and/or position statements for consideration and vote by Forum members. Proposed resolutions will be reviewed by a Resolutions Committee which will ensure it complies with DKG purposes and neutrality before bringing it forward for a vote. The resolution submission procedures and form are available on the U.S. Forum website via a link on the Guidelines page.

Forms of Advocacy:

Not everyone is comfortable discussing issues face-to-face with their legislative representatives, but everyone can become engaged in advocacy through one or more of the following activities.

- **Lobbying:** Lobbying involves direct communication with legislators to influence specific legislation and is allowed by DKG's 501(c)6 status.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Nonprofits can raise awareness about critical issues through campaigns, social media, and community events
- **Coalitions and Partnerships:** Collaborating with other organizations, such as LWV, AAUW, and retired teacher groups, amplifies advocacy efforts, as well as serves as a source of reliable information.
- **Educational Efforts:** Providing information to policymakers and the public helps shape opinions and policies.
- **Engaging in Respectful Conversations:** As a member, reach out to others and be willing to ask respectful questions and share your values and goals. Join on a Forum workshop where information is provided and issues are discussed in a safe environment. Workshop announcements are found on the Forum website and sent to those on the Forum mailing list.

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impacted by cancelation of appropriated funds for career readiness programs. The proposed budget from the Office of Budget Management for 2026 includes over \$18B dollars in cuts in programs and services, including for migrant and rural education, Title programs, teacher training, and graduate student loans, while increasing the budget for charter schools and school choice.

On November 18th, the DOE announced reorganization efforts to dismantle the department, and six **interagency agreements were signed to move the functions** of various department offices to those agencies. The Department of Labor will take over K-12 and higher education programs, the Interior Department will control Indian Education and tribal colleges, the State Department will take over International Programs and remaining employees will be transferred to other federal agencies. Timelines and transition plans for these transfers are unknown, though the Secretary indicated that some of the transfer of functions has already occurred.

These changes are happening without congressional approval, though Education Secretary Linda McMahon has indicated the department would seek Congressional codification of the changes into law. The Senate is expected to take up its version of the Labor-HHS-Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill for FY26 (S.2587) before Thanksgiving, but it's not clear when that bill will be negotiated with the House version or when a final version of the budgets will be enacted.

State education chiefs have said the news wasn't a surprise—but while some are optimistic that the change won't affect federal funding, others have concerns that it'll be less efficient for state education departments and districts to work with multiple federal agencies instead of one. Some worry about potential disruption in funding.

The Education Department is also considering moves for its divisions that oversee services for students with disabilities, civil rights enforcement, and student loans. Advocacy groups for the disabled are very concerned about maintenance of hard-earned rights and a deterioration in compliance monitoring and uniformity across states.

Federal education decisions ripple down to local classrooms, shaping opportunities and outcomes for students. With the uncertain future of DOE and its programs, proactive engagement and advocacy ensure your voice is heard and the needs of teachers, students, and families represented. Now is the time to strengthen relationships with your representatives and continue the work of advocating for education, both locally and nationally.



1. **Connect with Your Representatives:** Sign up for digital newsletters from Congressional, state, and local officials. Stay informed on their positions and any legislative actions on bills.
2. **Participate in Outreach:** Attend legislator meetings and share real stories of how policy changes affect teachers and students. Focus your questions on issues within their jurisdiction.
3. **Research and Ask Targeted Questions:** Understand how DOE changes impact your local schools. Press representatives for specific answers on unintended consequences and their plans to address them.
4. **Build Local Advocacy Networks:** Collaborate with other education advocates. Listen to diverse perspectives to broaden your understanding and strategy.
5. **Engage with School Boards:** Pay attention to school board elections and communicate with candidates and members about your perspective as an educator. Express appreciation for decisions that align with your values.
6. **Continue the work** of being an advocate for education!

Legislation to Watch (and act upon)

Open for Business Again, But for How Long?

by Dr. April Coleman, SW Regional Representative

The 43 day government shutdown and the associated Congressional recesses resulted in little to no movement of the key pieces of legislation that have been identified by our members. Now that Congress is back in session and before the next scheduled recess, it is time to reach out to your legislators and ADVOCATE! The most recent agreement only funds the government through January 30th, with exceptions for SNAP, WIC, the Department of Veteran Affairs, and Congress, which will be funded through the end of September 2026. K-12 schools largely carried on as usual during the shut-down, but there are some lingering consequences: federal dollars for Head Start and Impact Aid arrived late resulting in employee RIFs; \$270M in mental health service grants are delayed or at-risk for termination; changes in assessment and data systems funding are impacting states' ability to collect this type of data.

The time is NOW to make your voices heard and to push for the positive changes that you want to see. Call the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 to reach out to your Congressional Representatives at their DC offices before the December recess!

The 119th Congress is in full swing and based on the responses received from the Member Issue Survey, we believe these are the current Federal Bills to Watch. If you would like to read the language of a bill or if you want to track its progress, please go to www.congress.gov. You can also use that address to share your views with your Congressional representatives.

House Committee On Education and the Workforce/Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions 8/2025				
Bill Number	Bill Title	Sponsor	Introduced	Status
HR 5304	FY 2026 Labor, Health & Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill restores some funding cut by OBM memo 5/2025 but still cuts Ed Dept by \$12B or 15%	Robert Aderholt (R-AL)	09/11/2025	Introduced; placed on calendar
HR 6131	Increase the recruitment and retention of school-based mental health services	Judy Chu (D-CA)	11/19/2025	Referred to House Committee on Education and the Workforce
HRes 894	Expressing support for strong public education in history and civics as essential to preserving founding ideals of democracy	Jim Costa (D-CA)	11/19/2025	Referred to House Committee on Education and the Workforce
Bills in favor of Dept. of Ed Closure				
HR 369 HR 899 HR 838 HR 847	States' Education Reclamation Act Terminate Dept. of Ed. Dec. 2026 A PLUS Act (consolidates grants) BLOCK Act (block grants to states)	Rouzer (R- NC) Massie (R-KY) Moolenaar (R-MI) Burchett (R-TN)	1/31/2025	All referred to Committee on Education and Workforce No actions to date
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Legislation to Watch (and act upon)*cont. from p. 5***House Committee on Education & Workforce/Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions November 2025**

Bill Number	Bill Title	Sponsor	Introduced	Status
Bills in opposition to the Dept. of Ed Closure HR 869 HRes 94	Keep our PACT Act (retains monies for low income intervention programs and special ed)	Lee (D-NV)	1/31/2025	Referred to Committee on Education and Workforce and Committee on the Budget; no action
	Condemns closure; affirms public schools	Bonamici (D-OR)	2/4/2025	no action to date
HR711	Fair Act of 2025 (prohibits federal agencies and federally funded entities from discrimination or establishing preferences (quotas, # goals, timetables) on the basis of race, color or national origin in contracts/ employment)	Thomas Tiffany, R-WI-7	1/23/2025	Referred to Committee on the Judiciary, on Oversight, AND Gov. Reform on Education and Workforce; no action to date.
HR 6186	No anti-semitism in education Act	Randy Fine (R- FL)	11/20/2025	Referred to Committee on Education and Workforce
HR 5478	Preparing and Retaining All (PARA) Educators Act (support schools in recruitment & retention of para-educators)	Lucy McBath (D-GA)	9/18/2025	Referred to Committee on Education and Workforce
HR 3262 & HR305	One School/One Nurse Act (Demonstration grants to increase the numbers of school nurses in public elementary and secondary schools.)	Jennifer Kiggans, R-VA Fredrica Wilson D-FL-27	5/7/2025	Referred to Committee on Education and Workforce; no action to date
HR 3308	RETAIN ACT (Addresses the teacher and school leader shortage in early childhood, elementary, and secondary education, and for other purposes.)	Haley M. Stevens D-MI-11	05/08/2025	Referred to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Education and Workforce ;

While it can be frustrating to see “no action” on so many bills, it means that the bills are still in committee; hearings have not yet been held. There is still time to provide your input. The Senate and House Appropriations Bills are distinctly different, so now is the time to let your Congressional members know what you think.

Your Guide to Mis– and Disinformation

by **Lilly McGee** (reprinted from a July 12, 2021 blog from the League of Women Voters) <https://www.lwv.org/blog/your-guide-mis-and-disinformation>.

Misinformation: inadvertently sharing false information without the intent to harm.

Disinformation: intentionally sharing false information with the intent to harm.

While disinformation may seem like the worse of the two, it's frighteningly easy to spread misinformation. Remember the game "telephone" and how it shows that our messages get distorted over time? Every day, we play telephone in our face-to-face conversations, over social media, and more, with important political information.

We're all susceptible to mis– and disinformation, but the following steps will help you spot it before you take part in its spread:

1. Research the source. Who is sharing this information? If it's on-line, does the website sound familiar or have any political affiliations? If it's in-person, is the individual a frequent exaggerator, or do they have a job/experience that would give them insider information?

2. Check the date. It's easy to get incensed over an article on Twitter . . . only to realize it was published years ago and no longer is relevant.

3. Cross-check. Are reliable news sources reporting the same information? If not, it's unlikely that your smaller source just happened to get a super-exclusive, juicy scoop.

4. Read past the headline. You know how tabloids post scandalous headlines and follow them with articles that are relatively mundane? Unfortunately, political outlets

do that too. It is easy to take snippets out of context.

5. Question emotionally charged content. Is the person or outlet sharing this information using emotionally manipulative language to get you upset or excited? That's a red flag. Reliable sources let the facts fuel your response, not emotional language.

How to Stop Mis– and Disinformation:

1. Don't engage. It may be tempting to comment on an inaccurate Facebook post about how wrong it is, or to click on it to read all of the writer's claims, but don't! Every like, click, share, and comment contributes to the piece's rate of engagement, which tells the website that it's good content that they should show to more people.

2. Share correct information. For every incorrect piece of information you see or hear, try to share one that's correct. Instead of creating further discourse around something you don't want people to hear, get people talking about what you do want them to hear.

3. Report when needed. Whenever you see disinformation online, report it to ReportDisinfo.org (<http://reportdisinfo.org>). You can also report most social media posts to the platform themselves.

4. Learn more. Sign up to get updates on the League's Democracy Truth Project, an effort to advance public understanding of our government and reduce inaccurate information. (<https://lwv.org/educating-voters/women-power-democracy>).

Share: <https://www.addtoany.com/share?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.lwv.org%2Fblog%2Fyour-guide-mis-and-disinformation&title=Your%20Guide%20to%20Mis-%20and%20Disinformation%207C%20League%20of%20Women%20Voters>.

Advocacy Updates and Legislative Alerts

While generally legislation moves at glacial rates, there are times when things heat up, creating short timelines for submitting input to your Congressional representatives. If you would like to receive advocacy updates and legislative alerts via e-mail, please let your Forum Steering Committee know. We will add you to our contact list. You can complete the form on the website (<https://www.dkgusforum.org>) or

Email your request to: dkgu.s.forum@gmail.com

Subject line: Advocacy Updates Contact List

Give your name, state and best email address for reaching you.

The Connection is a publication of the U.S. Forum, The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International. It is published quarterly and distributed to all DKG members in the United States. The U.S. Forum purposes are to inform members and to support desirable legislation in the interests of education and women educators. To submit articles or if you have questions, contact Peggy Monroe, 2024–2026 editor, at dkgu.s.forum@gmail.com.