

U.S. FORUM CONNECTION #166, NOVEMBER 2017

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.

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CURRENT TAX LEGISLATION

Congress is in the process of revising the income tax code. It was proposed by one candidate during the Presidential Debates that the cap on FICA taxes be removed. (As of 2017 the cap will be raised from \$118,500 to \$127,200.) This tax is used to bolster the fund for old age, survivor, and disability insurance (Social Security). This means that anyone making more than \$127,200 will not have that overage taxed. Thus, a person making \$500,000 would only pay FICA tax on \$127,200 and the remainder of the person's income (\$372,800) would not be taxed. Removal of the cap would extend the time when these entitlements can be paid. With the current proposed tax legislation, there will be a large deficit. In what way will that deficit be compensated? Some elected congressional officials have already mentioned the possibility of reducing the deficit by reducing Social Security and Medicare in the legislation now under consideration. In the past there are some members of the current Congress who have advocated totally doing away with both Social Security and Medicare. Doing this would be catastrophic for the elderly many of whom rely solely on these two sources of funds. During what has been called the "Great Recession," many entities which had pension funds did away with their pensions for both current and past employees thus making these groups totally financially dependent on Social Security and Medicare.

Some tax legislation passed in the House of Representatives some time ago. It appears likely that tax legislation after some minor revisions will shortly pass in the Senate. A conference committee will decide the final legislation which will be voted on in both houses. Because of the pressure to accomplish a significant piece of legislation before the

end of the year this committee is expected to report out some sort of compromise of the two bills in a very short period of time. Congress will be in session for only a very few days between now and the end of the year. According to the official calendar the House will only be in session for nine more days this year. The Senate is scheduled to be in session for eleven days between now and the end of 2017.

From Crystal Ward: "Note – a bill has passed both the House and the Senate – Sen. Collins and Rep. Poliquin voted YES --Sen. King and Rep. Pingree voted NO

Now the conference committee (Republicans only) must work out the differences, and they will have to vote again.

If this huge welfare bill for the mega rich (a trillion dollars) finally passes, the next move is to CUT millions from Medicare, Social Security, and Medicaid.

Republican leadership has already stated this.

Please contact Sen. Collins and Rep. Poliquin."

SEXUAL HARRASMENT IN CONGRESS

The ME TOO Congress Act (H.R.4396) (S.2159) was introduced November 15, 2017 in the House and November 16, 2017 in the Senate. These bipartisan bills introduced by women legislators mandate sexual harassment training for all members of Congress and their staffs. Additionally, the bills would reform the complaint procedure to give alleged victims whistle blower status to protect them. The bills also mandate that any member who settles a complaint would be personally responsible for any financial costs incurred. Currently the Office of Compliance has paid for these costs (estimated at over \$30 million) from the U.S. Treasury. (The tax payers have been footing the bill.) Many of these settlements contain nondisclosure agreements by which the victims are paid with the proviso that they not publicly reveal either the details of the sexual harassment or the amount paid.

With the number of high profile men being charged by multiple victims, sexual misconduct is being widely discussed. There are two facts which should be mentioned. 1) When there are multiple female victim complaints, those allegations are more likely to be regarded as factual. 2) The recent report of a male being the victim of sexual misconduct put the lie to the belief that only females are victims. In the recent case of a male victim, it was not the victim himself but his mother who lodged the complaint.

Workers who deal with sexual assault have estimated that in the past only about 20% of sexual assaults are reported.

LEGISLATION OF INTEREST

Although some members of Congress have indicated an interest in new CHIP legislation none has been proposed to date. Although some states still have designated CHIP money from the previous allocation, many states discontinued CHIP payments shortly after the legislation expired.

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SEMINAR (NLS) SCHEDULED

The National Legislative Seminar will be held in Washington, DC March 18-21, 2018. The registration form can be found at [nls_registration_2018_updated.pdf](#).

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/>

CONTACTING YOUR LEGISLATOR

If you wish to contact your senator to express your opinion, you can call the Congressional Switchboard at [1-866-327-8670](tel:1-866-327-8670) [this is a toll-free number]. You can email your senator or representative via a link at Congress.gov. Another way of contacting your senator is by using a telephone number which is not toll free both of which are available at https://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm

Email access and addresses for members of the House of Representatives:

<http://www.house.gov/>.

Email access and addresses members of the U.S. Senate:

<http://www.senate.gov/>.

For 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.