



Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

## CSAVR National News Brief

May 31, 2025

CSAVR *National News Brief* is a regular series covering legislative activity, media stories, research initiatives, webinars, reports, conferences, and national advocacy activities of interest to member state VR agencies.

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### NATIONAL NEWS

#### *Budget Reconciliation Bill*

On May 22<sup>nd</sup> the House passed their Budget Reconciliation bill also known as “The One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025” 215-214. The package remained almost the same as it was before negotiations began with the following major changes:

- Increase of state and local tax (SALT) deductions from \$30,000 to \$40,000 with a 1% COLA each year and a cap at \$500,000 in income
- Removal of sale of public lands in Nevada and Utah

- Medicaid work requirements to be implemented in 2027 (December 2026) versus 2029

The bill now goes to the Senate which will begin consideration of the House budget reconciliation proposal this coming week. Senate leadership has already indicated they have changes to make, and the parliamentarian must review for Byrd rule violations. The changes they have publicly indicated are to make some of the business tax provisions permanent instead of temporary for the life of the reconciliation bill. Senate leadership has said that late June is their expected timeline for a floor vote. If the Senate makes changes as they have already indicated they will, the House will have to revote.

The House language does little to directly impact individuals with disabilities where they are expressly carved out of most of the major changes such as the work requirements.

Where individuals with disabilities may be directly impacted are as follows:

- Where an individual with disabilities only qualifies for Medicaid as part of the expansion population. If this is the case, they will be required to prove eligibility every six months instead of yearly.
- Where an individual with disabilities lives in a state that provides Medicaid coverage to those in the country illegally. Those states should be California, Oregon, Colorado and Minnesota. Where this is the case, the federal match for Medicaid coverage will be reduced by 10%
- Where a state's waiver for Home and Community Health Services (or other relevant waivers) is not considered budget neutral

Most should be already deemed budget neutral due to the current process for designated waivers, but if there is a change of rulemaking at CMS due to the codification of this process there could be impact. There also may be indirect impacts on individuals with disabilities. For example, where a state must use resources to create and administer the work requirement oversight program, that funding could be drawn from other services the state is providing through their state Medicaid program.

### *Other Medicaid News*

In other Medicaid news, beginning under the first Trump Administration and broadening under the Biden Administration, states have been allowed to opt-in to a demonstration program where they provide certain ancillary social services that lend themselves to health outcomes through Medicaid funds. Eighteen states had approved Social Determinants of Health waivers which allowed for those activities. CMS has been pulling back approvals on these expenditures for states and explained in a

statement to media that they believed these services (providing housing, internet and other subsidy) were duplicative of other well established federal programs.

### *MAHA Commission Report*

The Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission created by Secretary Kennedy earlier this year has released its first report on food and environmental impact on childhood disease. The report specifically mentions only one suspected connection to autism (red dye 40) and makes clear that the evidence is not sufficient to draw that conclusion at this time but recommends further study.

The report also identifies environmental toxins as potentially contributing to autism and other disorders or diseases but indicates there is not adequate study on causation. The report examines vaccines and indicates that the vaccines schedule is not in line with other first world partners but does not indicate any connection between vaccines and disability. [See the full report here \[foodfix.co\]](https://www.foodfix.co).

### *Labor Secretary Testimony before Senate Appropriations Subcommittee*

In her testimony before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee recently, Secretary of Labor Lori Chavez-DeRemer outlined her department's priorities under the Trump administration. She emphasized a "worker-first" approach focused on expanding job growth, reducing federal inefficiencies, and increasing workforce training opportunities through initiatives like the America at Work listening tour and the consolidation of federal training programs into a single grant structure.

The Secretary also:

- reported recovering unused COVID funds and cutting federal spending on programs deemed ineffective, including Job Corps and certain DEI initiatives,
- highlighted growth in registered apprenticeships, including efforts to prepare workers for AI-related careers, and
- throughout her testimony emphasized collaboration with state and local partners and pledged to modernize workforce development to match economic demands.

### *Key Nominees Advancing Out of Senate HELP:*

- Nomination of Julie Hocker (Asst. Secretary of Labor for Office of Disability Employment Policy, Labor Dept.)
- Nomination of Henry Mack III (Asst. Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training Administration, Labor Dept.)
- Nomination of Kirsten Baesler (Asst. Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, Education Dept.)

- Nomination of Kevin O'Farrell (Asst. Secretary for Career, Technical, and Adult Education, Education Dept.)
- Nomination of Nicholas Kent (Under Secretary of Education, Education Dept.)

On Thursday, June 5, 2025, US Secretary of Labor Lori Chavez-DeRemer will testify before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce to outline the Department of Labor's budget and strategic priorities. The hearing, titled "Examining the Policies and Priorities of the Department of Labor," may offer key insights into how the Department plans to address disability employment policy, workforce inclusion, and enforcement of workplace protections.

The session will be held at 2175 Rayburn House Office Building and live streamed via the Committee's YouTube channel.

### **HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS FOR FY26**

Starting this coming week the House begins consideration of their 12 FY26 Appropriations bills. The first appropriations bills being considered are Homeland Security, Agriculture, and Military Construction and the VA. These three bills are historically the least controversial and easiest for at least the Republican conference to pass.

### **CSAVR BUSINESS**

The application period for the CSAVR CEO position closed on May 21<sup>st</sup>. Applicants were asked to email resume, cover letter, and vision statement for CSAVR.

The June Monthly Membership Call from 2 to 3 pm ET on Wednesday, June 4<sup>th</sup> will be primarily devoted to a presentation by the Ridge Policy Group (RPG). Presenters will be Brittany Cranspie, Ezra Thrush, and Zachary Kennedy. This will be a very informative session so hope you plan on joining.

The FFY 2025 VR appropriation base included the Consumer Price Index-Urban (CPIU) adjustment for FFY 2025 and restored the CPIU increase for FFY 2024. Including sequestration, this resulted in an increase of \$364,505,750 in Federal funds for VR agencies. This substantial increase in the amount of Federal funds available will impact on reallocation, the provision of pre-employment transition services, and implementation of orders of selection.

To better understand the impact and identify ways CSAVR might support you, we sent out a survey to agencies. Thank you for responding. The responses are being reviewed now.

## **TIP OF THE EDITION**

Your State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) can be a very important partner in many ways. One is helping advocate with both your Congressional delegation and your state legislature even your DSA for things such as support for budget requests and even salary increases for staff. They can often carry these messages forward when you cannot directly. To do so they need information and your support.

For more information you can refer to 34 CFR 361.16 *Establishment of an Independent Commission or State Rehabilitation Council* or the VRTAC-QM [SRC Training Series \[ncrtm.ed.gov\]](https://ncrtm.ed.gov).

## **REPORTS, TRAINING, NEWSLETTERS AND CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITIES**

The National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) 2025 annual conference will take place July 21-24 at the Grand Hyatt Washington, DC. Registration is open. In the afternoon of the first day they will march to the Capitol and hold a rally around the theme of *Our Lives, Our Homes, Our Communities*.

Upcoming Maryland Works training:

### **Revealing the Best Kept Secrets about Medicaid & Medicaid Waiver Programs: How to Help People Get Into Waiver Programs and Stay There**

- **June 9, 2025, 11 AM – 1 PM, In person in Frederick, MD - [Learn More \[mxtws-cmpzourl.maillist-manage.com\]](#)**
- **June 10, 2025, 11 AM – 1 PM, In person in Millersville, MD - [Learn More \[mxtws-cmpzourl.maillist-manage.com\]](#)**
- **June 11, 2025, 11 AM – 1 PM, In person in Prince Frederick, MD - [Learn More \[mxtws-cmpzourl.maillist-manage.com\]](#)**
- **June 12, 2025, 1 PM – 3 PM, In person in Ridgely, MD - [Learn More \[mxtws-cmpzourl.maillist-manage.com\]](#)**

### **Strategic Thinking**

- **June 12th, 2025, 9 AM - 12 PM, Location: Virtual - [Learn More \[mxtws-cmpzourl.maillist-manage.com\]](#)**

### **Providing Effective Employment Supports**

- **July 28, 2025, 9 AM - 12 NOON, Virtual, [Learn More \[mxtws-cmpzourl.maillist-manage.com\]](#)**

## SSDI&SSI Work Incentives: How to Keep Benefits While You Work

- August 13th & 14<sup>th</sup>, Day 1 - 9 AM -1 PM | Day 2 - 9 AM -12 PM, [Learn More \[mxtws-cmpzourl.maillist-manage.com\]](#)

## SUPERVISORY BOOT CAMP

- August-September 2025, August 25th, 26th, 27th & September 2nd, 3rd, 4<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM, Location: Virtual via Zoom Meeting, [Learn More \[mxtws-cmpzourl.maillist-manage.com\]](#)

From NCRTM [Lessons from the Field Webinar - Engaging Families to Support Student Achievement \[ncrtm.ed.gov\]](#)

**Hosted By** National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE)

**Type:** Upcoming ( Nov 15 2025 | 3 - 4:30pm )

[Register for Lessons from the Field Webinar - Engaging Families to Support Student Achievement \[safesupportivelearning.ed.gov\]](#)

For those exploring AI usage, you may wish to take a look at the [NARIC Collection Spotlight: Is Artificial Intelligence the Next Big Thing in Disability and Rehabilitation Research? \[ncrtm.ed.gov\]](#) (NARIC)

Independent Futures that Work! has developed a helpful tool to guide youth with disabilities and their families through the early steps of accessing vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. [Questions for Your First Visit with a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor \(Youth Version\) \[independentfuturesthatwork.com\]](#) is a printable resource designed to help young people prepare for their initial meeting with a VR counselor. Topics include understanding available services, the application and eligibility process, communication expectations, and self-advocacy.