



**FEDERAL
LEGISLATIVE
&
REGULATORY
UPDATE**

Thursday, April 30, 2026

AGENDA



**Secretary McMahon Testifies On Capitol Hill
As One of Three Key Hearings and Markups**

&

The Department Continues to Publish New Regulatory Guidance

- Federal Regulatory Update
- Federal Legislative Update
- Q&A



REGULATORY UPDATE

**BREAKING
NEWS**

The image features the words "BREAKING NEWS" in a large, bold, white, three-dimensional sans-serif font. The letters are set against a vibrant red background. A series of white, curved lines radiate from the top right corner, creating a sense of motion and urgency. The text is positioned in the upper half of the frame, with "BREAKING" on the top line and "NEWS" on the bottom line. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the edges of the 3D letters and casting soft shadows on the red surface below.



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. Department of Education Launches Comprehensive, Nationwide Federal Student Aid Fraud Prevention Effort

APRIL 27, 2026

Today, the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) launched a new, real-time fraud detection capability for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form, marking the largest and most comprehensive, nationwide fraud prevention effort in the agency's history. Effective immediately, fraud detection is built directly into the FAFSA itself, with every applicant evaluated in real-time using risk-based identity screening. Applicants who display a certain level of fraud risk will now be required to

ED and DOL Implement Workforce Development Partnership

Today, the U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Labor (DOL) announced the implementation of a workforce development partnership to create an integrated federal education and workforce system.

JULY 15, 2025 | [ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT](#)



FEDERAL REGISTER

Public Inspection :: Tomorrow's Documents Today



Ⓜ Public Inspection :: Rule

Reimagining and Improving Student Education: Federal Student Loan Program

An **unpublished** Rule by the Education Department on 05/01/2026

PUBLIC INSPECTION DOCUMENT

Document Details

Sharing

🚫 This document is **unpublished**. It is scheduled to be published on 05/01/2026.

Once it is published it will be available on this page in an official form. Until then, you can [download the unpublished](#) PDF version.

Although we make a concerted effort to reproduce the original document in full on our Public Inspection pages, in some cases graphics may not be displayed, and non-substantive markup language may appear alongside substantive text. If you are using public inspection listings for legal research, you should verify the contents of documents against a final, official edition of

FEDERAL STUDENT AID FRAUD PREVENTION EFFORT

Today, the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) launched a new, real-time fraud detection capability for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form, marking the largest and most comprehensive, nationwide fraud prevention effort in the agency's history. Effective immediately, fraud detection is built directly into the FAFSA itself, with every applicant evaluated in real-time using risk-based identity screening. Applicants who display a certain level of fraud risk will now be required to present government-issued identification before accessing federal student aid funds such as Pell Grants and federal student loans.

The Department also recently began conducting a one-time review of all previously submitted 2026-27 FAFSA forms using the new screening technology, ensuring that all federal student aid program dollars are supporting students and families, not fraudsters. The Department estimates that its efforts to identify and deny federal student aid to fraudulent students will save taxpayers over \$1 billion during this year's FAFSA cycle.

FEDERAL STUDENT AID FRAUD PREVENTION EFFORT

“Since day one, the Trump Administration has protected the integrity of federal student aid programs, ensuring that these critical resources help the students they are intended to serve,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon. “Under President Trump’s leadership, we’ve not only reversed the previous Administration’s years of mismanagement of the federal student aid portfolio, but have rooted out fraud, waste, and abuse—keeping \$1 billion out of fraudsters’ hands and putting it back in the pockets of real students and families. This new fraud detection tool will stop fraud at the start of the process, before money goes out the door, strengthening the integrity of our programs and expanding opportunity for students who depend on these resources to finance their postsecondary education.”

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Biden Administration removed key verification safeguards, diverted resources away from fraud prevention, and required less than one percent of students to verify their identity following the submission of the FAFSA. These policies led to institutions across the country coming under siege by highly sophisticated fraud rings, ‘ghost students,’ and AI bots. In response, the Trump Administration launched a nationwide effort to combat identity fraud in the federal student aid programs by requiring institutions to verify the identity of each newly enrolled student – leading to more than \$1 billion in savings.

FEDERAL STUDENT AID FRAUD PREVENTION EFFORT

This new fraud detection tool embeds real-time fraud prevention technology directly into the FAFSA, relieving institutions of the most burdensome aspects of identity verification. It builds on the Trump Administration's commitment to root out fraud, waste, and abuse across the federal government, in coordination with the new White House Task Force to Eliminate Fraud, chaired by Vice President Vance.



FEDERAL STUDENT AID FRAUD PREVENTION EFFORT

Protecting the American Taxpayer

The Trump Administration has taken historic, proactive steps to ensure federal student aid dollars are used responsibly. Under Secretary McMahon's leadership, the Department conducted a comprehensive review of the Department's fraud prevention systems and made the following changes to protect the federal student aid programs, saving the American taxpayer millions of dollars.

- The Department [strengthened](#) real-time data-sharing with the Social Security Administration to prevent identity theft and stop money from going to dead individuals, saving the American taxpayer more than \$30 million.
- The Department [resumed](#) automated post-screening of student aid records, preventing overpayments to ensure lifetime federal Pell Grant limits are respected and enforced, saving American taxpayers more than \$10 million.
- The Department [partnered](#) with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to ensure illegal aliens no longer receive federal student aid funds.

For more information, please see Federal Student Aid's Electronic Announcement [here](#).

Knowledge Center Home > Library > Electronic Announcements > One Big Beautiful Bill Act NSLDS Eligibility Processing Updates

(LOANS-26-05) One Big Beautiful Bill Act NSLDS Eligibility Processing Updates

Print

POSTED DATE: April 24, 2026
AUTHOR: Federal Student Aid
ELECTRONIC ANNOUNCEMENT ID: LOANS-26-05
SUBJECT: One Big Beautiful Bill Act NSLDS Eligibility Processing Updates

The *One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA)* establishes new aggregate loan limits, introduces loan limit exceptions, and includes other changes to the federal student loan programs that must be implemented on July 1, 2026.

Tags

Electronic Announcements

Direct Loan

Federal Family Education Loan (F...

NSLDS

NSLDS ELIGIBILITY PROCESSING UPDATES

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) establishes new aggregate loan limits, introduces loan limit exceptions, and includes other changes to the federal student loan programs that must be implemented on July 1, 2026.

This Electronic Announcement outlines the updates that we will make to the National Student Loan Data System (NSLDS®) to support these changes. These OBBBA-related changes will be available in NSLDS beginning April 26, 2026, in anticipation of the start of the 2026–27 award year.

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) is currently engaged in rulemaking on numerous OBBBA provisions. While final regulations are forthcoming, we are providing the technical guidance below to support institutions, states, and vendors in preparing their systems to implement these changes in April. If the forthcoming regulations result in changes to these technical updates, we will provide additional guidance at that time.

For information about the April 26, 2026, updates to the FAFSA Processing System, refer to the March 9, 2026, Electronic Announcement. For information about the updates to the Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) System, refer to the April 23, 2026, Electronic Announcement.

NSLDS ELIGIBILITY PROCESSING UPDATES

NSLDS Academic Levels Updates

Beginning with the 2026–27 award year, NSLDS will begin using the following academic level codes, which will help determine the new graduate and professional aggregate loan limits:

- 8 – Graduate Never Professional
- 9 – Graduate Was Professional
- 10 – Professional Never Graduate
- 11 – Professional Was Graduate
- 12 – Graduate Concurrent Enrollment
- 13 – Professional Concurrent Enrollment

NSLDS will continue to display academic levels A–G for pre-*OBBBA* graduate/professional borrowers and include academic levels A–G in system outputs for loans prior to the 2026–27 award year. Academic levels 8–13 will apply to new loans beginning with the 2026–27 award year.

NSLDS ELIGIBILITY PROCESSING UPDATES

NSLDS Academic Levels Updates

NSLDS will also use the “Loan Limit Exception” flag reported by the COD System to determine whether a borrower qualifies for the pre-*OBBBA* aggregate loan limits or is subject to the new aggregate loan limits.

The Loan Limit Exception flag will not be reported to NSLDS during the initial days following the April 26, 2026, system implementation. As a result, all outputs will display a null value for this field until NSLDS receives a file from the COD System that confirms borrowers’ eligibility for an exception. NSLDS expects to receive this file and update the flag by Wednesday, April 29, 2026.

Note: For borrowers flagged as exceptions and who are eligible for the pre-*OBBBA* aggregate loan limits, the new aggregate loan limits will apply when the exception period ends. Schools should keep this in mind when awarding aid during the exception period.

NSLDS ELIGIBILITY PROCESSING UPDATES

Aggregate Loan Limit Updates

We are making updates throughout NSLDS to implement the revised aggregate loan limits included in the *OBBA*.

Graduate and Professional Aggregate Loan Limits

Borrowers who do not qualify for an exception will be subject to the revised limits.

Borrowers who qualify for an exception will remain eligible for the current aggregate limits while the exception is in effect. After the exception period ends or the borrower is no longer eligible for the exception, the revised limits will apply.

Graduate and professional borrowers who do not qualify for an exception will no longer be eligible to receive Direct PLUS Loans for graduate and professional borrowers as of July 1, 2026. However, NSLDS will continue to display previously awarded PLUS loans for graduate and professional students and include them in applicable system outputs.

NSLDS ELIGIBILITY PROCESSING UPDATES

Aggregate Loan Limit Updates

We are making updates throughout NSLDS to implement the revised aggregate loan limits included in the *OBBBA*.

Graduate and Professional Aggregate Loan Limits

Undergraduate subsidized and unsubsidized loans will **not** be included in the calculation of the new graduate or professional aggregate limits. However, borrowers who qualify for an exception will continue to have their undergraduate subsidized and unsubsidized loans included in the calculation of the pre-*OBBBA* graduate/professional aggregate limit of \$138,500 (or \$224,000 for borrowers who attend eligible health profession programs).

Note: Borrowers who are eligible for the increased unsubsidized limits while enrolled in certain health profession programs and are eligible for the interim loan limit exception will continue to be eligible for the increased amounts while eligible for the limited exception. After the student is no longer eligible for the limited exception or the limited exception period has been exhausted, these borrowers are no longer eligible for the increased aggregate limit and will instead fall under the new \$100,000 or \$200,000 limits, as applicable.

NSLDS ELIGIBILITY PROCESSING UPDATES

Aggregate Loan Limit Updates

We are making updates throughout NSLDS to implement the revised aggregate loan limits included in the *OBBBA*.

Parent PLUS Aggregate Loan Limit

Beginning with the 2026–27 award year, the Parent PLUS aggregate loan limit will be \$65,000 and apply per dependent student, **not** per parent borrower.

Once the parent borrower(s) has reached the \$65,000 Parent PLUS aggregate loan limit for an undergraduate dependent student, they will not be eligible to borrow additional PLUS loans for that student, even if any loans have been repaid, forgiven, or discharged.

NSLDS ELIGIBILITY PROCESSING UPDATES

Aggregate Loan Limit Updates

We are making updates throughout NSLDS to implement the revised aggregate loan limits included in the *OBBBA*.

Parent PLUS Aggregate Loan Limit

A dependent student whose parent borrower(s) has reached the Parent PLUS aggregate limit will not be eligible to receive additional unsubsidized loans beyond the dependent annual limit.

Note: Dependent students will still be eligible to receive additional unsubsidized loan amounts when a Direct PLUS Loan for parent borrowers is denied due to adverse credit.

For dependent students (and subsequently the parent borrower(s) who qualify for an exception), the Parent PLUS aggregate limit will not apply during the exception period. However, NSLDS will continue to calculate, display, and include the limit in system outputs and reflect the limit in other impacted areas of NSLDS.

NSLDS ELIGIBILITY PROCESSING UPDATES

Aggregate Loan Limit Updates

We are making updates throughout NSLDS to implement the revised aggregate loan limits included in the *OBBBA*.

Lifetime Maximum Aggregate Loan Limit

Beginning with the 2026–27 award year, student borrowers will have a new lifetime maximum aggregate loan limit of \$257,500. This limit includes loans received as an undergraduate, graduate, or professional student and includes both Direct Loans and Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program loans.

The limit does not include PLUS loans for parent borrowers, consolidation loans (underlying loans are included), or Health Education Assistance Loan (HEAL) Program/health profession program loans.

Note: PLUS loans for graduate or professional students (both Direct and FFEL) will be included in the lifetime maximum aggregate loan limit.

NSLDS ELIGIBILITY PROCESSING UPDATES

Aggregate Loan Limit Updates

We are making updates throughout NSLDS to implement the revised aggregate loan limits included in the *OBBBA*.

Lifetime Maximum Aggregate Loan Limit

Once a borrower reaches the \$257,500 lifetime maximum aggregate loan limit, the borrower will no longer be eligible to receive additional *Title IV* loans, even if the borrower's loans have been repaid, forgiven, or discharged.

For borrowers who qualify for an exception, the lifetime maximum aggregate loan limit will not apply during the exception period. However, NSLDS will continue to calculate, display, and include the limit in system outputs and reflect the limit in other impacted areas of NSLDS.

Reminder: After the exception period ends, any borrower (student or parent) who continues to borrow will be subject to the new aggregate loan limits.

NSLDS ELIGIBILITY PROCESSING UPDATES

NSLDS Professional Access Updates

As part of the system update scheduled for April 26, 2026, we will implement the following enhancements to the [NSLDS Professional Access](#) website:

- We will add “Close or Equal to” and “Exceeds” warning icons for the new graduate, professional, Parent PLUS, and lifetime maximum aggregate loan limits.
- We will display “Close or Equal to” or “Exceeds” informational icons for borrowers who qualify for an exception and are close to or have exceeded the new aggregate loan limits. The informational icons are designed to help schools award aid to borrowers who qualify for an exception and are currently eligible for the pre-*OBBA* aggregate loan limits.
- **Reminder:** Once the exception period ends, the new aggregate loan limits will apply. Schools should keep this in mind when awarding aid to these borrowers during the exception period.

NSLDS ELIGIBILITY PROCESSING UPDATES

NSLDS Professional Access Updates

As part of the system update scheduled for April 26, 2026, we will implement the following enhancements to the [NSLDS Professional Access](#) website:

We will update the “Aggregate Calculations Table” on the Financial Aid Dashboard to include the following columns:

- Undergraduate
- Pre-*OBBBA* Graduate/Professional
- Total (undergraduate + pre-*OBBBA* graduate/professional)
- Graduate
- Professional

NSLDS ELIGIBILITY PROCESSING UPDATES

NSLDS Professional Access Updates

As part of the system update scheduled for April 26, 2026, we will implement the following enhancements to the [NSLDS Professional Access](#) website:

- We will add an additional table to the Financial Aid Dashboard to display Parent PLUS loan information:
 - This table will include the student borrower's role (student or dependent) and name, Parent PLUS totals, Parent PLUS limit indicators, and other relevant details.
 - When viewing a parent's record, this table will display each undergraduate dependent student associated with a PLUS loan borrowed by the parent borrower(s), along with each student's individual total.
 - When viewing a student's record for whom a parent has borrowed a PLUS loan, the table will display only that student and the total amount borrowed on their behalf.
 - The "Total Outstanding Balances" section on the Financial Aid Dashboard will now include the lifetime maximum aggregate total.
 - The loan limit exception flag will display in multiple areas on the Financial Aid Dashboard.

NSLDS ELIGIBILITY PROCESSING UPDATES

NSLDS TSM/FAH Updates

Beginning April 26, 2026, we will make several important updates to the NSLDS Transfer Student Monitoring (TSM)/Financial Aid History (FAH) processes. Refer to the [updated *NSLDS Transfer Student Monitoring & Financial Aid History User Guide and Record Layouts*](#) for detailed information about updates to the TSM and FAH file layouts and a new TSM Alert for transfer students.

NSLDS ELIGIBILITY PROCESSING UPDATES

NSLDS Post-Screening Reason Codes Updates

We will make several important updates to existing NSLDS post-screening reason codes and add new post-screening reason codes to support the changes under *OBBBA*.

We will update the following post-screening reason codes to incorporate the new graduate and professional aggregate loan limits, in addition to the existing undergraduate and pre-*OBBBA* graduate/professional aggregate loan limits:

- 10 – Student has exceeded combined aggregate loan limit
- 12 – Exceeding combined loan limit resolved

NSLDS ELIGIBILITY PROCESSING UPDATES

NSLDS Post-Screening Reason Codes Updates

The following new post-screening reason codes will identify borrowers who are close to or have exceeded the lifetime maximum aggregate loan limit or the Parent PLUS aggregate loan limit:

- 28 – Student is close to their lifetime maximum aggregate loan limit
- 29 – Student has exceeded their lifetime maximum aggregate loan limit
- 30 – Lifetime maximum aggregate loan limit resolved (only applicable if a loan or a disbursement has been canceled and the total falls below the “Close to” and “Exceeds” limits)
- 31 – Student recipient is close to their Parent PLUS aggregate loan limit
- 32 – Student recipient has exceeded their Parent PLUS aggregate loan limit
- 33 – Student recipient Parent PLUS aggregate loan limit resolved (only applicable if a loan or a disbursement has been canceled and the total falls below the “Close to” and “Exceeds” limits)

Note: NSLDS will only generate the new post-screening reasons codes 28–33 when the borrower is not considered an exception.

NSLDS ELIGIBILITY PROCESSING UPDATES

NSLDS Post-Screening Reason Codes Updates

A new post-screening reason code for loan limit exception status changes will also be available to notify schools when a borrower's exception status has changed:

34 – Loan limit exception status change

Additionally, new informational post-screening reason codes will be available for borrowers who qualify for an exception and who are not subject to the new aggregate loan limits during the exception period. These borrowers, including student borrowers and dependent borrowers who are the beneficiary of a PLUS Loan for parent borrowers, will receive the following informational post-screening reason codes:

35 – Student has exceeded the new combined graduate or professional aggregate loan limits

36 – Student is close to their lifetime maximum aggregate loan limit

37 – Student has exceeded their lifetime maximum aggregate loan limit

38 – Student recipient is close to their Parent PLUS aggregate loan limit

39 – Student recipient has exceeded their Parent PLUS aggregate loan limit

NSLDS ELIGIBILITY PROCESSING UPDATES

NSLDS Post-Screening Reason Codes Updates

These informational post-screening reason codes are designed to help schools award aid for borrowers who qualify for an exception and are currently eligible for the pre-*OBBA* aggregate loan limits. Once the borrower is no longer considered an exception, NSLDS will stop generating the informational post-screening reason codes; instead, NSLDS will use the applicable existing or new post-screening reason codes.

Reminder: Once the exception period ends, the new aggregate loan limits will apply for these borrowers. Schools should keep this in mind when awarding aid to students during the exception period.

[Knowledge Center Home](#) > [Library](#) > [Electronic Announcements](#) > [One Big Beautiful Bill Act FAFSA Processing Updates \(Updated April 23, 2026\)](#)

(APP-26-02) One Big Beautiful Bill Act FAFSA Processing Updates (Updated April 23, 2026)

🖨️ Print

POSTED DATE: March 09, 2026

AUTHOR: Federal Student Aid

ELECTRONIC ANNOUNCEMENT ID: APP-26-02

SUBJECT: One Big Beautiful Bill Act FAFSA Processing Updates (Updated April 23, 2026)

i Note

Update on April 23, 2026: We are sharing additional details about the transition to the updated

Tags

Electronic Announcements

All Title IV Federal Student Aid...

Application Processing

FAFSA PROCESSING UPDATES

Update on April 23, 2026: We are sharing additional details about the transition to the updated ISIR layout on Sunday, April 26:

The last batch of ISIRs using the existing layout will be delivered on the morning of Friday, April 24, per normal delivery processes.

NSLDS post-screening will be paused for one week to simplify the transition to the new ISIR layout. This means that ISIRs delivered on Monday, April 27, will not include updated post-screening codes. NSLDS post-screening will resume the following weekend (May 3) on the regular schedule.

The first batch of ISIRs using the new layout will be generated on Monday, April 27 and delivered to school and state SAIG mailboxes on Tuesday morning, per the regular schedule.

- Please note: FSA will closely monitor ISIR generation post-launch to ensure that the system is operating as expected. The Department may choose to pause ISIR delivery if there are issues that need to be resolved. If this happens, we will notify partners as an update to this EA and via the FSA Tech Listserv.

Loan limit exception flags are managed by the Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) System. Changes to this flag will trigger an updated NSLDS post-screening transaction on the regular post-screening schedule. If you have questions about which students have loan limit exceptions, please refer to the new COD <LoanLimitException> field, which will be set with an initial value on Sunday.

FAFSA PROCESSING UPDATES

This electronic announcement describes updates to several Federal Student Aid (FSA) systems and the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA[®]) processing experience resulting from the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act* (P.L. 119-21) (*OBBBA*), which established Federal Pell Grant (Pell Grant) eligibility for eligible workforce programs and modified loan limits. In anticipation of the program changes to *Title IV* programs under *OBBBA* that are required to be implemented on July 1, 2026 or later, these system changes will go live on April 26, 2026.

All student- and contributor-facing FAFSA form changes related to *OBBBA* were made in September 2025 in advance of the general availability of the 2026–27 FAFSA form (see [APP-25-23](#)). Following the April 26, 2026, changes to the processing elements, FSA does not anticipate that any additional changes related to *OBBBA* will be made to the FAFSA application.

The Department of Education (Department) is currently engaged in rulemaking on numerous *OBBBA* provisions. While final regulations are forthcoming, we are providing the technical guidance below to support institutions, states, and vendors in preparing their systems to implement these changes in April. If the forthcoming regulations result in changes to these technical updates, we will provide additional guidance at that time.

FAFSA PROCESSING UPDATES

Eligible Workforce Programs

We are updating the FAFSA Processing System (FPS) to account for the *OBBBA* change that extends Pell Grant eligibility to a student enrolled in an eligible workforce program even if the student has already obtained a bachelor's degree. Before *OBBBA*, students with a bachelor's degree could only receive a Pell Grant to enroll in certain teacher certification programs.

A new field, "Enrolled in Eligible Workforce Program," will be added to the FAFSA Partner Portal (FPP), Electronic Data Exchange (EDE) batch corrections system. This field will also be added to the end of the "Matches and Other Processing Information" block in the Institutional Student Information Record (ISIR). The options for this field are:

1 = Yes

2 = No

<blank> = Null

FAFSA PROCESSING UPDATES

Eligible Workforce Programs

When a student submits a FAFSA form for the first time, the value of this field will be set to 'blank' for the initial transaction. Pell Grant eligibility will be calculated on this initial transaction consistent with existing practice. If the student has indicated that they have already received a bachelor's or graduate degree or are currently enrolled in a program leading to a graduate degree, the Pell eligibility flag will be set to 'No'.

A financial aid administrator (FAA) must manually set this field to 'Yes' via a correction in FPP or via EDE batch correction to indicate that **this student is enrolled, or accepted for enrollment**, in an eligible workforce program that has been approved by the Department.

Once the indicator is set to 'Yes', FPS will process a new ISIR transaction that includes updated Pell Grant eligibility. A student who meets all requirements to qualify for a Pell Grant except that they have obtained a bachelor's degree will then become eligible for a Pell Grant. Schools must still confirm that students enrolled in eligible workforce programs meet all eligibility criteria, including not having a graduate credential or currently being enrolled in a graduate program.

FAFSA PROCESSING UPDATES

Eligible Workforce Programs

All schools listed on the FAFSA form and state agencies will receive this new transaction, even if they did not update the “Enrolled in Eligible Workforce Program” indicator. We will update the FAFSA Submission Summary to make this clear to students. Partners should note that this new transaction may include additional corrections unrelated to Workforce Programs.

To help prevent schools from incorrectly disbursing a Pell Grant to a student who qualifies for Pell Grant funds due to enrollment in an eligible workforce program at another institution, the Common Origination and Disbursement (COD) system will generate a new warning edit. This warning will prompt schools to confirm that the disbursement is for an eligible workforce program whenever they attempt to disburse funds on a transaction with the “Enrolled in Eligible Workforce Program” indicator selected and for which tuition and fees were not reported.

If the student ceases to be enrolled in the program, the institution must make a correction to set the field to 'No'. If the school initially set the indicator to ‘Yes’ because the student was accepted into an eligible workforce program, but the student never enrolls in the program, the institution should change the field to blank. If a student is never accepted into and never enrolls in an eligible workforce program at an institution, the institution may leave the field blank.

FAFSA PROCESSING UPDATES

Modified Loan Limits

We are updating the National Student Loan Database System (NSLDS®) match process to account for a new lifetime maximum loan limit, limits on Direct PLUS loans for parent borrowers, and the elimination of eligibility for Direct PLUS loans for graduate and professional students.

The NSLDS Information block on the ISIR has been updated to accommodate new aggregate loan limits, academic levels, and loan limit exception flags. This includes several new fields, as well as 12 additional NSLDS post-screening reason codes.

FPS has extended existing logic for FPS-C flags, edits, and comments to align with these changes. For example, FPS-C flags will be set for new indicators such as the NSLDS Professional Combined Limit Indicator when the value of the indicator is set to E (Exceeded). See the [2026–27 FAFSA Specifications Guide](#) for full details.

FAFSA PROCESSING UPDATES

Launch Details

All changes to the FPS, NSLDS, and COD systems described above will be released on **April 26, 2026**. As previously communicated, eligibility changes and modified loan limits will go into effect on July 1, 2026.

This release will include a mid-cycle update to *only* the 2026–27 ISIR format. The 2025–26 ISIR format will not change. Any 2026–27 ISIR generated on or after April 26 will be generated in the new format.

A draft version of the updated [2026–27 ISIR layout and Volume 4A](#) of the 2026–27 FAFSA Specifications Guide are now available. Updates to Volume 1, Volume 4B, Volume 5, Volume 6, and Volume 7 of the guide will be published over the next month. We will post an update here when they are available.

There won't be a large-scale reprocessing effort as part of this launch. Changes to student records in NSLDS may trigger a post-screening NSLDS system generated transaction using the existing process.



FEDERAL REGISTER

The Daily Journal of the United States Government



PR Proposed Rule

Accountability in Higher Education and Access Through Demand-Driven Workforce Pell: Student Tuition and Transparency System (STATS) and Earnings Accountability

A Proposed Rule by the Education Department on 04/20/2026



This document has a comment period that ends in 27 days. (05/20/2026)

SUBMIT A PUBLIC COMMENT

7 comments received. [View posted comments](#)

← PUBLISHED DOCUMENT: 2026-07666 (91 FR 21088)

PDF

Document Details

DOCUMENT HEADINGS

Department of Education
34 CFR Parts 600, 668, and 685



IN OTHER NEWS



Robbing from the Poor to Give to the Rich: The Flawed Logic and Failed Methodology Behind the *Do No Harm* Earnings Test

Diane Auer Jones

April 2026

Abstract

This report critically examines the Do No Harm (DNH) earnings test, a highly flawed and scientifically unsound higher education accountability metric enacted by Congress as part of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. Although Congress requires this metric to be applied to undergraduate degree programs, graduate degree programs and graduate certificate programs, the Department of Education (the Department) has proposed to use its regulatory authority to expand the test to include undergraduate certificate programs. The Department's desire to hold all schools and programs to the same standards is commendable; however, the metric imposed upon them by Congress lacks validity and merit, rendering it an arbitrary and capricious regulatory test.

This report evaluates the DNH metric against accepted standards of experimental design, including those established by the Department¹ as the minimum required to demonstrate suitability for policy-making decisions, and finds that it fails in numerous and significant ways. The report demonstrates that the metric's design systematically disadvantages low-income students and the institutions that serve them and in particular, has disparate impact at the certificate level on non-traditionally-aged females and students of color. Importantly, the DNH metric ignores well understood employment trends, including that earnings grow significantly during the first 10 years of one's career, that individuals from low-income families tend to take

THE FLAWED LOGIC AND FAILED METHODOLOGY BEHIND THE DO NO HARM EARNINGS TEST

Policy Recommendations

1. A Better Approach for Certificate Programs
2. Methodological Corrections Needed to Improve the Scientific Integrity of the DNH Metric
 - Tip Income Adjustment
 - Risk Adjustment
 - Occupations Unavailable to High School Graduates
 - Public Assistance Reform
 - Public Assistance Reform

A C C R E D I T A T I O N



Negotiated Rulemaking for Higher Education 2026

This page provides information regarding the Department's negotiated rulemaking in 2026 to make regulatory changes for the programs authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

View our [Frequently Asked Questions about Negotiated Rulemaking for Higher Education](#) for more information about negotiated rulemaking in general.

[Knowledge Center Home](#) > [Library](#) > [Federal Registers](#) > Comment Request: Student Assistance General Provisions-Subpart J-Approval of Independently Administered Tests

Comment Request: Student Assistance General Provisions-Subpart J-Approval of Independently Administered Tests

Print

PUBLICATION DATE: April 30, 2026
POSTED DATE: April 30, 2026
SUBJECT: Comment Request: Student Assistance General Provisions-Subpart J-Approval of Independently Administered Tests
FR TYPE: Notice

Tags

Federal Registers

Laws and Regulations



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

HOT TOPICS

The image features the words "HOT TOPICS" in a bold, red, 3D sans-serif font. Each letter is topped with a realistic flame effect, with yellow and orange fire rising from the top edges. The text is set against a solid black background. Below the main text, a faint, semi-transparent reflection of the words is visible, creating a mirrored effect on a dark surface.

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS



**Hearing on the
Administration's
Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Proposal**



[Click Here for Information for Virginians in the Middle East](#)

NEWS

APRIL 29 2026

Kaine Statement on Cancellation of Meeting with Education Secretary McMahon

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA), a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, released the following statement regarding the cancellation of a HELP Committee discussion with U.S. Secretary of Education Linda McMahon about steps the Trump-Vance Administration is taking to dismantle the Department of Education (ED). The move came after Kaine announced he would host a press call from inside the meeting.

“The strength of our Department of Education is vital to our economy and America’s future. But the Trump-Vance Administration has spent the last year driving the agency into a ditch and then tried to send its Secretary of Education to the Senate for backroom meetings with senators instead of hearings in full view of the American public. Rather than allowing me to broadcast the conversation, which wouldn’t include any classified information, the meeting was canceled altogether. What is the Administration hiding about its efforts to dismantle critical education programs? I’m going to keep doing everything I can to find out and to demand accountability.”

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Mark Up of Fraud Prevention Legislation

FRAUD-PREVENTION MARKUP

Legislation Considered

[H.R. 8312, Fraud Prevention and Accountability Act of 2025](#): The bill establishes a permanent Inspector General for Fraud, Accountability, and Recovery (IGFAR) within the U.S. Treasury to assume and expand the data analytics and investigative functions of the Pandemic Response Accountability Committee after 2028. The bill looks to strengthen Treasury's Fiscal Service program integrity role, including administration of the Do Not Pay system and development of a government-wide data analytics platform, and requires data access agreements to support both pre-award fraud prevention and post-award investigative activities. **Bill mentions PRAC, IGs, of course.**

[H.R. 8467, Zeroing Out Monetary Benefits Improperly Expended or ZOMBIE Act](#): The bipartisan bill reforms the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019 by requiring agencies to conduct more comprehensive and ongoing fraud risk assessments focused on improper payments that result in financial loss to the government. The bill mandates implementation of fraud risk management best practices, including the GAO Fraud Risk Framework, replaces annual improper payment estimates with continuous risk-based controls such as use of the Do Not Pay system prior to award decisions, requires agencies to estimate financial losses from improper payments, **and increases coordination among agencies, Inspectors General, and the U.S. Treasury through annual meetings.**

FRAUD-PREVENTION MARKUP

Legislation Considered

[H.R. 8466, Taxpayer Resources Used in Emergencies](#) (TRUE) Accountability Act: The bipartisan bill requires the Office of Management and Budget to issue guidance for agency internal control plans for use during future emergency spending. It requires agencies to incorporate GAO improper payment and fraud risk frameworks, conduct risk assessments, and implement real-time, data-driven payment monitoring techniques in emergency response programs. **Committee approved an amendment that requires agencies to conduct “after action reviews” of internal control plans and to consult IGs for independent check.** Goal is to create a cycle of continuous improvement.

[H.R. 8463, Pre-Payment Fraud Prevention and Treasury Data Access Act](#): This bipartisan bill looks to strengthen the Federal government’s financial oversight and controls by directing the U.S. Treasury to work with agencies to verify payment and payee information before payments go out the door. It expands tools like the U.S. Treasury’s Do Not Pay system and ensuring federal agencies have better access to accurate data to identify improper and fraudulent payments. **Bill mentions IGs (agencies making information related to bill to the OIG).**

FRAUD-PREVENTION MARKUP

Legislation Considered

- [H.R. 8466, Taxpayer Resources Used in Emergencies](#) (TRUE) Accountability Act: The bipartisan bill requires the Office of [H.R. 1755, Timely and Accurate Benefits Act of 2025](#): The bipartisan bill requires the U.S. Treasury to make the Do Not Pay system available to States administering federally funded programs for eligibility determinations and payment verification. The bill conditions receipt of federal funds on States developing and maintaining plans to ensure access to necessary data systems for identity verification, financial and household eligibility checks, and payment validation, and requires States to identify and address gaps in their verification capabilities. **Bill mentions IGs, agencies to provide reports related to the bill to OIGs, GAO, etc.**
- [H.R. 8464, Stopping Fraudulent Payments Act](#): The legislation looks to tackle the widespread “pay and chase” problem by preventing federal agencies from making payments when an agency has determined there is an elevated risk of fraud or the payment is likely to be improper. The bill also gives the U.S. Treasury new authority to return payment requests to agencies if they appear to be at risk for fraud. These reforms shift agency actions from recovery to prevention which protects taxpayer dollars. **Bill mentions IGs (law enforcement exemption).**

FRAUD-PREVENTION MARKUP

Legislation Considered

[H.R. 8428, Federal Fraud Prevention Workforce Training Act](#): The bipartisan bill requires the U.S. Treasury, in coordination with the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Personnel Management, to establish a government-wide training program to ensure the federal workforce can identify fraud risks, implement anti-fraud best practices, and utilize Treasury tools such as the Do Not Pay system. The training program is also made available to State and local governments administering federally funded programs.

[H.R. 8340, Taxpayer Funds Oversight and Accountability Act of 2025](#): The bipartisan bill clarifies agency Chief Financial Officers' responsibilities over financial performance, internal controls, and financial reporting, including implementation of financial management plans issued by the Office of Management and Budget. It requires regular updates on plan implementation, authorizes Deputy CFOs to serve as acting CFOs during vacancies, removes Vacancy Act limitations, and requires agencies to establish and annually assess internal accounting and administrative controls aligned with reporting obligations and improper payment assessments.

FRAUD-PREVENTION MARKUP

Legislation Considered

H.R. 8107, Government Audit and Accountability of Federally Funded State-Administered Programs Act of 2025: The bipartisan bill directs the Comptroller General to produce a recurring “High Risk List” identifying federally funded State-administered programs most vulnerable to waste, fraud, and abuse, including comparative analysis across States to identify trends and high-risk administrative practices.

**WHAT
COULD
BE
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2026 Spring Webinar Series





BETWEEN THE LINES, BEHIND THE WORK:

Survey Findings on
the True Scope of
Licensure Compliance

BETWEEN THE LINES, BEHIND THE WORK: SURVEY FINDINGS ON THE TRUE SCOPE OF LICENSURE COMPLIANCE

Summary

This report examines how institutions are managing the growing demands of professional licensure compliance following the 2024 federal certification requirements. Based on a nationwide survey, it highlights the scope, complexity, and intensity of licensure-related work across states, professions, and academic programs.

Unlike other compliance areas, professional licensure requires institutions to track and interpret highly variable state requirements, determine whether programs meet educational standards in each student's location, and provide accurate public and direct disclosures. Under the new regulations, institutions must certify these determinations at the time of enrollment, often without confirmation from state licensing boards, increasing institutional risk and responsibility.

The findings show that licensure compliance now carries significant workload, operational strain, and potential consequences for student access. Many institutions report increased staff burden, reliance on manual processes, and difficult decisions about where programs can be offered. The report provides early insight into how institutions are responding and underscores the need for sustainable compliance practices, clearer policy alignment, and continued collaboration to protect students and support licensure pathways.

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