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Federal Government Update - 9.19.25 [1]

September 19, 2025 by Riley Black [2]

Dear Colleagues,

Please find a federal government update from our teams.

Court Halts HHS Reduction in Force
The U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston ruled 3-0 [3] on Sept. 17 that it will not lift a lower court order blocking the federal administration from implementing a reduction in force at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The lawsuit, brought by 19 states including Colorado, as well as the District of Columbia, halts layoffs at four HHS offices: the Center for Tobacco Products, the Office of Head Start, components of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. The administration is expected to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court.

Education Department Announces Reprogramed Funds to HBCUs, TCCUs
The U.S. Department of Education (ED) announced [4] on Sept. 15 that it will redirect $495 million in funding to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities (TTCUs) in FY25. The Department said the funds are being repurposed from programs "not in the best interest" of students and families. This includes $395 million in funds redirected from Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), reports [5] the *New York Times.*

Correction: Last week's email update said that CU Denver currently has an HSI and AANAPISI designation. CU Denver and CU Anschutz currently are designated as HSI and AANAPISI.

NASA Bans Chinese Nationals
NASA implemented on Sept. 5 a ban on Chinese nationals, including those with valid visas, from participating in its programs. The new policy, which restricts access to NASA facilities, data and supercomputing, will affect hundreds of scientists and researchers, reports [6] *CNN*. Previously, Chinese nationals could work on NASA research programs as contractors and students, explains [7] the *BBC*.

NASA cites national security concerns as the reason for the policy, which was unveiled as tensions between the U.S. and China escalate as they race to the moon. The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, which Senator Hickenlooper (D-CO) serves on, convened a hearing [8] on Sept. 3 entitled, "There's a Bad Moon on the Rise: Why Congress and NASA Must Thwart China in the Space Race."

Lawsuit Challenging UC Funding Freeze
A coalition of labor and advocacy groups, including the American Association of University

Professors, filed a lawsuit on Sept. 16 challenging the federal funding freeze at the University of California (UC), reports [9] the *Washington Post.* The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) said the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) must pay nearly $1.2 billion in fines, eliminate DEI programs and cede control of its admissions, hiring and curriculum, among other demands, to have its federal research funding reinstated. UCLA's funding was frozen this summer following an antisemitism investigation.

The Federal Relations and General Counsel teams are actively monitoring developments. 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 page [10] for up-to-date communications and federal memos.

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