

## US FORUM CONNECTION #88 APRIL 2011

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 each individual.

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 100,000 members. Delta Kappa Gamma members wishing to subscribe to this FREE newsletter should send a request to [Angela.Bedenbaugh@usm.edu](mailto:Angela.Bedenbaugh@usm.edu). 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. This publication is intended for your information about issues important to education, women and children.

**NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SEMINAR DATES SET**  
**NEW BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR 2011 FROM HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**READING IS FUNDAMENTAL CUTS**  
**PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT**  
**National Women's history museum**

### **NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SEMINAR DATES SET**

The National Legislative Seminar will be held at the Comfort Inn Pentagon March 18-21, 2012. Registration materials and other information will be available shortly.

### **NEW BUDGET PROPOSAL FOR 2011 FROM HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

The House of Representatives has adopted a budget plan for 2011-12 that aims for fiscal discipline over the next decade. Among other things, it calls for dramatic changes in Medicare and Medicaid. The bill was passed on a partisan vote of 235 to 193, with only four Republicans voting no. The legislation written by Wisconsin Republican Paul Ryan seeks to trim more than \$5.8 trillion over the next 10 years. The proposal would bring tax rates down for individuals and companies. It would also freeze non-defense spending for five years. But it doesn't promise a balanced budget. The Ryan proposal advocates converting Medicaid into block grants to give states more control. It would change Medicare into a federally subsidized voucher system so seniors could buy their own insurance on the private market. It would kick in for people under the age of 55.

Representative JOHN LARSON (Democrat, CT) commented "They are out to destroy this guaranteed benefit. They are out to destroy Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. There is a time to draw a line in the sand and fight." (Source NPR News, ALL THINGS CONSIDERED)

The budget proposal released by House Budget Committee Chair Paul Ryan (R-WI) would attempt to balance the budget on the backs of low and middle class taxpayers as well as our most vulnerable populations the young and elderly. The House proposal would, among other things:

- Make deep cuts to non-security discretionary spending which would cause dramatic further reductions in education services to students and would result in ballooning class sizes;
- Dismantle health care for the poor, disabled, and elderly by turning Medicaid into a block grant program. Fifty percent of Medicaid enrollees are children and one-third of all children receive their health care through Medicaid;
- Cut the maximum Pell Grant award, which would prevent or make it much more difficult for millions of students from low income families to get a higher education;
- Extend the District of Columbia Voucher Program, which would funnel scarce taxpayer dollars to private schools while slashing funding for programs serving public school students;
- Convert Medicare into a voucher system in which recipients would purchase insurance. Under such a system, insurance companies could reject the sickest patients or charge higher premiums to the oldest. (NOTE: Recently passed health care reform legislation often referred to as Obamacare prohibits denial of health insurance for any reason which includes preexisting conditions. Bills now being proposed

could allow insurance companies to deny insurance to those with preexisting conditions or people who have exceeded arbitrary limits set by insurance companies.)

- Other programs facing drastic cuts or elimination are Headstart, early childhood education, and food stamps)

## **READING IS FUNDAMENTAL CUTS**

As of now the Reading Is Fundamental Program which has in the past received some financial support from Federal sources is not even mentioned in the House proposed budget. (The source for this information is Reading Is Fundamental.)

## **PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT**

The Paycheck Fairness Act has once again been introduced in both houses of Congress. (H.R.1519, S.797). It is estimated that the average woman loses \$10,849 a year due to the wage gap between what she receives as compared with her male counterpart. This act allows women to determine whether their pay is commensurate with their male counterparts. The Ledbetter Act passed in the previous session of Congress provides that an underpaid woman can collect back payments for every single check in which she was underpaid; however, without a means of finding out what other workers are making, a woman does not know the amount to which she may be entitled. This act would allow women to find out whether their pay is equal to that of a man in the same job position with the same responsibilities.

## **National Women's history museum**

The National Women's History Museum Act of 2011 is S.680 and H.R.1269. The bill which has been voted out of committee in the Senate is summarized below

Summary: directs the General Services Administrator (GSA) to convey, by quitclaim deed, to the National Women's History Museum, Inc. (the Museum) specified property in the District of Columbia, on terms which the Administrator deems appropriate. Requires the purchase price for the property to be: (1) its market value based on its highest and best use, as determined by an independent appraisal; and (2) paid into the Federal Buildings Fund. Requires the property to be dedicated for use as a site for a national women's history museum for a 99-year period. Provides for the reversion of the property to the United States without any obligation for repayment of any amount of the purchase price if: (1) it is not used as a site for a national women's history museum during the 99-year period, and (2) the Museum has not commenced construction of a museum facility on such property in a 5-year period other than for reasons beyond the Museum's control.

The House version of the bill has been referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

## **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.**

**<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)**

**STATE GOVERNMENT CONTACT INFORMATION can be obtained through**

**<http://www.emailyourgovernor.com/> Information available at this site allows contact with governors, members of the state legislature, state supreme court, congressional delegation and state agencies such as the Education Department, Attorney General, Motor Vehicles Department and Voter Registration.**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT SOME OF THIS INFORMATION MAY BE OUT OF DATE**

**INFORMATION ON HOW YOUR CONGRESSMAN VOTED ON KEY BILLS**

<http://projects.washingtonpost.com/congress/111/bills/>

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

Archival copies of the U.S. Forum Connection can be found at

<http://ocean.otr.usm.edu/~w305514/HomePage.htm>

Dr. Angela O. Bedenbaugh  
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry  
The University of Southern Mississippi  
118 College Drive #8466  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001  
Office: [\(601\) 266-5718](tel:6012665718), [\(800\) 814-4673](tel:8008144673)  
Fax: [\(601\) 266-5718](tel:6012665718)  
Answering machine [\(601\) 266-5716](tel:6012665716)