Published on *University of Colorado* (https://www.cu.edu)

Federal Government Update - 3.13.26 [1]

March 13, 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 nearly one month ago – on Feb. 14. Congress remains at an impasse over how to end the shutdown. The Senate voted 51-46 [3] this week against considering H.R. 7147 [4], House-passed legislation that would fully fund DHS. It is the fourth time the Senate has rejected advancing the bill. Meanwhile, the Senate also blocked legislation this week championed by Senate Democrats that would fund all DHS agencies, except Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). All other federal agencies are currently funded through Sept. 30, 2026.

NIST Walks Back Policies Targeting Foreign-Born Scientists
The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) seems to be walking back several unpublished policies to curb its partnerships with international researchers, reports [5] *Boulder Reporting Lab*. The alleged policies would impose three-year caps on international researchers, create a risk framework by country and increase vetting protocols to access NIST laboratories. NIST contends that these policies do not exist.

CU partners with NIST through our joint research institute, JILA [6], as well as the NIST Professional Research Experience Program (PREP) [7], which enables hundreds of CU students, postdocs and research associates to work and train in NIST laboratories.

Sen. John Hickenlooper (D-CO) asked about the policies, which he said would expel over 500 international researchers from working on cutting-edge research at NIST facilities, during a March 12 hearing [8] on foreign influence in higher education. Moreover, the Senator probed the federal administration's nominee for NIST director about the policies in a series of questions for the record [9], asking whether he is aware of the reports and what impact the policies will have on NIST's mission.

Neguse Seeks Investigation into NSF NCAR Restructuring
Rep. Joe Neguse (D-CO) wrote [10] to the Inspector General of the National Science Foundation (NSF) on March 9 to request an independent investigation into alleged "conflicts of interest and regulatory improprieties" by the federal administration as it restructures critical science infrastructure at NSF's National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder. A whistleblower told the Congressman's office that administration officials have negotiated an agreement to transfer NCAR's space weather program to a private, for-profit company before considering public input.

NSF's request [11] for public feedback on the future structure and management of NCAR closes today. CU Boulder submitted a letter emphasizing that NCAR is a uniquely valuable national asset that should remain intact.

ED Releases Proposed Rule on Pell Grant Reforms

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) published proposed regulations [12] in the *Federal Register* on March 9 to implement Pell Grant program reforms required by the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act*. The rules reflect the consensus proposals agreed upon [13] on Dec. 12 by the Accountability in Higher Education and Access through Demand-Driven Workforce Pell (AHEAD) negotiated rulemaking committee. Public comments are due April 8. The new rules are effective July 1, 2026. Read APLU's summary here [14]. Rulemaking on the AHEAD Committee's proposals on institutional accountability is forthcoming.

Colorado AG Joins IPEDS Lawsuit

Colorado joined [15] 16 other states in a lawsuit [16] against the U.S. Department of Education (ED) on March 11 over its new Integrated Postsecondary Education System (IPEDS) data collection survey. The new data collection survey, formally introduced [17] on Dec. 18, 2025, requires four-year institutions to provide enhanced admissions data on race, gender and standardized test scores. Institutions were originally required to provide ED with these data by March 18. The District Court for Massachusetts on March 13 granted a temporary restraining order [18] on the IPEDS ACTS Data Collection "in order to permit a hearing and orderly resolution of the issues." As such, the deadline to complete the survey is extended through March 25, 2026. ED is offering conditional extensions until April 8, reports [19] *Inside Higher Ed* .

The CU Offices of Federal Relations and General Counsel are closely monitoring any developments regarding the publishing of this data.

Appeals Court Ends SAVE Federal Loan Repayment Plan

A federal appeals court ruled [20] on March 10 to end the Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE) federal loan repayment plan, reversing a lower court decision. The income-driven repayment plan allowed borrowers to pay as little as $0 a month, reports [21] *Politico*. Borrowers with SAVE plans must now transition to other repayment options.

California State University Sues over Title IX Investigation

California State University filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Education (ED) on March 6 after the federal government threatened to cut federal funding to San Jose State should the campus refuse to sign a proposed resolution agreement from the Office for Civil Rights (OCR), reports [22] *Ed Source*. OCR found the campus violated federal civil rights law when it allowed a transgender student-athlete to play on the women's volleyball team during the 2022-24 NCAA seasons. San Jose State's president released the following statement [23].

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 [24] page for up-to-date communications and federal memos.

Danielle Radovich Piper, Sr. VP External Relations and Strategy
Kerry Tipper, Vice President, University Counsel

Federal Weekly Updates [25]
Send email when Published:
Yes

Source URL:https://www.cu.edu/blog/government-relations/federal-government-update-31326

Links
[1] https://www.cu.edu/blog/government-relations/federal-government-update-31326
[2] https://www.cu.edu/blog/government-relations/author/167081
[3] https://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_votes/vote1192/vote_119_2_00054.htm
[4] https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/7147
[5] https://boulderreportinglab.org/2026/03/10/nist-appears-to-walk-back-limits-on-international-researchers/ [6] https://jila.colorado.edu/ [7] https://www.nist.gov/iaao/academic-affairs-office/prep
[8] https://www.help.senate.gov/hearings/transparency-and-trust-exposing-malign-foreign-influence-in-higher-education [9] https://www.commerce.senate.gov/services/files/1461B96D-692E-4FD1-826A-2AA797E857C6 [10] https://neguse.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/neguse.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/neguse-letter-to-nsf-ig_ncar-ethical-violations-3.9.26.pdf
[11] https://www.nsf.gov/funding/information/dcl-nsf-intent-restructure-critical-weather-infrastructure
[12] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/03/09/2026-04520/accountability-in-higher-education-and-access-through-demand-driven-workforce-pell-pell-grant
[13] https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-concludes-negotiated-rulemaking-session-implement-new-workforce-pell-grant-program [14] https://www.aplu.org/wp-content/uploads/OB3-AHEAD-Neg-Reg-State-of-Play-Pell-Provisions.pdf [15] https://coag.gov/press-releases/weiser-sues-to-stop-education-departments-unlawful-data-demand/
[16] https://coag.gov/app/uploads/2026/03/03.11.2026-Massachusetts-et-al.-v.-Dept-of-Edu.-et-al.-Complaint-filed.pdf [17] https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/this-week-in-ipeds/331 [18] https://www.reuters.com/world/us-judge-blocks-trump-forcing-colleges-disclose-data-race-2026-03-13/
[19] https://www.insidehighered.com/news/quick-takes/2026/03/09/ed-offers-conditional-deadline-extension-acts-survey
[20] https://storage.courtlistener.com/recap/gov.uscourts.moed.211135/gov.uscourts.moed.211135.102.0.pdf
[21] https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/2026/03/appeals-court-kills-biden-era-student-loan-repayment-plan-00819793 [22] https://edsource.org/2026/san-jose-state-transgender-lawsuit/753103
[23] https://blogs.sjsu.edu/newsroom/2026/ocr-titleix-lawsuit/ [24] https://www.cu.edu/office-government-relations/federal-relations/federal-updates-and-actions [25] https://www.cu.edu/blog/government-relations/tag/federal-weekly-updates