Hi, everyone. Welcome to another edition of "Off The Cuff." I'm Justin Draeger.

I'm Allie Arcese with our communications team.

I'm Megan Coval with our policy team.

And I'm Jill Desjean with the policy team as well.

Welcome everybody. Allie, this last week we started our fitness challenge. How closely do you follow the NASFAA Instagram, Jill and Megan?

Closely.

Close. Jill, I see you...

I do not.

Okay. Which is fine. I mean, it's not a requirement to work here. I hope you feel a little shame, but not a ton of shame. Did you see Allie working out on our Instagram this last week? That was our NASFAA one, right?

Yeah.

So you were putting your money where your mouth is. You were like "get it done."

Yep.

Are we all going to do that? This week should Megan workout?

Hey, that little watch you saw there this morning.

Megan, was featured this morning.

Oh, was that you? I wondered because actually I was like-

That was me.

I was wondering why aren't we all connected then so we can all see each other's...?
Allie Arcese: Oh, I'm only friends with Megan Walter. That's literally my only friend on Apple watch.

Megan Coval: Oh, I'll connect on a workout piece.

Justin Draeger: All right. Yeah, let's do that. Jill, what's shoot... What you got going on over there? Do you have an Apple watch?

Jill Desjean: Oh no, I don't do devices.

Justin Draeger: Oh, all right. Just too much data, that sort of thing?

Jill Desjean: Yeah. Overwhelming.

Justin Draeger: All right, so we can do that. Are we going to put Megan on Instagram this next week?

Allie Arcese: Sure. I think Megan and I are going to work out together one day next week.

Megan Coval: Yeah, we talked about doing it together so we should coordinate that.

Allie Arcese: Oh yeah, we should just do a team workout.

Megan Coval: Yeah.

Justin Draeger: I'm not in peak condition right now.

Allie Arcese: That's okay. None of us are.

Megan Coval: Neither am I.

Justin Draeger: Well listen, I've had a series of issues this last year health wise. I'm just catching up. I did the beginner... First of all, I do other things. So I played racquetball on Monday.

Allie Arcese: Which is fine.

Justin Draeger: But then I also did the beginner thing, which was 10 pushups. But I had a shoulder separation. It really hurt, but I did it.

Allie Arcese: You can do it on your knees.

Megan Coval: Every little but counts.

Jill Desjean: People call those girl pushups though.

Megan Coval: I did girl pushups the other day.
Allie Arcese: No, they're working on your form push-ups.

Justin Draeger: I could not do that regardless of whether it's sexist or not. I could not do that and save face in front of my kids. So I had to do the real pushups. It was painful, but I did it.

Allie Arcese: Good job.

Justin Draeger: And now we get to somebody wins something, right?

Allie Arcese: Yeah. So we had several people reach out to tell us that they were going to participate in the activity challenge and I would just like to clarify for next week, like we said before, we also want you to show us in some way that you are participating.

Justin Draeger: How are they going to do that?

Allie Arcese: The examples we provided were take a selfie and tag us on Facebook.

Justin Draeger: I like that.

Allie Arcese: You could email us to the news inbox news@nasfaa.org. You can tag us on social media, like Megan-

Justin Draeger: They can take a screenshot of their smartphone.

Allie Arcese: Yeah. Of you getting all your steps in for the day, like Megan did.

Justin Draeger: Pictures of muddy tennis shoes.

Allie Arcese: Yeah. Literally anything. Just show us that you are being active. It's kind of on the honor system. We do want to see something other than just you sending your name in and saying that you did it.

Megan Coval: Is it called re-Instagramming it?

Allie Arcese: We'll share them on our story.

Megan Coval: Yeah, I think that's nice. I don't know what the word for that is.

Justin Draeger: I don't know either.

Allie Arcese: Support.

Justin Draeger: Yeah. Well you're talking about re-Instagram. People can reshare it.

Megan Coval: If a member does it-
Allie Arcese: Just reshare it.

Justin Draeger: Repost it.

Allie Arcese: Yeah. If you tag us in-

Justin Draeger: What about LinkedIn? Can they do it on LinkedIn?

Allie Arcese: I don't know that that's the place we're looking for this.

Justin Draeger: Well I just wanted to get a sense of which social media. So Facebook, not TikTok?

Allie Arcese: Twitter, Instagram. No.

Megan Coval: Bumble.

Justin Draeger: What about Tinder?

Allie Arcese: That's not social media.

Justin Draeger: All right, so we're just basically saying Facebook and Instagram, not LinkedIn,

Allie Arcese: Twitter, too.

Justin Draeger: And Twitter. All right, fine.

Allie Arcese: Anyway, I have everyone's names in a little random-

Justin Draeger: What were their reactions? Were people like, "I'm so excited about this!" or were people like, "fine, I'll do it"?

Allie Arcese: I think the general sentiment was people were excited. A lot of it was just like, "I'm in, excited to participate!"

Justin Draeger: Exclamation points?

Allie Arcese: Yeah. Exclamation points, "onboard with you guys," "pick me winky face."

Justin Draeger: Pick that person. This is random though, right?

Allie Arcese: Yes. This is going to be totally random. So I have everyone's names in a little spinny wheel. I'm going to click it to pick someone and-

Megan Coval: Oh, that's officially random, Allie.

Allie Arcese: It's officially random.
Megan Coval: I was wondering how you were going to do that.

Allie Arcese: And our winner... Oh, Patricia Springstead from University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. You are our week one winner.

Justin Draeger: Yay.

Allie Arcese: Good job.

Megan Coval: What does she get?

Allie Arcese: You can send me an email arcesea@nasfaa.org and I will coordinate with you to get you your prize.

Justin Draeger: Fantastic. What is the prize?

Megan Coval: What's their prize?

Allie Arcese: Okay, so Patricia, you're going to be getting an "Off The Cuff" mug and a NASFAA... It's a workout shirt. So it's the material that's the performance material, sweat wicking, I don't know.

Justin Draeger: She's getting two things.

Allie Arcese: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Justin Draeger: Okay, great.

Allie Arcese: Yeah. Each winner will get a mug and a shirt.

Justin Draeger: That's fantastic. Congratulations to her. And then next week we're going to do the same thing, so people have to send us proof.

Allie Arcese: Yeah, send us a proof.

Justin Draeger: Through one of the approved social media channels.

Allie Arcese: Just a little bit of proof. The rest of it will be on the honor system.

Megan Coval: Don't show us too much.

Jill Desjean: That's what he says.

Justin Draeger: And then they could be a big winner on "Off The Cuff." All right.

Megan Coval: Cool.
Justin Draeger: Well thanks everybody for participating. We have lots of participation. We're going to have lots of winners. How many weeks are we doing this for?

Allie Arcese: Three weeks.

Justin Draeger: All right. Let's jump right into the week's news. Maybe one of the things that got the most press this last week is that we've known for some time that Senator Elizabeth Warren has this debt plan where her plan is to erase, how much? Is it $50,000 in debt?

Jill Desjean: Up to $50,000, yup.

Allie Arcese: Up to $50,000.

Justin Draeger: Yeah. Up to $50,000 in debt. And the big news this week though is she plans on doing it unilaterally without Congress. Jill, you want to catch us up?

Jill Desjean: Sure. Yeah. So she has said that she's going to make this a day one priority. And the Harvard Law School Legal Service Center has laid out the legal basis under which her plan could be implemented without any new legislation. So yeah. So just to summarize Warren's plan, it's going to cancel, like we said, up to $50,000 in student debt for every person with household income under $100,000. So that would be 75% of student loan holders would have their debt entirely canceled. Then there's a phase out of the amount that you can have canceled for incomes that fall between $100,000 and $250,000. So if you make more than $250 you get no cancellation at all. If you make between $100 and $250 you get partial cancellation.

Allie Arcese: It's like a sliding scale, right?

Jill Desjean: Exactly. So it's sort of for each additional $3 of income that you have, over $100,000 you get $1 less than $50,000 of loan forgiveness.

Justin Draeger: I just want to point out one thing here, because it's tax season, so I'm thinking this way. I know that it doesn't go into this much detail. Maybe it does, but... So if I made more than $250,000 this year, but then quit my job and only made $10,000 next year, then do I get the forgiveness, I wonder?

Jill Desjean: I don't know. It'd be a one-time forgiveness. So I assume it would just be based on a tax year.

Justin Draeger: And I guess $50,000 to give up a $250,000 job for $50,000 that doesn't make mathematical sense.

Jill Desjean: Probably wouldn't do that voluntarily. Yeah.

Justin Draeger: I'm always just thinking about gaming, but go ahead, continue.
Jill Desjean: Sure, sure. Yeah. So all told, when you factor in the partial cancellation and the full cancellation, she estimates that 95% of student loan holders would have some type of forgiveness and that would be 42 million Americans.

Justin Draeger: How much was the price tag? Do we remember? It's like $800 and some billion, right?

Jill Desjean: Yeah. I didn't look up the price tag. I don't remember what it is, but she's going to pay for it with this ultra-millionaire tax that she's been talking about. She also says that a private student loan debt would be included in this and also the forgiveness would not be taxable as income. She did not lay out how she was going to do that because right now forgiveness is taxable, so we'd have to learn more about that.

Justin Draeger: Yeah, some forgiveness. In fact, just this last week as an aside, the Trump administration announced the IRS is not going to count borrower defense forgiveness as taxable income, which is good because it's not income.

Megan Coval: Yes, right.

Jill Desjean: So true.

Justin Draeger: Go ahead, continue.

Jill Desjean: So yeah, as far as the legal authority to do this, apparently where this resides is in HEA section 432A which broadly covers ED's legal powers with respect to making FFEL loans. And the relevant language, I'll just quote it says that, "The secretary has the authority to enforce pay compromise, waive or release any right title, claim, lien or demand, however required," blah, blah, blah. There's similar language in HEA section 468 with respect to Perkins loans. And as for Direct loans, HEA section 451 specifies that Direct loan terms and conditions are the same as FFEL unless otherwise specified. So that section 432 sort of covers both of those. And then there's a separate mention...

Justin Draeger: So you think with congressional intent the idea here was that the secretary, if she has some reason to have a claim against somebody, let's say somebody who's in default, the secretary has the authority to wave maybe collection fees or a portion of that or maybe the entire loan if the circumstances warrant it. But in this situation she's saying this provision does not have limitation on it.

Jill Desjean: Exactly.

Justin Draeger: And if the secretary has that authority, then she simply appoints a secretary who's going to come in and do this for everybody.

Jill Desjean: Right. The ED's has been doing it with death and disability discharge, borrower defense. Uses that authority for certain reasons. And basically what the Harvard
Center came out and said was that it doesn't have to be limited. That's just a choice that's been made in the past. But just because it's never been done before doesn't mean it can't. The legal authority exists.

Justin Draeger: What are the reactions to this? Any idea?

Jill Desjean: Well, certainly critics of the plan generally complain that it would disproportionately benefit wealthier Americans. The college earnings premium means that if you've gone to college and borrowed loans and graduated, you're likely to be making more money. So people who never went to college aren't going to benefit from this.

Justin Draeger: I want to circle back around to that because that was talked about again at the debates. We'll get to that in just a second. I also wonder, when I first heard this and I hadn't actually done the leg work to look at the brief that you mentioned, which hopefully we can just stick in the show notes. When I first heard this, I just get a little bent out of shape because I think about Republicans and Democrats both, it just seems like every administration across parties administrations just take more and more power under themselves leaving Congress to sit on the sidelines. I mean, we're debating this right now with war powers.

Justin Draeger: So the whole idea of the Republic just feels like it gets further and further away. But then again, if the statute was written without limitation than Congress ceded to the secretary this authority. But I imagine if this were to actually happen, there would be case filing after case filing and lawsuit after lawsuit. Don't you think?

Jill Desjean: I would agree, yeah.

Justin Draeger: I mean, just in the name of the taxpayer.

Jill Desjean: Sure. Yeah.

Justin Draeger: Not to mention that if we have a Warren presidency, we also don't know what the makeup of Congress would be. Congress could certainly try to itself counteract a presidential action, which we've seen in the past as well.

Megan Coval: Yeah. Well, I've been trying to think through this also, but this is a onetime forgiveness, right?

Jill Desjean: Presumably, yeah.

New Speaker: So what happens for the student who's starting college the next year? There's no real plan to-

Megan Coval: I mean, that hinges on the rest of her plan.
Jill Desjean: Right.

Justin Draeger: Those are all really good points. So I was thinking about this too, and I was like, Megan, if I came to you... We're good friends, right? Very good friends. Best friends.

Megan Coval: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah. Yes.

Justin Draeger: So if I came to you and I was like, Megan, I'm in dire straits. Do you have $20,000? I imagine you would think, geez, what do you need $20,000 for?

Megan Coval: It's serious.

Justin Draeger: Or $50,000 if we're doing the Warren thing. And you might then think well, whatever caused you to go in debt, is that still happening?

Megan Coval: Right.

Justin Draeger: Are you going to come back to me in another year for another $50,000? So if we don't solve the borrowing then we're going to wipe it out for all these people. But then what about the very next award year?

Megan Coval: And what you're saying is the rest of her plan for the free public tuition would get at that?


Justin Draeger: But this is the point is she could come in and wipe out student loan debt. Let's assume that legally will stand. Okay. I don't know if it will or won't, but she does that. But then all these other things that have to happen to prevent the next year's students...

Jill Desjean: She needs Congress for that.

Justin Draeger: Yeah. Unless every year the president's just going to waive the debt people took on. So you need Congress to increase taxes and by a significant amount for really wealthy people. I think it was a tax on people who had more than...

Allie Arcese: Ultra millionaires.

Justin Draeger: $50 million. Yeah.

Jill Desjean: It's a tax on wealth, not an income, right? On your assets. Yeah.

Justin Draeger: And then you have to pass your free public college provisions as part of the HEA, which is federal and state money. "There ain't no such thing as free money." That's going to come with all sorts of new requirements on colleges and
universities. So there will be a lot of concerns there. So all of these things have to happen in tandem. And I don't mean to be a naysayer.

Megan Coval: And this is where she is. She's very progressive in what she's running on. But I mean, I think a lot of people would be happy to have their debt sliced in half even versus just the whole-

Justin Draeger: Or a portion waived.

Megan Coval: That's her platform and certainly where she's been on these issues for a long time. So I think she's sort of like let's go big on it.

Allie Arcese: Also, one of the things that she talks about later on in her plan, which sort of gets at some of the issue of addressing the growth of student loan debt in the future was talking about making public college and technical school tuition free, supporting HBCUs and MSIs, and working to close racial gaps in access to higher ed and completion and things like that. And so she talked about leveraging I think the Office for Civil Rights to open investigations into the roles that they're playing in the student loan industry specific. And then notes she says that there's all this evidence that the Department is sitting on, that there is racial discrimination in connection with student borrowing.

Justin Draeger: And she has actually gone out for a solicitation for comments on some of the racial disparities in student loan borrowing. We've weighed in on that and actually shown, but this is what I would call more systemic sort of racial disparities and racism. It's not a specific student or subset of students by race. It's more of a people who are low income now are relying on loans more predominantly than they have in the past. There are racial disparities that fall on wealth lines. And the progressive programs that were created to create opportunity in some instances are looking quite regressive, which we've said in our comments to Senator Warren.

Justin Draeger: Okay. Speaking of massive loan forgiveness, because several different people now have proposed some sort of widespread loan forgiveness. Moody's recently weighed in this last week. They looked at the impact of loan forgiveness on the economy at large. They said that 1) these are all estimates so we have to take that with a grain of salt anytime somebody is trying to figure out what the economic impact is going to be, it's built with assumptions. Some of those assumptions might be off by a little bit, which then has a pretty big consequence on the final estimate.

Justin Draeger: But a couple things I'll pull out is according to Moody's report proposals that would grant large scale loan forgiveness would quote, "yield a tax cut like stimulus to economic activity contributing to a modest increase in household consumption." So it's not going to solve everything but a modest increase. And then it says the report goes on and says that it'll have economic benefits that will lead to quote, "an improvement in small business and household formation
as well as increased home ownership." And then a credit rating agency warn that there could be some drawbacks to increasing the risk of moral hazard and the accumulation of even higher student loan debts. That is if you know that debts are being forgiven, would that cause people to borrow with abandon? Jill, you seem doubtful on that. You don't agree?

Jill Desjean: Well, people make that argument about PSLF too with graduate students and grad PLUS loans. Oh, they'll just go hog wild tomorrow. I don't know. It seems like a pretty risky endeavor.

Allie Arcese: Or maybe they'll contribute to their savings accounts instead?

Jill Desjean: I mean it just seems really... Maybe there are a handful of people who would do that, but it seems pretty reckless to be like, I'm going to borrow $30,000 I don't need, because I'm pretty sure it's going to get forgiven.

Justin Draeger: This whole thing about the loan forgiveness, I read... I'd like to find this, but I just want to notate it in this. There was a proposal a long time ago that sort of built the idea that every so often there should just be widespread debt forgiveness. Okay. Not just student loan but widespread debt forgiveness. And it kind of hearkened back to Old Testament stuff because there was in the Old Testament this, was it every seven years or something people would settle up and there'd be this widespread debt... I'm going to find this so we can talk about it.

Justin Draeger: But the interesting thing was the whole thing came down to exactly this point. Moral hazard versus economic stimulus, and at what point have people crossed the line from counting on forgiveness, so now this will effectuate a different behavior. I don't know. I think you would be pretty hard pressed to find... I just wonder if we could survey Public Service Loan Forgiveness people who've turned in an employment form, how many of them are counting on Public Service Loan Forgiveness? I wonder what the percentage would be like. And then how many of them actually did something actionable in college because they were expecting loan forgiveness. I wonder.

Jill Desjean: Yeah. I only worked with medical students and I can promise you that none of them were borrowing a nickel they didn't need, even though they were borrowing a ton. Certainly no one was saying, "oh, I'm not worried. I'm just going to get this forgiven." They were in my office every other day with, "Are you sure this might really happen? Is this real thing?"

Justin Draeger: Because they're looking at the amounts.

Jill Desjean: Exactly. The amounts that they borrowed that they borrowed super carefully.
Allie Arcese: That's the one thing I hear from my brother all the time is still, I don't know if I can... Asking, like you're saying Jill all the time, "Is this really possible that it might get forgiven?"

Jill Desjean: He's in law school, right?

Allie Arcese: He graduated a couple years ago. Yeah, he works for the Energy Department.

Justin Draeger: What do you tell him?

Allie Arcese: I tell him, I'm like, "I don't think you really need to be worried at this point. Any change that they would make presumably would not be retroactive. It would just be for new loans. Yeah. I was like, "If you want to stay and work there 10 years, then just make sure you're making all your payments."

Justin Draeger: And get your employment certification form in and keep track of all your documentation. Continuing on the thread of massive loan forgiveness, this actually came up at the Democratic debate, this last one, this last week. I do wonder how many people are actually watching this, given that we're on seven months of debates now.

Allie Arcese: Yeah. So I just pulled up something and it says CNN's coverage of the Democratic debate drew an estimated 7.3 million viewers according to early numbers from Nielsen, which is the media research firm.

Justin Draeger: Is that up?

Jill Desjean: That is up from the 6.1 7 million who watched the December debate by PBS and Politico. And six points up from 6.5 million from the November debate on MSNBC.

Justin Draeger: So more people are watching? I'm exhausted.

Megan Coval: I felt more interested and excited to watch this one. Actually I ended up falling during this one, but-

Allie Arcese: There's interestingly is...

Megan Coval: Because there's less. The first is just sort of herding... It's a cattle call. It's ping pong. But this is sort of like, okay, maybe we're going to get some real insight into how this is going to shake out.

Allie Arcese: Well the interesting thing is the viewership is actually currently, and those ones in November and December, is much lower than the debates that were much earlier in the cycle. So the first Democratic debate in June had 18.1 million viewers.
Megan Coval: Wow.
Justin Draeger: Look out.
Allie Arcese: Yeah.
Justin Draeger: That's Bachelor territory.
Allie Arcese: No, I think more people are watching The Bachelor.
Justin Draeger: Okay. I don't know. I'm just throwing that out there. 7.1 and it was 18. I get that because there were how many people on stage for the first one? 120 right? I.
Megan Coval: I mean there was close to 20.
Allie Arcese: 18, I don't know.
Justin Draeger: So that one was all about watching your grandparents come up with one liners to zing each other. And now, because there's what? There were six people on the stage, I think, and they actually had to come up with substantive things to say.
Allie Arcese: Who was there?
Justin Draeger: Oh boy.
Allie Arcese: Biden, Warren-
Justin Draeger: Biden, Warren, Booker just dropped out. Buttigieg was there. Klobuchar. Was Yang there?
Megan Coval: Yang's not there. Steyer.
Justin Draeger: Wait a minute. Didn't Yang just pick up at a Dave Chappelle endorsement this week, but he didn't make it to the debate?
Jill Desjean: That doesn't qualify you for debate.
Megan Coval: He didn't make it. Bloomberg was not there. Well, because he's not taking the public donations, or the whatever the DNC has. Tom Steyer, which I'm still like, why are you here?
Justin Draeger: He's a billionaire too, right?
Megan Coval: Yeah. Did we say Bernie?
Justin Draeger: Oh, yeah. Bernie was there.
Allie Arcese: How do you forget Bernie?

Megan Coval: How do we forget Bernie?

Justin Draeger: And so they actually got into a little free public debate squabble. We have some audio.

Pete Buttigieg: We got to be making sure that we target our tax dollars where they will make the biggest difference. And I don't think subsidizing the children of millionaires and billionaires to pay absolutely zero in tuition of public colleges is the best use of those scarce dollars.

DebateModerator: Senator Warren?

Senator Warren: So look, the way I think we need to do this is we need a wealth tax in America. We need to ask people with fortunes above $50 million to pay more. And that means that the lowliest millionaire that I would tax under this wealth tax would be paying about $19 million in the first year in taxes. If he wants to send his kid to public university, then I’m okay with that. Because what we really need to talk about is the bigger economic picture here. We need to be willing to put a wealth tax in place to ask those giant corporations that are not paying to pay. Because that's how we build an economy, and for those who want to talk about it, bring down the national debt.

Justin Draeger: All right, so these are familiar talking points. Jill, you mentioned earlier that critics of the widespread loan forgiveness is that it seems like a handout to the wealthy. So when you look at the distribution of people that are borrowing... It's the same thing with free college, which is a lot of people that go to college are able to pay for it. But we're not going to require them to.

Justin Draeger: But what I found interesting was Senator Warren's response was that well under her plan, because she's going to have the, what did you call it, the ultra-millionaire tax, which is $50 million. I don't know, any of you guys approaching that?

Megan Coval: Not quite yet.

Jill Desjean: Just under.

Allie Arcese: Maybe next year.

Justin Draeger: So you're safe. But she said in the debate, which I haven't done any math on, but she's like in the first year, if you make over whatever the ultra-millionaire amount is, the first year that she's going to tax them $19 million.

Megan Coval: Yeah, she said her lowliest millionaire would be taxed at that.
Justin Draeger: $19 million. I mean, I guess that's fine. Whatever. So you would be only have $30 million as opposed to $50.

Megan Coval: It's still in good standing.

Justin Draeger: Seems like a lot of money.

Jill Desjean: Still a yacht lifestyle if you want to have one.

Justin Draeger: Right. A smaller yacht, a medium yacht.

Jill Desjean: Financing.

Justin Draeger: But this goes back to the thing we said where everybody has to like that and all these things have to happen for her plan to work. And at least some of those things require Congress. So I don't know. Anything else interesting out of the debate?

Megan Coval: No, and I just think to remind folks, so Mayor Pete, he's saying families that make up to $100,000 they would get free public...

Justin Draeger: Right? So they're all drawing in some qualifiers. Except for Sanders. I don't think he has a...

Megan Coval: No.

Justin Draeger: Yeah. All right. Moving on. Some congressional action happening this week. Megan, you want to catch us up?

Megan Coval: Yes. So just this morning, the House voted on a resolution that would repeal the Trump administration's new borrower defense regulations, which are set to go into effect July 1st of this year. And they did this under a vehicle called the Congressional Review Act, which is a rarely used tool and actually hasn't been used since 2017 that allows Congress to review in a very expedited manner, any new regulations that were recently issued by agencies. And they have to do it within 60 legislative days.

Megan Coval: The House passed it this morning. It's going to go over to the Senate next. What's interesting about using the Congressional Review Act as it only requires a simple majority of the Senate. So they only need 51 votes versus the 60 that they typically need to get. So it's a little unclear what's going to happen over there, but only about four Republicans need to come over.

Allie Arcese: It's six Republicans going into the-

Megan Coval: Yeah, six Republicans this morning voted in favor of it. So I think there's a
Justin Draeger: I'm going to go on the record and say it's not leaving the Senate, but let's see what happens. My guess would be though, sometimes this looks like good show, but you know the caucus whips, you know what the votes are, and the majority often... Well I guess they can't stop this from coming to a vote. That's the thing with this resolution, right?

Megan Coval: Right. It has to go. Yeah. So it has some different rules. And the Trump administration of course has already caught wind of this and issued a policy statement saying "we will veto this if it comes to our desk."

Justin Draeger: And then you need two thirds.

Megan Coval: Then you need two thirds, which will not happen. But it was used successfully in 2017 to repeal the Obama era teacher prep regulations. But at that time you'll remember we had a Republican House and Senate and in the White House.

Justin Draeger: I was thinking about this earlier today because the vote just happened a short while ago. And about how large the thresholds are for Congress to get anything done. I mean what, we're six years past a reauthorization expiration, original expiration. And I was reminded of this opinion piece that Mitch McConnell did in the New York Times in August. It's one of the articles that I flagged and I keep referring back to because the Senate parliamentarians... Which I would call Mitch McConnell a parliamentarian, anybody who's got a lot of years in the Senate becomes a parliamentarian because that's sort of how they pride themselves.

Justin Draeger: But he talks about this high threshold to get anything done in the Senate. And the two things that he said in this opinion piece that I agree with is that one, this is not a bug. It was specifically about the filibuster. He was saying this is not a bug, it's a feature of the Republic. He was talking about how the House is a simple majority. That's fine. They're up for election more often. They're more reflective of where public opinion is. But the Senate is really there as a check and a balance. And he said, that's not a bug. That's a feature.

Justin Draeger: The second thing that he talked about was that when you start trampling these rules in the Senate, it works for you today and will work against you tomorrow. So if Democrats think it's a good idea when they're in control to skirt rules to get something jammed through that that will work then and it'll come back and bite them in the end. And the whole Supreme Court-

Allie Arcese: I was going to say, that's exactly what happened in the Supreme Court.

Megan Coval: That's what I was just thinking of.

Justin Draeger: Right. Senator Reed was the majority leader was the one who did away with the filibuster on judicial nominees, and then it just went into a nuclear war where it escalated to the point where we got to the Supreme Court justices. So it's sort
of like there is some truth that once you open that box... Anyway, I think about that with the Congressional Review Act and a lot of legislation. It's so frustrating that we are now in 2020 without a Higher Education Act.

Justin Draeger: On the other hand, if you can't craft a piece of legislation that garners some bipartisan support and it's the voters who put people there, for a lot of people that's seen as a feature, not a bug.

Megan Coval: Yep. No, that's a really good point.

Justin Draeger: One final thing I want to touch on, not necessarily about politics or necessarily even a direct on public policy, but a new report that just came out from Georgetown, their workforce. What is that called?

Jill Desjean: Center for Education and Workforce.

Justin Draeger: Yeah. Where Anthony Carnavale is often issuing reports about how salaries turn out for graduates of certain schools and colleges. He just did one and this reaffirmed something we've seen other studies we've seen in the past specifically on liberal arts. Some of the findings basically is that in the short term return for liberal arts institution starts out rather low, but over time it actually turns out quite well for students. Particularly if they go... It doesn't even have to be the top 10th liberal arts schools. If you go to a decent liberal arts school, 10 years down the road, salary wise on average, you're going to do better than almost any other major. I always find this heartening. I'm not a liberal arts major. Are any of you? You are.

Jill Desjean: I was.

Justin Draeger: Oh you are. Oh, good for you. But I come from a very blue collar background. So we've talked about this before. Where I'm from it was very much like parents who were sending first generation kids to college were thinking STEM because that's almost like a souped up blue collar...

Jill Desjean: Training. Yeah.

Justin Draeger: And it feeds into this idea of why do you go to college? You go to college to get a job. Liberal arts is a little harder to put your finger on because it's not job training.

Allie Arcese: It's like if you swing too far in either direction, it's not going to be good. Things like STEM, just like MOOCs, I think were overhyped.

Justin Draeger: Yeah. So STEM is the answer to the all problems.
Allie Arcese: Yeah. Going 100% in on STEM. And you don't even need to take English. You already speak English. Why do you need to take English? But have you ever heard of STEAM?

Megan Coval: See this... Don't get me started on the STEAM thing.

Justin Draeger: What is STEAM? I don't know.

Allie Arcese: It adds arts in.

Megan Coval: So then what else is there?

Justin Draeger: Are we back to liberal arts then?

Allie Arcese: Yeah, you're back to having a well-rounded education.

Megan Coval: I can't figure that out. I get STEM, but STEAM is just everything.

Justin Draeger: One of my regrets in life is that in college I went for a bachelor of science and it was ultimately in something I didn't end up working in. It was somewhat interesting to me, but if I could do it all over again I would've done liberal arts because that's what I was interested in.

Megan Coval: And that's the point.

Justin Draeger: I was interested in sociology and history and philosophy and that's where I wish I would... I had to walk by those buildings on the way to my STEM major and I remember being like "aw."

Allie Arcese: Didn't the students outside those buildings just look happier?

Justin Draeger: No, I think it's proven that more... Philosophers are generally unhappy.

Allie Arcese: Oh yeah. They're burdened by human issues.

Justin Draeger: That's right. But that's okay. Ignorance is bliss-

Allie Arcese: Someone has to be.

Justin Draeger: ... but sometimes you still want to know. You want to be in the know. Anyway, I was heartened to see this.

Megan Coval: Yeah, me too.

Justin Draeger: Obviously I forwarded this to my entire family in a passive aggressive way. All right. It's January. I don't know how you all feel about... January is my least favorite month.
Megan Coval: It's long.

Allie Arcese: It goes on forever.

Megan Coval: It's because it's dark and long.

Justin Draeger: It's cold.

Megan Coval: Your holidays are over. All the things you've been looking forward to.

Justin Draeger: You're bloated. There's a lot happening. Speaking personally.

Allie Arcese: I'm just still pretending it's December because we still have our Christmas tree up.

Megan Coval: There you go.

Justin Draeger: Anyway, my point is January sucks and so what I'm looking for is something. Give me something. The listener question is what's your latest life hack? Anything. Help me get through January. That's what I want. Do you have any? What's your latest, Megan? You got something good?

Megan Coval: Yeah, I mean yes. I feel like you may think this is a little gross, but I'm going to just say this. I know that eBay has been around for a really long time.

Justin Draeger: Is it around? It's still open?

Megan Coval: Oh yeah.

Justin Draeger: All right.

Megan Coval: I always sort of thought of it is if you were looking for these big ticket items. Nick buys computers and iPhones on eBay.

Justin Draeger: Really?

Megan Coval: Yes. All of his stuff comes from eBay.

Justin Draeger: No kidding.

Megan Coval: I'm a little bit of a... I won't say cheapskate, but I'm a bargain hunter. I have recently started buying clothes or basically anything that I want on eBay because I just didn't realize how much was on there. And you can do that 'buy now' option so you don't have to deal with the whole bidding stuff.

Allie Arcese: Well, I mean, do you ever look at Thread Up or Poshmark? It's like the same thing.
Megan Coval: It is, but it's just... I don't know. It's like everything's on there.

Justin Draeger: Are you wearing anything eBay today?

Megan Coval: I'm not. But I was just, in the spirit of working out more, I wanted to get more work out pants and it really angers me how... Well, we know Jill likes fancy yoga pants.

Allie Arcese: I'm with Jill.

Megan Coval: I am mad about the fact that the Nike capris costs 45 bucks a pop. I just think it's ridiculous.

Allie Arcese: Oh, yeah. And they're not even squat proof.

Megan Coval: So I went on... What does that mean?

Allie Arcese: If you do squat in the Nike leggings, and this was an issue with some Lulu Lemon ones too that blew up.

Jill Desjean: I remember that a couple of years ago.

Allie Arcese: They become see through.

Justin Draeger: Oh, so they're not... You're not shredding them.

Allie Arcese: No. But they become see through.

Justin Draeger: Well, given the number of people in our gym, I think it's fine.

Allie Arcese: Well, I don't wear Nike leggings for that reason.

Justin Draeger: There's nobody in our gym is my point. All right, so you're buying leggings through eBay?

Megan Coval: I was like I am not. It makes me mad. So I just went on and I looked at the ones I had. I put all the details in, the size I wanted, and there were some there and they were used. Fine. Whatever. I have a washing machine. They looked like they were in good condition. Joelle is looking at me like, "oh man." I also love shopping for work clothes at Ann Taylor. I feel like Ann Taylor is kind of expensive. I know what size dress I wear there and it just never dawned on me until a month or so ago to be like just go in there, plug it in. A lot of them look nice, had been worn a couple of times, so now I'm getting all this stuff. I got it a nice dress for 15 bucks.

Justin Draeger: Good for you. You know what? always pictured people on eBay as older gentlemen looking for a Garfield mug.
Allie Arcese: Like trolls in a basement?

Megan Coval: This is why I feel like it sort of falls under...

Allie Arcese: ... in original packaging.

Justin Draeger: Mondays. Lasagna.

Megan Coval: That's why I feel like it's a little hack that I've discovered. You have no idea all this stuff that's on there.

Justin Draeger: I'm going to check it out.

Megan Coval: Yes. I just saw these shoes that I liked and I'm like I'm sure these are on eBay somewhere.

Justin Draeger: You know what? You're right. I'm going to check it out.

Megan Coval: Rothy's. Ladies here on the podcast will know what Rothy's are.

Justin Draeger: Never heard of it.

Megan Coval: I have three pairs. Got them all on eBay. You can wash the Rothy's, which is a key. You should try it out.

Justin Draeger: Great hack. Thank you. Allie? Do you not have one?

Allie Arcese: Honestly, I got nothing right now. I'm trying to wake up earlier.

Justin Draeger: Oh yeah.

Allie Arcese: I'm setting my alarm five minutes earlier every day.

Justin Draeger: What time are you getting up?

Allie Arcese: Today I got up at 6:45 am.

Justin Draeger: Do you want me to help you get up? Do you want me to ring you?

Jill Desjean: Say no.

Megan Coval: What time does everybody get up?

Allie Arcese: I mean, no.

Justin Draeger: I'm up at 5:45 am every day.
Allie Arcese: When do you get up?

Jill Desjean: I get up a little after 5:00.

Justin Draeger: Holy... What the hell are you doing up at 5 am?

Allie Arcese: What time do you go to bed?

Jill Desjean: I have a lot of things to do.

Justin Draeger: What is happening?

Jill Desjean: I go to bed very early.

Megan Coval: What time? What time?

Jill Desjean: Between 8:30 pm and 9 pm usually.

Megan Coval: Okay. Well, that's... If you go to bed-

Allie Arcese: You should be getting up at 5 am.

Jill Desjean: I like my Zs and I'm an early riser.

Justin Draeger: That works in January. But what do you do in July when the sun doesn't go down in DC until 10:00?

Jill Desjean: Oh, that's no problem for me.

Justin Draeger: You just go to bed in the daylight?

Jill Desjean: Yeah. When Greg is working, I put my kids to bed at 7:30 pm or 7:45 pm. I'm like, well my night's over. I just go too. I'm like, this is a treat. When Greg is home I feel the need to keep him company.

Justin Draeger: This is good to know. So we need Jill after 8 pm we know we're going to have to either go over to her house or.

Jill Desjean: I'm sure you already know this. I'll wake up in the morning with all these Slack messages from you guys and be like, oh, I just turned off my notifications.

Justin Draeger: Well, that's good. You know what? I'm going to change your employee review from disengaged to sleepy. All right. Do you have any, Jill?

Jill Desjean: This is probably a hack. I'm obsessed with the floors in my house not having stuff on them. I have dark wood floors and every little bit of dirt and dust shows
on them. I'm sweeping sometimes twice a day so I got a little robot. I got like a Roomba. It's amazing.

Justin Draeger: It works.

Jill Desjean: Oh yeah.

Allie Arcese: We got my grandparents one of those for Christmas.

Jill Desjean: I'm being mocked mercilessly by everyone in my family. The kids are making fun of me, and my husband's making fun of me because I love it so much. I've got it programmed and I come home and I'd be like, "guys look how clean the floor is. Look how clean the floor is." And they're all just like-

Justin Draeger: Have you named it?

Allie Arcese: Yeah, you can do it from your phone.

Jill Desjean: You can name it. Yeah.

Justin Draeger: What's yours?

Jill Desjean: So Charlotte, my daughter named it. She called that Rosa Bella, which I like because you can call it Rosie, like the cleaning robot in the Jetsons.

Allie Arcese: Oh nice.

Jill Desjean: So I call it Rosie but Charlotte calls it Rosa Bella.

Allie Arcese: How does Rosie do with chairs? Because I'm thinking that would be super helpful under the dining room table, especially with the period of time I-

Jill Desjean: She's great. She's big.

Allie Arcese: But they just bump around them.

Jill Desjean: She can fit between the legs of the chairs but just about, but she senses something coming and slows down so she doesn't slam into all the legs of your furniture. There's also a little spring so when she does bump into it, it's a gentle little tap and then she pops back so you don't get all scuffed up.

Megan Coval: Interesting.

Jill Desjean: The bottoms of my chairs are all scuffed for my kids anyway, but at least I can blame my kids and not Rosie.

Justin Draeger: I love it. Thank you. You've given me hope. Maybe I'll try some of those.
Megan Coval: You don't have one to share? You're just looking for inspiration.

Justin Draeger: Yeah. I'm looking for inspiration today. So listeners, if you guys have some hacks, could be things, they could be activities. Let us know, help brighten our January. And continue the workout challenge. We'll pick another winner next week.

Allie Arcese: Keep showing us how you're moving.

Justin Draeger: Put it on an approved social media channel, one that we check. And keep listening. Send us your comments. Remember to subscribe and tell a friend.