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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.

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ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT UPDATE (ESEANCLB)

Different versions of this legislation are being crafted in the House and the Senate. The Senate version is entitled "Every Child Achieves Act of 2015" (S.1177). Among other things this bill maintains the testing of No Child Left Behind, allows states to create their own accountability system, does not allow Title I funds for low income students to follow the student to other public or private schools of their choice, reinstates the 21st century community learning centers (after school program), requires states to identify low performing schools, and increases the number of school counselors and social workers. The House bill (H.R.5) is quite different. It also keeps the testing provisions of No Child Left Behind, but it is so complicated that two different, lengthy summaries of what is currently in the bill are posted at Congress.gov. The House bill has not yet made it out of committee; the Senate bill has been put on the Senate calendar for consideration. Assuming both bills are passed by their respective houses, the bills almost certainly will eventually be resolved through a joint committee.

SOCIAL SECURITY EXPANSION ACT

This bill (S.731) would raise the cap on taxable wages thus making the Social Security System solvent for a number of additional years. It would use the Consumer Price Index for Elderly Consumers to calculate cost-of-living adjustments. If this change in how cost of living is calculated were to take effect, it would reflect the types of expenses which older Americans typically have. This change in how cost of living is calculated would increase the average annual benefit to current beneficiaries by about \$800 per year or about \$65 per month.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING BILL PASSES

The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (S.178) passed the Senate April 22 and passed the House on May 19. The bill has been sent to the President and will become law if the President signs it. Human trafficking has been described as modern slavery. The bill as passed provides for additional fines for those involved in trafficking. Some of the money or sale of assets of human traffickers is to be used to help children deal with the psychological damage of being exploited. The bill helps expedite aid to victims and provide training for law enforcement officers in how to help victims and punish traffickers. Although this bill is helpful, there are still a number of areas which need to be addressed. Those most at risk are the homeless and runaways.

CREDIT CARD THEFT PROTECTION

It is possible for a criminal with a card device to get your credit card information simply by operating it within 30 feet of you. You can protect credit cards by wrapping them in aluminum foil. Cards contained within RFID (radio frequency identification) protection cannot be compromised. RFID protection is commercially available either as aluminum cases or as paper sleeves impregnated with aluminum. The Forum is considering selling some of these card protectors. There are two types of card protector. One type protects 2-3 cards (sleeve) while the other one which is thicker holds at least 6-8 credit cards. We would like feedback on interest in the card protectors. The slim card protector would cost \$3. If enough people want it, the committee would have to explore the cost of the thicker card protector. If you are interested in purchasing either protector sleeves or the thicker protector from the U.S. Forum, please contact me via email at Bedenbaugh.Angela@gmail.com.