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Federal Government Update - 2.27.26 [1]

February 27, 2026 by Riley Black [2]

Dear Colleagues,

Please find a federal government update from our teams.

Government Funding Update
Federal funding for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) lapsed on Feb. 14 and has not been restored. The Senate failed to advance full year funding for the agency this week, reports [3] *The Hill*. DHS has halted Global Entry services to prioritize standard airport security lines during the shutdown, reports [4] the *New York Times.* TSA workers will receive only a portion of their next paycheck, with most affected workers only being paid for the second week in February since agency funding lapsed as of Feb. 14, reports [5]*CNN.* All other federal agencies are currently funded through Sept. 30, 2026.

State of The Union
In his State of the Union Address [6] to Congress on Feb. 24, President Trump touted the "Golden Age of America" and spotlighted the Presidential AI challenge [7], an initiative focused on K-12 students spearheaded by the First Lady, which seeks to "inspire young people and educators to create AI-based innovative solutions to community challenges while fostering AI interest and competency." Secretary of Education Linda McMahon released a statement [8] applauding the "Golden Age of Education," which she said has "restored accountability in education, empowered parents and expanded opportunities for students across the country."

ED Announces New Interagency Partnerships
The U.S. Department of Education (ED) announced [9] on Feb. 23 two new interagency agreements that move federally-mandated programs and operations out of ED to other federal agencies. ED has signed nine interagency agreements with four federal agencies since May 2025. The latest agreement moves foreign gift and contract reporting, required of universities under Section 117 of the *Higher Education Act,* from ED to the State Department. State will support ED in managing the new Section 117 foreign funding reporting portal, [10] which launched [11] in January 2026. ED released a fact sheet [12] on the new partnership, which emphasizes that data from the portal will now be easily accessible to national security experts at State.

NIH Publishes Perspective on Unified Funding Strategies
Thirteen Institute and Center (IC) Directors at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) published [13] perspectives on implementing the NIH Unified Funding Strategy on Feb. 23. Originally announced [14] in August 2025, the Unified Funding Strategy is intended to help the NIH provide clearer, more consistent funding decisions across all ICs. While each IC may implement its own framework, all must:

- Post IC profiles and funding strategies in a central location on the NIH Grants and Funding site;
- Communicate changes to NIH and IC programmatic priorities, funding principles, and decision factors in a clear and timely manner;
- Remain committed to maintaining objective peer review;
- Inform applicants when their proposals fall outside an IC's mission;
- Have IC Directors retain final funding decisions; and
- Internally document each decision for applications that will be funded.

ED Resumes Student Loan Forgiveness

A federal district court judge on Feb. 24 denied the U.S. Department of Education's request for additional time to decide whether to approve thousands of applications from borrowers requesting loan forgiveness, reports [15] *Politico.* The district court previously directed the department to come to a decision on the applications by Jan. 28.

More than 11,000 borrowers received notifications last week that their loans would be forgiven, reports [16] *Forbes.* These are the first approval notices issued by the Department since forgiveness under the Income Contingent Repayment (ICR) plan, created in 1994, was blocked over one year ago.

DOJ Lawsuit Against University of California

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) filed a lawsuit [17] against the University of California (UC) System on Feb. 24 over alleged antisemitism at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) campus in October 2023, according to a DOJ press release [18]. It is the latest action against the UC System by the federal administration, which also sought a $1.2 billion settlement from the university, attempted to freeze millions in federal research grants, tried to curb international student enrollment and more, reports [19] *Inside Higher Ed.*

The Federal Relations and General Counsel teams are actively monitoring developments at the federal level.?We are working closely with the President and Chancellors, as well as the Colorado congressional delegation to champion CU priorities. We are committed to keeping you informed. Please visit the CU System Federal Updates and Actions [20] page for up-to-date communications and federal memos.?

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Kerry Tipper, Vice President, University Counsel?

Federal Weekly Updates [21], Federal Updates [22]
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