

U.S. FORUM CONNECTION #185, MAY 2019

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 70,000 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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RECOGNIZING ACHIEVEMENT IN CLASSIFIED SCHOOL EMPLOYEES ACT

This is one of only a few pieces of legislation which Congress has passed into law this session. It was signed into law on April 12, 2019. The Recognizing Achievement in Classified School Employees Act ([H.R.276](#)) is designed to recognize commitment and excellence by school employees who provide exemplary service to students in prekindergarten through high school. Those eligible for the award include school employees in 1) paraeducator services, 2) clerical and administrative services, 3) transportation services, 4) food and nutrition services, 5) custodial and maintenance services, 6) security services, 7) health and student services, 8) technical services and 9) skilled trades. The single award recipient is selected by the Secretary of Education to present the Inspiring School Employees Award and consists of a certificate.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)

The Temporary Assistance For Needy Families (TANF) ([H.R.430](#)) was passed into law on January 24, 2019 and is a long-standing program which provides temporary financial assistance for pregnant women and families with one or more dependent children to help pay for food, shelter, utilities, and expenses other than medical. Funding for the law provides grants to states and U.S. territories such as Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands just extends the program until June 30, 2019.

NEW STATES?

The Washington, D.C. Admission Act ([H.R.51](#))([S.631](#)) would grant statehood to the District of Columbia and the Puerto Rico Admission Act ([H.R.1965](#)) would study admission of Puerto Rico as a state. The We the People Commission on Full Representation Act of 2019 ([S.960](#)) establishes a commission to study the status of Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, Guam, the United States Virgin Islands; American Samoa; and the Northern Mariana Islands.

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES AND EDUCATION

Four of the presidential candidates have proposed some actions related to education. Cory Booker wants to help educators retire their college debt; while Kamala Harris is proposing giving every teacher a pay raise via a new federal initiative. Amy Klobuchar would like to use an infrastructure initiative to update school physical facilities, and Elizabeth Warren is proposing the creation of a universal child care program. These candidates are actively seeking the endorsement of the large national teacher's groups.

THERAPY DOGS IN SCHOOL

On February 23, 2016 the Supreme Court ruled that a girl with cerebral palsy had the right under the Americans with Disabilities Act to bring her service dog into the school classroom. Fourteen students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida where a mass shooting took place last year have gotten therapy dogs which accompany them to school each day. This is a way of coping with the shootings. Photos of the dogs have even been included in the school yearbook. There have been several suicides as a result of that traumatic event. For the CBS account of this along with pictures of the dogs go to <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/parkland-therapy-dogs-school-marjory-stoneman-douglas-high-school-florida/>

CONTACTING YOUR LEGISLATOR

As Emily Ellsworth suggests in a [New York Times article](#), phone calls from constituents are often more effective than emails because emails are depersonalized and easily ignored with other overwhelming requests for contact.

Do you know who your legislator is? Your national legislators are easily identified if you don't already know who they are. Go to [Congress.gov](#). In the middle of the right-hand side of the screen is a black box which says "Contact Your Member." Then select either Representative or Senator. You will receive directions which will enable you to find your senators and representatives.

Consider devoting part of a chapter meeting to legislation. Then have the chapter members contact their delegation offering the action you want taken. We are told that when five or more constituents contact a legislator about a topic, the legislator will pay attention and usually take the suggested action. A good trial run would be to contact a senator about signing on as a cosponsor of S.699. You can see whether your contact

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 1-202-224-3121. [this is not a toll free number]. Another way of contacting your senator is via email or 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

<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

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