



## Coalition to Promote Research

Organizations Committed to Promoting Public Health, Innovation  
and Fundamental Knowledge Through Scientific Research

February 17, 2011

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Coalition to Promote Research (CPR), we write to urge you to vote no on the following amendments (No.417 - No.422) being offered by Representative Darrell Issa to H.R. 1, the Fiscal 2011 Continuing Resolution.

The Issa amendments would eliminate funding for specific peer-reviewed research grants supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF).

The NIH grants targeted in the Issa amendments have all gone through the NIH's two-tier review process. That process includes a scientific and technical review by scientists who are experts in the field. The second tier is consideration by an Advisory Council, required by law to meet three times a year for such purposes, which includes public representatives. It is the Council's role to make recommendations based on alignment of the application with the research priorities of the NIH Institutes and Centers. The NSF grant has also been approved based on its scientific merit as determined by the NSF's rigorous and exacting peer review system. To support the integrity of these merit review systems, we ask that you:

**Oppose Amendment 417:** *Sec. \_\_. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the National Institutes of Health to study the impact of integral yoga on hot flashes in menopausal women.*

Amendment 417 targets NIH-funded grant examining the effectiveness of integral yoga on objective and subjective menopausal hot flashes was designed to address a health concern experienced by 64 to 87 percent of women who report experiencing hot flashes. For many women, these symptoms are frequent and severe enough to become debilitating and interfere with daily activities. It directly addresses the concern many women have regarding taking hormone therapy and have sought alternative treatment.

Currently, the only effective treatment for hot flashes is hormone therapy, which many women are reluctant to take because of health risks and adverse side effects. This grant seeks to determine if yoga can be an effective method to reduce the frequency and/or severity of hot flashes, leading to an improvement in sleep, mood, and overall quality of life. Because yoga practice involves the combination of physical postures, breathing, and deep relaxation and may be beneficial for relief of menopausal hot flashes, yoga could prove to be an effective way to reduce hot flashes. As part of the grant, the researchers will measure physiological measures to help explain the mechanisms of yoga's effectiveness and to help identify appropriate control groups for yoga research. The results will inform the development of effective treatment therapies for menopause.

**Oppose Amendment No. 418:** *Sec. \_\_. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the National Institutes of Health to examine the potential impact of a soda tax on population health.*

Amendment No. 418 would prohibit funding of the research project, "Economic Contextual Influences on Population Diet and Obesity," which was designed to investigate the relationship between food, beverage and restaurant taxes and food consumption patterns,

diet quality, body mass index and obesity prevalence among children, adolescents, and adults. The research design uses state-level data merged with nationally representative cross-sectional and longitudinal population data.

**Oppose Amendment 419:** *Sec. \_\_. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the National Institutes of Health to research the use of marijuana in conjunction with opioid medications, such as morphine.*

Amendment 419 would defund basic research on the contributions of cannabinoids, which are derived from marijuana, to enhance the effectiveness of morphine in pain therapies. No marijuana is used in these studies, which involve the microinjection of synthetic cannabinoids into the brain of rats. Pain conditions are a major health problem in the US and their economic burden approaches \$100 billion per year in lost productivity and medical expenses. It is the most common reason for medical appointments. Chronic pain affects more than 50 million Americans per year. Pain often results in disability and, even when not disabling, it has a profound effect on the quality of life. Its deleterious effects have been demonstrated in overall morbidity, decreased immune function, impaired sleep, cognition, eating, mobility, affective state, and overall functional status. In hospitalized patients, pain may be associated with increased length of stay, longer recovery time, and poorer outcomes, which in turn have health care quality and cost implications. The results of this research will inform the development of more effective pain therapies.

Cannabinoids are less effective than opioids in relieving pain, but they have been shown to enhance the pain relieving properties of morphine, even in animals that have become tolerant to the morphine's effect. In this project, the researchers are studying the neural mechanisms that underlie the interaction between opioids and cannabinoids in order to enhance the treatment of pain.

**Oppose Amendment 420:** *Sec. \_\_. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Department of Health and Human Services to study condom use skills in adult males.*

This amendment may impact multiple NIH grants that are seeking to reduce the public health burden of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS. According to the CDC, approximately 56,300 new HIV infections occur annually in the United States. About half of the new HIV infections in the U.S. are among people under age 25, with the majority infected through sexual behavior and about one in three new diagnoses of HIV/AIDS are attributed to heterosexual transmission (CDC, 2008). Men who have sex with women play a major role in HIV transmission to women who can also pass it on to offspring. In 2006, 80% of HIV/AIDS diagnoses among females in the USA were attributed to heterosexual transmission.

Previous studies have shown that problems with condom use are common. This study will systematically assess problems encountered by men with condom use in order to develop interventions that more specifically address and alleviate these problems. Improving condom use could prevent hundreds, or even thousands of new HIV cases.

**Oppose Amendment 421** *Sec. \_\_. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the Department of Health and Human Services to study the concurrent and separate use of malt liquor and marijuana among young adults.*

This amendment would defund a research project aimed at improving the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of alcohol use disorders by understanding young adults' use of malt liquor, other alcoholic beverages, and marijuana, all of which confer high risks for addiction. The researchers will systematically examine situation-specific alcohol and substance use in the daily lives of young adults (ages 18 to 25). The long term goal is to use

the understanding gained to develop prevention and intervention strategies to reduce the risks of substance abuse faced by vulnerable populations of young adults.

In the United States, 18 million Americans (8.5% of the population age 18 and older) suffer from alcohol use disorders. Only 7.1% of these individuals received any treatment for their alcohol use disorders in the past year. Problems related to the excessive consumption of alcohol cost U.S. society an estimated \$185 billion annually. Cannabis use disorders affect approximately 1.7% of the United States population. About 15 million adults use marijuana on a regular basis.

**Oppose Amendment 422:** *Sec. \_\_. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used by the National Science Foundation to study whether video games improve mental health for the elderly.*

This amendment would defund a research project designed to incorporate results from neuroscientific research into computerized programs for training older adults, with the goal of improving cognitive functioning and everyday abilities. Computer training can be particularly useful in halting age-related declines and associated mental health problems in typically underserved populations - e.g. the elderly in rural communities and those who are physically unable to leave their homes to receive care in more traditional health settings.

**We urge to vote no on these amendments and preserve the scientific integrity of peer review at NIH and NSF.**

The Coalition to Protect Research (CPR) is a coalition of national organizations committed to promoting public health, innovation, and fundamental knowledge through scientific research. Our organizations represent hundreds of thousands of scientists, physicians, health care providers, and patients who support federal investments in basic and applied biomedical and behavioral research. If you would like additional information, please contact CPR co-chairs Angela Sharpe, [alsharpe@coffa.org](mailto:alsharpe@coffa.org) or 202-842-3525 with the Consortium of Social Science Associations or Karen Studwell, with the American Psychological Association, [kstudwell@apa.org](mailto:kstudwell@apa.org) or 202-336-5585.