

U.S. FORUM CONNECTION #140, AUGUST 2015

This publication is intended for your information about issues important to education, women and children. How you choose to use the information included here is up to you.

This free newsletter is sponsored by the United States Forum of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International. The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International is an organization of leading women educators with over 80,000 members. Delta Kappa Gamma members wishing to subscribe to this FREE newsletter should send a request to the editor Angela O. Bedenbaugh at Bedenbaugh.Angela@gmail.com. We urge you to share this newsletter with other interested individuals who are not members of Delta Kappa Gamma or members who do not subscribe to this publication.

IN THIS ISSUE

SOCIAL SECURITY EXPANSION
EDUCATION PROGRAM FUNDING
EDUCATION TAX RELIEF
DEALING WITH ROBOCALLS

SOCIAL SECURITY EXPANSION

The Social Security Expansion Act (S.743) would, among other things, use the Consumer Price Index to calculate cost of living increases in Social Security payments, extend the tax on earners making more than \$250,000 annually, increase the amount paid on lifetime low earners based on years in the workforce. If this legislation passes, some of its provisions would not take effect until 2021.

EDUCATION PROGRAM FUNDING

The five week summer break for Congress ends September 8. When members return there will be only 10 "work days" before the 2016 fiscal year budget should take effect. The problem is that a deal raising education funding which was negotiated in 2013 expires at the end of September 2015. Both budget bills currently pending in the House and the Senate would cut education spending. As one might expect the two bills do not agree, and the House bill would cut almost twice as much funding as the Senate bill. A continuing resolution could be passed which would continue spending at the current levels or Congress could put together some sort of temporary spending allocation. If there is no budget agreement, as seems likely, most education funding would continue with two exceptions. The two programs which could be negatively impacted if no agreement is reached are Head Start and Impact Aid. These programs would not get any money until a budget is agreed upon. In that case the programs would have to borrow money to operate thus paying interest on the borrowed funds which would decrease money for the programs. Impact Aid monies go to schools on military bases and Native American reservations. This affects about 1,250 school districts.

EDUCATION TAX RELIEF

There are currently two bills which could provide tax relief for educators. The Educator Tax Relief Act of 2015 (H.R.2940) would make professional development expenses tax deductible. The Tax Relief Extension Act of 2015 (S.1946) has been introduced; however, no summary of the provisions in the bill are available at this time. The bill would extend tax deductions for educators which expired in 2014.

DEALING WITH ROBOCALLS

More and more telephone customers are being plagued with unwanted robocalls. There are several devices which block incoming robocalls. One of those rated well by Consumer Reports is Nomorobo which is free; however, it is not available everywhere. You can find information about this at <https://www.nomorobo.com/> If this service is not available in your area, the site provides toll free numbers that you can call. It is to your advantage to call the number/s provided; because that will motivate your provider to install the free service in your area. (When you complain it ties up their paid operators, so it is to the company's economic advantage to put in the robocall blocking service and allow the paid operators to take care of customers with other problems.)

There are devices which block robocalls that can be purchased through Amazon. These are

1. Digitone Call Blocker Plus (\$110) 18 of 24 reviewers gave it a positive rating.
2. HQTelecom.com Landline Call Blocker (\$59) six of thirteen reviewers gave it a positive rating.
3. Sentry Dual Mode Call Blocker (\$59) 27 reviewers gave it a positive rating; 28 reviewers gave it a negative rating

For a more detailed account of all aspects of robocalls, consult out the September 2015 issue of Consumer Reports which is probably available at your local library..

FORUM FACEBOOK PAGE LINK

For those of you desiring discussion of legislative topics there is a U. S. Forum Facebook page online at <http://www.facebook.com/DKG.US.Forum>

FORUM WEB SITE: <http://www.usforumdkg.org/>

CONTACT ADDRESSES FOR GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

U.S. GOVERNMENT CONTACT INFORMATION can be obtained through Congressional Switchboard [1-866-327-8670](tel:1-866-327-8670) [this is a toll free number]. You can contact your Congressman and Senator through this number without paying long distance charges.

Email access and addresses

<http://www.house.gov/> for members of the House of Representatives <http://www.senate.gov/> for members of the U.S. Senate

White House [1-202-456-1111](tel:1-202-456-1111)

FIVE CONSTITUENT CONTACTS WILL CAUSE A LEGISLATOR TO PAY SERIOUS ATTENTION TO A GIVEN ISSUE.