Dear Colleagues:

I am writing about the reports that the Senate has crafted a $10 billion bipartisan COVID relief package to provide national resources for testing, vaccines and other public health needs that is partially paid for by tapping $500 million in unused emergency relief funds from the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund (HEERF).

While the situation is fluid, it is our understanding from conversations we have had with those directly involved in the current legislative process that the $500 million from HEERF will not affect any HEERF funds you have been allocated, even if you have not yet drawn down those funds.

The $500 million rescission is also not intended to affect the $198 million Supplemental Support under American Rescue Plan (SSARP) funds, also referred to as “(a)(3),” announced in February as targeted for institutions that did not otherwise receive funds from various HEERF student and institutional allocations, but should have. Funding for these institutions got caught in red tape and were never received by the schools. This tranche also includes funds for institutions that serve rural, low-income students and those that serve predominantly graduate students. These schools should still get their funding, and are not affected by the proposed cut.

As it did for the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, the Senate has found offsets government-wide from unused emergency relief funds, including those from the Department of Education. The Department’s intent had been to reallocate unused emergency funds for additional student emergency assistance in the future.

We will keep you informed of any changes to this situation.

Regards,

Barbara

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