



Summer 2026

<https://www.dkgusforum.org/>

U.S. Forum Connection

The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International

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U.S. Forum Steering Committee

Chair:

Dr. April Coleman

Area Representatives:

Sharon Scheidegger, NE

Dr. Cindy Dixon, SE

Susan Dixon, SW

Kay Stern, NW

Treasurer:

Linda McCrary

International President:

Connie Rensink

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Newly Elected Steering Committee

The General Membership meeting of the U.S. Forum, held on July 3, 2026, in Aurora, Colorado, was attended by two hundred and six members, representing thirty-seven percent of the convention participants. There were also eighteen members from the other Forums attending the first half of the meeting where speaker Dr. Heathre Palige demonstrated strategies to assist students with social-emotional dysfunction in the classroom.



l-r: Susan Dixon, Sharon Scheidegger, Dr. Cindy Dixon, Dr. April Coleman, Kay Stern

Following Dr. Palige's presentation, the first order of business for the U.S. Forum members was election of the 2026-2028 Steering Committee. After nominees' informational speeches, there being no new nominations from the floor, the assembly voted to accept the slate of nominees by acclamation. Dr. April Coleman (AZ) was elected as Chair; Susan Dixon (CA) will serve as SW Regional Representative, Kay Stern (WA) as NW Regional Representative, Sharon Scheidegger (OH) as NE Regional Representative, and Dr. Cynthia Dixon (AL) as SE Regional Representative. Details about each committee member may be found on the Forum website www.dkgusforum.org/about-us.

The experiences these women bring to the Steering Committee are very impressive as is their desire to further the goals of the Forum, awareness of Forum activities and greater participation by all DKG members in the United States. Members can expect a continuation of virtual workshops, detailed information on pending legislation, in-person and virtual conferences, and the opportunity to provide input on issues critical to U.S. members.

 **TAKE A LOOK**



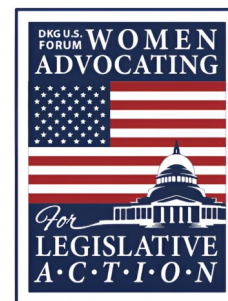
Biennial Report of the 2024-2026 U.S. Forum Steering Committee

Pat Bennett-Forman, Chair 2024-2026

The 2024-2026 biennium of the U.S. Forum was filled with many successes but also left the next Steering Committee with some significant challenges. A survey conducted in December 2024 revealed that fewer than twenty percent of DKG members had any awareness of the Forum, its purposes or activities, and even fewer had participated in Forum activities in the past. Goals were established to promote awareness, increase participation, and engage members in the vital tasks of advocating with governmental officials on behalf of educators, women, and children.

To accomplish those goals, the Forum adopted a new logo and mission statement, “DKG women advocating for legislative action,” which is now found on all communications, logo wear, lapel pins and stationary for contacting legislators. A new, user-friendly website was produced (dkgusforum.org) and a newly formatted *Connections* newsletter published quarterly. More importantly, the Forum contact list grew from sixty-four names to over 700, ensuring more direct and timely contact with members. That, however, is still a long way from having all 44,000 U.S. DKG (and Forum) members in “the know.”

Based on member survey results and the extant resolutions from previous years, the Steering Committee determined to offer two types of virtual workshops: (1) to provide information on legislation related to priorities identified by members, and (2) to increase member skills in advocating. The following virtual workshops reached over 800 members this past biennium:



- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Skill builders: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ tracking legislation ◆ engaging with legislators ◆ interviewing legislators ◆ written testimony |
| Issue clarification: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Congress and education legislation ◆ closure of the Department of Education ◆ school choice ◆ Project 2025 |

The Forum provided a series of virtual informational workshops for members attending the 2026 National Legislative Seminar, ranging from an historical overview of the purposes and outcomes of NLS to basic ideas for packing, transportation, and site seeing. Workshops on preparing position statements and etiquette for meeting Congressional representatives were included both virtually and in a newly developed manual for attendees. NLS 2026 was attended by sixty-one members from twenty-three states, from California to New York, Washington to Florida and places in-between, including twenty-three first timers. The overall program was highly regarded with evaluation ratings averaging 4.78 out of 5.

Workshops on establishing a State Legislative Day and promoting membership through the Forum were delivered at International Conferences and Conventions. Keynote speakers discussed voucher programs in Louisiana and social emotional learning in Colorado. Presentations were also made at several state conventions and for International Committees.

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Another area of importance for the Committee was to create an accountable and transparent process for members and state organizations to initiate issue discussions and identify areas of common concern about which the Forum and its members could advocate. In summer 2025, amendments to the Forum Guidelines created a resolution process which has been initiated. Since then four resolutions have been brought forth and voted on by the members: concerning the closure of the Department of Education, retirement security, school choice, and food insecurity. Each outlines specific questions and actions for members, chapters, state organizations and the Forum to take consistent with the non-partisan status of the organization. The full language of each resolution is available for reading on the Forum website.

In summary, there were a great many successes for the 2024-2026 biennium. But there were also challenges, which unfortunately continue into the new biennium.

First, the goal of having 75 attendees at NLS was not met. Anecdotal information suggests this was due to the cost of NLS attendance, the general cost of living, and competition from the International Convention. Regardless, the income did not cover expenses with a loss of \$6,091.36.

Secondly, there were unanticipated AV costs from the 2025 Forum Meeting at the International Conference in New Orleans totaling \$6,100.00. In combination, the Forum owes International \$12,191.36. Agreement between the Steering Committee and the International Administrative Board is to pay the amount owed over the next three years which will have the net effect of lowering the Forum's annual revenue from International from \$10,000/year to \$5,935/year.



To help rectify this deficit, the 2024-2026 Steering Committee has recommended three courses of action: (1) lower costs for the 2028 NLS by examining the venue structure; (2) raise funds through merchandise sales and donations—thank you to the individuals and state organizations who have already assisted with this strategy; and (3) seek an increase in the International allocation to the U.S. Forum from the current \$0.24/member to a higher amount, hopefully \$0.50/member.

In addition, the 2024-2026 Steering Committee has made the following recommendations:

1. Keep the momentum going: continue the newsletter, website, and promotions; continue to offer workshops each quarter; and enhance the web site with an open forum discussion page.
2. Identify liaisons for EVERY state; utilize the liaisons to spread the word about the Forum and its' offerings and to establish state-level Forums in each state.
3. Provide a virtual educational issues-oriented Forum conference in 2027 to increase overall member engagement and to keep the mission of the Forum front and center in the DKG organization and with its members.

The 2024-2026 U.S. Forum Steering Committee is grateful for the opportunity to serve DKG members and is very appreciative of the support afforded by International President Dr. Beverly Hall-Maughan.

For the full text of this report, see the Forum website: <www.dkgusforum.org/guidelines>.

Food Insecurity Resolution Passed

Oklahoma member Debby Yarbrough introduced a resolution to the General Forum Member meeting on July 3, 2026, on Food Insecurity that was unanimously approved. In light of proposals and Congressional actions on the budget, SNAP has received a 20% cut, and increases are noted in the use of food banks around the country. The resolution calls on **DKG chapters and members** to

DONATE FOOD HERE



(1) **research** child nutrition and **food assistance programs** in their communities to determine local food insecurity levels;

(2) **study** proposed federal and state **legislation** regarding the funding of child nutrition and food assistance programs to determine the potential effect

on meeting hunger needs;

(3) **communicate** their findings and views to members of Congress and their state legislatures, other government officials, local and state organizations and agencies, and community members as appropriate; and

(4) **request** that Congress authorize a detailed **bi-partisan research study on the effects of funding cuts** for food assistance programs that were enacted by P.L. 119-21, ‘the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.’”

Ms. Yarbrough reported on details she has received from her local DKG active educators that reinforces what most educators know: children experiencing food insecurity have greater difficulty engaging in school curriculum. The Food Insecurity Resolution provides an important opportunity for members to promote services to children and demonstrate DKG relevancy.

Becoming active in the U.S. Forum

The survey conducted by the Forum Steering Committee in winter 2025 found that many members were unaware of the Forum and unsure about how to become active in Forum functions. At the same time, members affirmed a desire to promote the Forum as a vital service of DKG. So, how does one become active in the Forum?

First, explore the U.S. Forum website <www.dkgusforum.org> and become familiar with the services, resources, and publications listed on the site. Notice the “About Us” page and the committees you might be interested in joining. Learn about Forum purposes and events.

Next, sign-up to be on the Forum contact list <www.dkgusforum.org/events-1> so you can have copies of the newsletter, event notifications and legislative alerts sent directly to your email. Registration for Forum virtual workshops is easy when you are sent the direct registration link.

Third, get to know the other DKG members in your chapter, state and region who share your interests. Working with others to evaluate legislation and develop position statements is far easier than going it alone. Did you know that Steering Committee members (current and past) would welcome the opportunity to present at your state convention or provide virtual training sessions to inform members about the Forum and/or facilitate discussion on issues?

Finally, ask questions and get to know what roles (great and small) exist for members to support the Forum. Communicate with Steering Committee members as to your concerns, the issues on which you want the Forum to speak out, and how the Committee might enhance its positions and further its goals. YOU matter!

Legislation to Watch (and act upon)

Of the twenty-two bills listed in the Spring 2026 *Connection*, only one has progressed beyond the Committee referral stage in Congress, though a few have gained additional co-sponsors. The one exception is **HR 6392**, the Home School Graduation Recognition Act, which passed the House on March 3, 2026, and was forwarded to the Senate, where it was read twice but no further actions taken.

Some of the previously listed pieces of legislation may “fall to the floor” and not be considered in the next session of Congress unless they are reintroduced. If you have a “favorite” bill that has not been progressing, you might want to talk to the sponsor’s legislative staffer to ascertain whether that bill will continue or not.

Below are bills that have been introduced to Congress this past spring and summer, not previously listed in the *Legislation to Watch* column. Of particular interest are the set of bills titled “Less Bureaucracy, Better . . .” These bills, introduced in July 2026, all relate to the transfer of Department of Education functions and programs to other federal Departments. Following referral to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce and committee review, each received a majority vote to “order to report” in Congress.

“**Order to Report**” is a procedural motion (neither to approve nor reject the bill) that sends the bill back to the full chamber (in these cases, the House) for consideration. This procedural process is often used to either delay or, as is the case with these bills, to expedite consideration. It is often used when the committee wants to move the bill forward but may not be ready to pass it outright, or when it wants to control the debate in the full chamber. When a committee votes to “order to report,” the Speaker instructs the clerk to place the legislation on the calendar for debate and possible passage. It is important to take note of bills that have been voted to “order to report,” and contact legislators with comments as all Representatives, not just the members of the House Education and Workforce Committee, will have the opportunity to debate and vote on the specific bills. As of this publication date, no action has been taken by the House on these bills.

The 119th Congress is in full swing and based on the responses received from the Member Issue Survey, we believe these are the current Federal Bills to Watch. If you would like to read the language of a bill or if you want to track its progress, please go to www.congress.gov. You can also use that address to share your views with your Congressional representatives.

House Committee on Education and the Workforce/Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions 8/15/26

Bill Number	Bill Title	Sponsor	Introduced	Status
HR 9604	Less Bureaucracy, Better Tribal Education Transfers and repeals Dept. of Ed. functions related to tribal education and job training to the Department of Interior.	Owens, R-Ut-4	7-9-26	Committee vote of 20 yeas to 15 nays to “order to report (amended)” to the full House on 7-15-16.
HR 9609	Less Bureaucracy, Better Student Aid Act Transfers Dept. of Ed. functions related to federal student aid to the Department of the Treasury	Walberg, R-Mi-5	7-9-26	Committee vote of 19 yeas and 16 nays to “order to report (amended)” to the full House on 7-15-26.

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Legislation to Watch (and act upon)*cont. from p. 5*

House Committee on Education & Workforce/Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions 8/15/2026				
Bill Number	Bill Title	Sponsor	Introduced	Status
HR 9610	Less Bureaucracy, Better K-12 Education Act Transfers to the Dept. of Labor all functions of the Sec. of Dept. of Ed. related to Elem. And Sec. Act of 1965, including Titles I, II, III, IV, V, and VII, including ELL, migrant, rural, community schools, teacher training, and more, codifying the inter-agency agreements made by executive order.	Harris, R-NC-8	7-9-26	Referred to House Committee on Education and the Work Force; Committee vote of 19 yeas to 16 nays to “order to report (amended)” to the full House on 7-15-26
HR 9611	Less Bureaucracy, Better Higher Education Transfers to the Dept. of Labor all functions of the Secretary of the Dept. of Ed. for multiple offices and programs related to higher education, including TRIO, historically Black colleges, and others.	Harris, R- NC-8	7-9-26	Committee vote of 20 yeas to 16 nays to “order to report (amended)” to the full House on 7-15-16.
S 4028	Open Books, Open Doors Act Expands equitable access to developmentally-appropriate literacy materials, programs, and family engagement in reading, especially in underserved communities	Kim, D-NJ	3-9-26	Read twice and referred to the HELP Committee; no action since.
HR 7691	Fight Book Bans Act Provides grants to local educational agencies to cover the costs of challenges to books and curriculum in public elementary and secondary schools.	Frost D-FL-10	2-25-26	Referred to House Education and Workforce Committee; no action since
S 4504	Full-Service Community School Expansion Act of 2026 Improve the full-service community school programs grants.	Van Hollen, D- MD	5-12-26	Referred to HELP Committee; no action since.
S 4431	Time for Completion Act Requests comprehensive student achievement data in higher ed	Barasso R-WY	4-30-26	Referred to HELP; no actions to date

While it can be frustrating to see “no action” on so many bills, it means that the bills are still in committee; hearings have not yet been held. There is still time to provide your input. Click on the links to these bills on the [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) website and see where they are in the adoption process.

While Congress is in Recess . . .

While Congress is in recess or focused on re-election, advocates have an opportunity to prepare for the next legislative session. This is also a time to prepare for state legislative action, county and school district decisions AND HOW YOU CAN EFFECT THEM ALL.

Below is an abridged version of a checklist to help ensure that you hit the ground running when Congress, state legislators, or other decision makers get back to work. By being prepared, you can boost the chances that your favorite legislation will be considered. Work on these items NOW to be ready when the next session begins.

The complete and unabridged version of the Checklist is on the Forum website under the Resources tab: <www.dkgusforum.org/resources> .



LEGISLATIVE SESSION PREPARATION CHECKLIST (abridged)

Make the most of the interim. Work through these items before the next session begins.

- A. Evaluate the last session**
 - ☐ What happened to your tracked legislation last term? Did it pass? Advance in the process? Why or why not? What is the current status? Any similar legislation?
- B. Confirm where the Forum stands**
 - ☐ Are current position statements and resolutions still accurate? Should they be reaffirmed, updated or retired?
- C. Check-ins with key legislators on current bills**
 - ☐ Schedule a virtual conversation with the legislative staffer working on the bill and sign-up for notices regarding hearings, public comment periods, and bill tracking.
 - ☐ Thank legislators who supported Forum-backed bills; is your legislator on board?
- D. Examine NEW legislation and Do Your Homework**
 - ☐ Check for any currently proposed or new bills on issues you care about; use the Bill Evaluator process to decide if you are pro or con regarding the proposed bill.
 - ☐ Find allies (other DKG members, other organizations, friends) to research the issues, gather background stories, data, and sources you will need to develop position statements.
 - ☐ Submit your statement to the Forum Resolution Process (if appropriate)
- E. NEW ideas for legislation**
 - ☐ Find a legislator to work with and schedule an appointment (or with staffer) to discuss how to proceed.

For the more detailed checklist and suggestions for building your advocacy campaign, preparing materials, and tracking/documenting/and follow-up, see the complete Checklist on the U.S. Forum website/resources page.

A quick note: when you're contacting legislators or speaking up on an issue as yourself, that's your voice, not the Forum's. The DKG U.S. Forum only advocates as an organization on issues it has adopted as position statements or resolutions. Be clear about which you're doing.

U.S. Forum News

HOT TOPICS of Discussion Summer 2026

Participants at the General Membership Meeting of the U.S. Forum, held on July 3, 2026, in Aurora, Colorado, had the opportunity to discuss two hot topics of current concern to members and to educators around the country. Grouped into regions facilitated by a volunteer member, each group discussed the issues as they have experienced them and identified areas for further consideration.



The use of A.I. in the classroom was the subject of an address given during the 2026 DKG International Convention by Terry L. Futrell. An avid user of A.I., Mr. Futrell was none the less realistic about the issues around its use, including privacy, safety, bias, ethics, and engagement “addiction.” His comments generated much discussion at the Forum as members identified concerns around the reduction in student critical thinking and cognitive skills, lack of boundaries or rules regarding academic dishonesty, erosion of the teacher-student trust bond, and the need for training and oversight on the use of A.I. by both educators and students. The environmental and monetary costs of data centers was also of concern to some participants. Substituting certificated staff with paraprofessionals and computer lab technicians—ie., educator job loss—was also identified as an issue.

Cell phones and, particularly, social media’s impact on student mental health was a major concern for educators. “Virtual bullying,” harassment, and abuse were some of the topics identified. The continued rise in youth mental health issues and the insufficient number of service providers in schools, with resultant work load increases for educators was highlighted by participants, as was the continued impact of COVID on student social-emotional skill development. Members also discussed the use of cell phones for classroom assignments, similar to issues raised about A.I.

In general, participants supported the growing movement for cell phone bans (and social media restrictions for youth), but acknowledged that educators, parents, and community members would need significant amounts of information and training to have such bans approved and appropriately and positively implemented. More education is needed on detecting the “tricks” being used to addict students to cell phones and social media, including A.I. technology, to ensure safe and appropriate use of the technology.

Overall, participants indicated that more information is needed on these topics. DKG and the U.S. Forum were identified as appropriate providers for promoting discussion on state standards, A.I. literacy, and guardrails to protect students and staff. Discussion groups and workshops will be important for this work, alongside advocacy.

Two resources of interest regarding the impact of social media addiction on youth, the techniques being used by tech companies, and strategies for interrupting that addiction, would make for great discussions by chapters and serve as a valuable source of data for advocacy efforts:

***The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Haidt and**

***The Amazing Generation* by Jonathan Haidt and Catherine Price.**

The latter is a graphic book written for students from 9-12 years of age, but appropriate for older readers.

The Connection is a publication of the U.S. Forum, The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International. It is published quarterly and distributed to all DKG members in the United States. The U.S. Forum purposes are to inform members and to support desirable legislation in the interests of education and women educators. To submit articles or if you have questions, contact the editor, at www.dkgu.s.forum@gmail.com.