

# The Federal Update for March 18, 2022

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Re: Federal Update

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[News 1](#_Toc98502252)

[Senate Confirms Shalanda Young as New Director of OMB 1](#_Toc98502253)

[White House Announces Conference on Hunger 2](#_Toc98502254)

[Vilsack Touts Administration’s Focus on Food Security 2](#_Toc98502255)

[Advocates Pushing for Student Loan Pause Extension 3](#_Toc98502256)

[ED Warns Colleges on ‘Deceptive’ Recruitment Practices 3](#_Toc98502257)

[Reports 4](#_Toc98502258)

[Threats of Violence May Cause Teachers to Quit, Says APA Survey 4](#_Toc98502259)

## News

### Senate Confirms Shalanda Young as New Director of OMB

On Tuesday, the Senate voted to confirm Shalanda Young as the director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Young, who was serving as acting director until her confirmation, is the first Black woman to be confirmed as director of OMB. Young has extensive experience for the position previously working as the deputy budget director and serving as a staffer on the House Appropriations Committee, including as Democratic staff director, clerk, deputy staff director, and in other roles. While working for the Committee, Young oversaw the appropriation of billions of dollars in legislation and aid, including funds for COVID-19 and disaster initiatives.

During recent months, Young has also drawn support from top Democratic leaders like Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD), and House Majority Whip James Clyburn (D-SC). On her confirmation, Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL), Ranking Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said, “I think it’d be hard for the Biden administration to do any better. She’ll do a good job if they let her.” Young is the fifth Black woman to be named to the President’s cabinet.

Resources:

Aris Folley, “Shalanda Young confirmed as OMB director”, *The Hill*, March 15, 2022.

Author: ASB

### White House Announces Conference on Hunger

The Biden administration announced this week that it will host a conference on food, nutrition, hunger, and health, which will take place later this year after last week’s passage of the omnibus appropriations bill, which included a provision to fund the event.

Report language in the appropriations bill notes that “levels of hunger, nutrition insecurity, and chronic disease in the United States are rising, and disproportionately afflict racial and ethnic minorities as well as low-income and rural populations,” and calls on leaders to use a “whole-of-government approach” to tackle the issue. Among the priorities set out in the report are examining why hunger and nutrition insecurity persist, how they impact health and the prevalence of chronic disease, and improving access to and consumption of nutrition foods. “Initial findings” must be reported to Congress within 120 days of the law’s passage.

This effort may impact the timing of other planned reforms, including a much-discussed reauthorization of child nutrition programs. If the findings of the conference—which may not happen until the fall—are intended to inform Congressional action, then the event could delay meaningful debate on the reauthorization of nutrition programs, pushing that reauthorization into the next session of Congress.

The last White House conference on food was held in 1969 and is widely believed to have sparked significant expansion of federally subsidized meal programs, including food stamps and free school meals.

Author: JCM

### Vilsack Touts Administration’s Focus on Food Security

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack emphasized the administration’s commitment to expanding food and nutrition security at a Thursday meeting at Columbia University. With school meal waivers expiring in June after a failed attempt to extend the flexibility as part of the omnibus appropriations bill, Vilsack stated that the administration is hoping to provide some other relief to schools, but did not specify what that may look like.

Vilsack’s comments came following a U.S. Department of Agriculture report was recently published linking COVID-19 recovery to ensuring food and nutrition security. The report also notes the link between chronic diseases and severe COVID-19 illness and that in many cases those chronic diseases are attributed to a lack of access to nutritious food. This is one of the many issues the White House and USDA leaders plan to delve into at a food and nutrition conference planned for later this year.

Though Vilsack did not provide details on possible relief coming for schools on the nutrition program front after the school meal waivers expire, it likely won’t be as extensive flexibility as school are currently receiving. During his comments at Columbia, Vilsack said that future flexibility will not be “quite the same as the higher flexibility and higher reimbursement rates.”

Resources:

Ximena Bustillo and Helena Bottemiller Evich, “Vilsack promises focus on ‘nutrition security,’ citing link to Covid,” *Politico*.

Author: KSC

### Advocates Pushing for Student Loan Pause Extension

With a May 1st end-date approaching for the Biden administration’s pause on requiring student loan borrowers to make payments, and accrual of interest in the interim, advocates are pushing for another extension. The pause has already been extended multiple times since its initial implementation in 2020 as a way to continue easing the financial burden on individuals who may have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In recent weeks, the Biden administration has not publicly stated whether it intends to extend the pause again, but the administration notably told loan servicers in a memorandum earlier this month to not send out reminders to borrowers that their payment responsibility would be resuming soon. In addition, the White House has said that it is currently considering another extension. Democrats in Congress are urging the President to continue the pause, with Chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Patty Murray (D-WA) urging an extension until “at least 2023.” Murray is also encouraging the administration to use this year to take other actions with regard to student loans, including cancelling some student debt and reworking the current plans available for lower-income borrowers, like income-based repayment plans.

On the other side of the aisle, many Republicans are opposed to any further extension of the payment pause. Representatives Jim Banks (R-IN) and Bob Good (R-VA) introduced legislation late last week that would prohibit the administration from further extending the payment pause. Meanwhile, some conservative advocacy organizations have also been urging the administration to resume payments.

Resources:

Michael Stratford, “Biden officials signal they might extend student loan payment freeze,” *Politico*, March 8, 2022.

Michael Stratford, “GOP lawmakers unveil bill to restart student loan payments,” *Politico*, March 11, 2022.

Michael Stratford, “Top Democrats urge Biden to extend student loan pause until next year,” *Politico*, March 16, 2022.

Author: KSC

### ED Warns Colleges on ‘Deceptive’ Recruitment Practices

In a bulletin from the Office of Federal Student Aid, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) said that it is monitoring several complaints and “borrower defense to repayment” applications from veterans and family members who misled applicants as to the share of college costs that would be covered by the GI Bill benefits. In some cases, students report that they were told GI benefits would cover the full cost of college but that loans were taken out in their name without their knowledge. Other allegations involved students who were pressured to start classes without their benefits being verified or being pressured to take out loans to cover interim costs and students being promised a “military discount” which did not exist.

The bulletin notes that ED may take enforcement action if it believes that an institution has engaged in “substantial representation” regarding the nature of a college program, financial charges, or the employability of graduates. Those consequences can include “limitation or termination of an institution’s participate” in Title IV student aid programs.

The bulletin is [available here](https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/electronic-announcements/2022-03-16/fsa-enforcement-bulletin-march-2022-substantial-misrepresentations-when-recruiting-servicemembers-and-veterans).

Author: JCM

## Reports

### Threats of Violence May Cause Teachers to Quit, Says APA Survey

A survey released this week by the American Psychological Association says that nearly half of teachers and a third of administrators said they are planning or want to leave their current positions due to concerns about school climate and safety. A third of teachers reported at least one incident of verbal harassment or a threat of violence from a student, and nearly half of administrators said they had been harassed or threatened by a parent. A significant portion of survey respondents said these statements caused them to want to quit their jobs—and sometimes even leave their professions.

For example, teachers and administrators in middle schools saw the highest rates of harassment in the survey, with 37 percent reporting verbal abuse and threats of violence from students and 30 percent from parents. While the majority of those surveyed were from public schools, teachers and administrators in private schools also reported similar rates of threats and verbal harassment. However, most of those statements in private schools came from parents rather than students.

[The report is available here](https://www.apa.org/education-career/k12/violence-educators-technical-report.pdf).

Author: JCM

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