



Association of  
Independent Colleges & Universities  
of Pennsylvania

## Government Relations Weekly Report

### Themes of the Week:

The House was in this week for an abbreviated couple of days with the Senate returning next week. The [House](#) and [Senate](#) spring session schedules have been released.

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### State Happenings

#### House Proposes Legislation to Overhaul PASSHE

The House held a [press conference](#) on Monday to announce a package of bills that will overhaul the state system of education. [HB 2171](#) (Sonney) would reform the governance and accountability of PASSHE's Board of Governors and the Councils of Trustees. [HB 2172](#) (Topper) would make needed financial and legal reforms. [HB 2173](#) (Schroeder) would make needed reforms to streamline reporting and clarify and update statutory language.

#### House Set to Pass Legislation to Prevent Human Trafficking

The main focus of the house this week was to work through a [human trafficking prevention package](#) including several bills:

- [HB 2174](#) (Mihalek) amends the Human Trafficking statute, to prohibit defendants from introducing evidence of a human trafficking victim's past sexual victimization and allegations of past sexual victimization in any prosecution;
  - [HB 2175](#) (Schroeder) amends Title 42 to expand the list of offenses where an expert may testify about the dynamics of sexual violence and victim responses to sexual violence;
  - [HB 2176](#) (Mustello) amends the Crimes Code to add certain prohibited activities that, if committed, constitute the crime of unlawful contact with a minor;
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- [HB 2177](#) (Gaydos) amends Title 42 to expand the list of sexual offenses that require offenders to attend and participate in a Department of Corrections program of counseling and therapy designed for incarcerated sex offenders;
- [HB 2178](#) (Rowe) amends Pennsylvania’s child custody statute to require that a court consider whether a party or member of that party’s household has been convicted of human trafficking prior to awarding child custody to that party; and
- [SB 60](#) (Phillips-Hill) shifts the focus of state law from punishing the victims of trafficking to punishing those who traffic individuals and those who would buy sex from them.

*The Senate bill heads to the Governor’s desk while all of the others head to the Senate to await action.*

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## **Federal Happenings**

### **Freedom of Speech Regulations Released**

As you may be aware, the Department of Education has published [proposed regulations](#) that are designed to implement President Trump’s [Executive Order](#) (EO) addressing freedom of speech on campus, as well as to facilitate faith-based institutions’ eligibility to participate in various grant programs under the Higher Education Act (HEA). Public comments on the notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) are due on February 18, 2020, and can be submitted electronically via the [Federal eRulemaking Portal](#).

### **House Getting Closer to a Vote on the Higher Education Act (HEA)**

Last October the House Education and Labor Committee passed the [College Affordability Act](#). Bobby Scott (D-VA) plans to bring it to the full House of Representatives for a vote as soon as there are a sufficient amount of co-sponsors. This legislation is a comprehensive update to HEA with a significant price tag. The prospects in the Senate are uncertain at best on passage of the Act.

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## **Save the Date**

AICUP will be on the Hill April 7, 2020 –

Hope you can join us to advocate for independent nonprofit colleges across Pennsylvania! This year we expect over 45 schools and 300 students to attend!

**We have extended the deadline for the speech contest to February 28, 2020.** Check out

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more details on our Speech Contest in partnership with PHEAA [here](#).

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