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Federal Government Update - 3.27.26 [1]

March 27, 2026 by Natalie Barry [2]

Dear Colleagues,

Please find a federal government update from our teams.

Government Funding Update
The Senate approved by voice vote on March 27 legislation that funds nearly all U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) agencies through the end of the fiscal year. Funding for DHS agencies lapsed 42 days ago on Feb. 14. The Senate deal provides funding for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the U.S. Coast Guard. It does not include funding for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and part of U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

The House opted not to take up the Senate-passed bill today and will instead consider its own, alternative DHS funding bill, reports [3] *CBS News*. Meanwhile, the Senate has adjourned for a two-week recess, which means the DHS funding lapse is likely to continue into April, reports [4] *NBC News*.

Earlier this week, the Senate confirmed [5] Markwayne Mullin as DHS Secretary by a 54-45 vote. Mullin was sworn in on March 24, DHS announced [6].

As we have reported, all other federal agencies are funded through Sept. 30, 2026.

White House Unveils National Policy Framework for Artificial Intelligence
The White House unveiled [7] its new National Policy Framework for Artificial Intelligence [8] on March 20. The framework provides legislative recommendations for Congress to establish federal AI laws that would supersede conflicting state AI laws. The White House has been "trying to establish preemption over state AI laws using Congress and executive order for roughly a year," reports [9] *Politico*.

The four-page framework addresses six objectives:

- Protecting children and empowering parents
- Safeguarding and strengthening American communities
- Respecting intellectual property rights and supporting creators
- Preventing censorship and protecting free speech
- Enabling innovation and ensuring American AI dominance
- Educating Americans and developing an AI-ready workforce

White House Appoints PCAST Members
The White House appointed [10] thirteen members to the President's Council of Advisors on

Science and Technology (PCAST) on March 25. David Sacks, the president's AI and crypto czar, and Michael Kratsios, director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) will co-chair the council. The council boasts tech company leaders such as Mark Zuckerberg, chief executive of Meta Platforms, Larry Ellison, executive chairman of Oracle and Jensen Huang, CEO of Nvidia, but only one university scientist, John Martinis, a physicist at the University of California Santa Barbara, reports [11] *FYI*.

PCAST advises the president on science, technology and innovation policy. It can include up to 24 members. The White House has directed the new council to address the impact of emerging technologies on the American workforce and ensure "all Americans thrive in the Golden Age of Innovation."

ED Moves Student Loans to Treasury

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) announced [12] on March 19 a new interagency partnership that moves operational responsibility for collecting defaulted federal student loan debt and efforts to return borrowers to repayment to the U.S. Department of Treasury. The agreement will shift oversight of roughly 7.7 million borrowers in default, or about $180 billion of the $1.6 billion federal student loan portfolio [13], to Treasury.

Treasury will provide operational support over non-defaulted federal student loan debt and other Federal Student Aid (FSA) functions, including administration of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form, in subsequent phases of the agreement, according to a fact sheet [14].

This is the tenth interagency agreement signed by ED over the last year. Moreover, ED announced on March 26 it will relocate its headquarters to a smaller building to reduce the agency's footprint, reports [15] *Fox News*.

ED Releases Eligibility for Title III and Title V Grants

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) released [16] on March 23 its grant eligibility application for Title III and Title V grants, which serve low-resourced institutions. While the application addresses Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TCCUs), notably absent are Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), reports [17] *Inside Higher Ed*.

VA to Assist Veterans in GI Bill Education Benefits

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced [18] on March 26 that veterans are now eligible for an additional 12 months of educational benefits and up to 48 months in total. The policy follows two recent court cases, *Rudisill v. McDonough* and *Perkins v. Collins*.

Federal Judge Extends Deadline for IPEDs Data

A federal judge extended a temporary restraining order (TRO) on March 24 for 17 states, including Colorado. The ruling gives public universities in the plaintiff states until April 6 to provide admissions data on race, gender and standardized test scores to the U.S. Department of Education. Institutions were originally required to submit these data by March 18. The Association of American Universities (AAU) filed a motion to intervene [19] in the lawsuit on March 25 to protect its university members not covered by the court's TRO.

The judge plans to rule on the request for a preliminary injunction against the requirements next week, reports [20] *Higher Ed Dive*.

Gender Affirming Care for Minors Lawsuit
A federal judge ruled on March 19 that U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) overstepped in a Dec. 18, 2025 declaration [21] which said gender affirming care for minors fails to meet standards of care, reports [22] *The Hill*. Colorado joined a coalition of 18 states in a lawsuit challenging the policy.

DOJ Lawsuit Against Harvard
The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) filed a lawsuit [23] against Harvard on March 20 over alleged antisemitism on campus. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of Civil Rights (OCR) announced [24] on March 23 two new Title VI investigations at Harvard related to antisemitism and race-based admissions. In February, the federal administration announced it would seek a $1 billion settlement from Harvard in the alleged antisemitism findings.

OCR Sends Letter to San Jose State University over Title IX
The U.S. Department of Education's (ED) Office of Civil Rights (OCR) sent a letter [25] to San Jose State University (SJSU), on March 24, which gives the university ten days to sign a proposed resolution agreement or face enforcement action, including possible termination of federal funding. OCR found in January 2026 that SJSU violated Title IX federal civil rights laws when it allowed a transgender student-athlete to play on the women's volleyball team during the 2022-24 NCAA seasons. The California State University system filed a lawsuit earlier this month challenging the findings.

Additionally, this week it was reported [26] that the Justice Department opened an investigation into three medical schools across the country. The Federal Relations and Legal teams will continue to monitor this situation as it evolves.

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

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