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

Federal Government Update - 5.22.26 [1]

May 22, 2026 by Riley Black [2]

Dear Colleagues,

Please find a federal government update from our teams.

ED Issues Final Workforce Pell Regulations
The U.S. Department of Education (ED) announced [3] a final rule on May 18 to implement the Workforce Pell Grant program created by the *One Big Beautiful Bill Act*. The regulations [4] allow students to apply federal Pell Grants to short-term credential programs that prepare them for high-skill, high-wage and in-demand jobs. The new rules are effective July 1. ED released this fact sheet [5].

ED Reaches Consensus on Accreditation Reform
The U.S. Department of Education (ED) announced [6] on May 15 it reached consensus on draft regulations which the Administration believes advances reform of the nation's higher education accreditation system. According to the Administration the proposal reduces barriers for emerging accreditors, streamlines transfer of credit policies, reduces compliance and administrative burdens on colleges and universities, requires evaluation of academic freedom on campuses and refocuses accreditors on student outcomes, including graduation rates and post-completion outcomes. ED will release a notice of proposed rulemaking for public comment in the coming months. This is the fourth consecutive time ED has reached consensus on higher education regulations in the last 18 months.

States Sue Over Loan Limits for Health Professionals
Colorado and a coalition of more than 20 states filed a lawsuit [7] on May 19 against the U.S. Department of Education (ED) over new federal student loan limits. The new regulations [8], which cap lifetime borrowing to $100,000 for graduate students and $200,000 for professional students, are effective July 1. The regulations designate eleven programs as professional and exclude several health professions, including nursing, physical therapy, public health and physician assistant, from the higher borrowing limits. The plaintiffs argue ED's narrow definition of professional degree conflicts with federal law, violates the Administrative Procedure Act and will exacerbate nationwide healthcare workforce shortages.

CU Anschutz [9], Boulder [10], Colorado Springs, [11] and Denver [12] submitted public comments on the draft rule earlier this spring. CU's Federal Relations and General Counsel teams are monitoring developments in the case.

NIST Director Confirmed
The U.S. Senate confirmed [13] Arvind Raman as director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology on May 18. The en bloc vote was 46-43. Raman was nominated [14] in October 2025 and

previously served as dean of engineering [15] at Purdue. He replaces Craig Burkhardt, who has been the NIST acting director since January 2025.

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

Happy Memorial Day!

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

Federal Weekly Updates [17]
Send email when Published:
No

Source URL:https://www.cu.edu/blog/government-relations/federal-government-update-52226

Links
[1] https://www.cu.edu/blog/government-relations/federal-government-update-52226
[2] https://www.cu.edu/blog/government-relations/author/167081 [3] https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-issues-final-rule-create-new-workforce-pell-grant-program
[4] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/05/19/2026-10013/accountability-in-higher-education-and-access-through-demand-driven-workforce-pell-pell-grant
[5] https://www.ed.gov/media/document/workforce-pell-grant-final-rule-fact-sheet-114075.pdf
[6] https://www.ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-reaches-consensus-reform-and-strengthen-americas-higher-education-accreditation-system
[7] https://coag.gov/app/uploads/2026/05/state-of-maryland-et-al-v-united-states-of-education-linda-mcmahon-court-filing-2026.pdf [8] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/05/01/2026-08556/reimagining-and-improving-student-education-federal-student-loan-program-final-regulations
[9] https://www.regulations.gov/comment/ED-2025-OPE-0944-13894
[10] https://www.regulations.gov/comment/ED-2025-OPE-0944-18141
[11] https://www.regulations.gov/comment/ED-2025-OPE-0944-17304
[12] https://www.regulations.gov/comment/ED-2025-OPE-0944-18159
[13] https://www.congress.gov/nomination/119th-congress/730/54 [14] https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/10/nominations-sent-to-the-senate-ae53/
[15] https://engineering.purdue.edu/ME/People/ptProfile?id=12884 [16] https://www.cu.edu/office-government-relations/federal-relations/federal-updates-and-actions [17] https://www.cu.edu/blog/government-relations/tag/federal-weekly-updates