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CU Federal Relations Monthly Update - 5.29.26 [1]

May 29, 2026 by Riley Black [2]

FY27 Appropriations Update

Congress is working on the Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) appropriation process. House appropriations subcommittees began marking up the twelve annual spending bills in April. The House passed the Military Construction-Veterans Affairs [3] appropriations bill on May 15. The House Appropriations Committee has approved appropriations bills for Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, & Related Agencies [4]; Commerce, Justice, Science, & Related Agencies [5]; Energy and Water Development [6]; Financial Services & General Government [7]; Legislative Branch [8]; and National Security, Department of State, & Related Agencies [8].

House Appropriations subcommittees have approved appropriations bills for Interior, Environment & Related Agencies and Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, & Related Agencies. Markup sessions for all other appropriations bills are scheduled for early June. The full House markup schedule can be found here [8]. The Senate Appropriations committee has not announced their markup schedule.

The University of Colorado Federal Relations team actively advocates for robust funding for programs which support our students and researchers, including federal financial aid and numerous research agencies and programs. We have submitted CU-specific requests to Congress, signed stakeholder support letters, urged our members to lead and sign dear colleague letters, and brought CU leadership, faculty and students to Capitol Hill to champion university priorities.

Recent CU Advocacy Letters

CU Boulder signed onto a multi-organization letter [9] on May 14 urging Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee leadership to schedule a confirmation hearing for James O'Neill, nominee for Director of the National Science Foundation (NSF). Sen. Hickenlooper serves on the HELP Committee and CU Federal Relations has provided questions for the Senator to consider asking the nominee.

CU Anschutz signed onto multi-organization letters on May 13 urging House [10] and Senate [11] Defense appropriations leaders to support the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) in FY27. The letters advocate for $1.67 billion for CDMRP.

CU Boulder signed onto a multi-organization letter [12] on April 28 urging House and Senate Commerce, Justice, and Science (CJS) appropriations leaders to support the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) in FY27. The letter advocates for $42 million for NJI and $48 million for BJS.

DOL Prevailing Wage Proposed Rule Comments

All four campuses submitted a joint response [13] to the Department of Labor's (DOL) Notice of

Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on May 26. The proposed rule would revise the methodology used to calculate prevailing wages for workers on H-1B, H-1B1, E-3, and PERM visa programs by increasing wage levels.

ED AHEAD Proposed Rule Comments
UCCS [14], APLU [15], and AAU [16] submitted responses to the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Accountability in Higher Education and Access through Demand-Driven Workforce Pell (AHEAD) NPRM on May 20. The NPRM proposed an earnings accountability framework that would restrict access to federal direct student loans for programs whose graduates fail the "earnings test."

CU Science Policy Class in DC
CU Federal Relations hosted CU Boulder's Global Seminar on Science Policy [17] on May 6. The three-week Maymester course allows CU students to learn about science policy in our nation's capital. Heather Bené, Senior Associate VP of Federal Relations; Brett Roude, Assistant VP of Federal Relations and Health Policy; and Riley Black, Federal Relations Assistant, discussed the legislative process and the role the Federal Relations office plays in advancing federal science policy.

CU Spring Commencement
CU Federal Relations would like to extend our congratulations to all 2026 spring graduates at our four campuses and want to express our gratitude to the faculty and staff who helped make it all possible.

Sarah Gillis (CU Boulder AeroEngr BS'17), Senior Advisor to the Administrator of NASA, was the keynote speaker for the Smead Aerospace Engineering Sciences spring graduation ceremony [18] at CU Boulder on May 1. She also toured the Laboratory for Atmospheric and Space Physics [19] (LASP) while on campus.

Additionally, congressional staff from Rep. Crank's office attended the UCCS Spring Commencement on May 15.

Recent Capitol Hill Visits
Tom Flaig, Vice Chancellor for Research at CU Anschutz, met [20] with leadership from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) on May 4.

Students in the Quantum Scholars [21] program at CU Boulder met with staff from the offices of Sen. Hickenlooper and Reps. Neguse and Evans on May 8.

Amy Barton, Senior Associate Dean for Faculty and Students at the CU Anschutz College of Nursing, virtually met with staff from the offices of Sens. Bennet and Hickenlooper and Reps. DeGette, Crow, and Evans on May 13.

Pam Buckley, Associate Research Professor in the Institute of Behavioral Science at CU Boulder, met with staff from the offices of Sens. Bennet and Hickenlooper on May 26. Visits were organized through the Society for Prevention Research (SPR [22]).

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