



COSSA

CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
FOR PUBLIC OPINION
RESEARCH

AMERICAN ECONOMIC
ASSOCIATION

AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL
RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

AMERICAN HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION

AMERICAN POLITICAL
SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

AMERICAN SOCIETY
OF CRIMINOLOGY

AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

AMERICAN STATISTICAL
ASSOCIATION

ASSOCIATION OF
AMERICAN GEOGRAPHERS

ASSOCIATION OF
AMERICAN LAW SCHOOLS

LAW AND SOCIETY
ASSOCIATION

LINGUISTIC SOCIETY
OF AMERICA

MIDWEST POLITICAL
SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

NATIONAL
COMMUNICATION
ASSOCIATION

RURAL SOCIOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

SOCIETY FOR RESEARCH
IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

HOWARD J. SILVER,
PH.D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SUSAN CUTTER, PH.D.
PRESIDENT

July 24, 2009

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Consortium of Social Science Associations, I write to urge you to vote "NO" on the amendment being offered by Representative Darrell Issa to the House FY 2010 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill that would eliminate funding for three currently funded, peer reviewed research grants supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Supported by more than 100 professional associations, scientific societies, universities, and research institutions, COSSA stands alone in representing the full range of social and behavioral sciences.

The NIH mission is to uncover new knowledge that will lead to better health for everyone. It is widely recognized by the scientific community that social and behavioral science research is critical in America's quest to promote health, prevent disease, and provide quality treatment. Behavioral factors "are a main driver" of disease burden. Six of the ten leading causes of death in the United States are behaviorally-based, including HIV/AIDS, smoking, violence, accidents, diet, and substance abuse. This research provides knowledge about the social, cultural, and economic environments that influence human health and behavior and the means by which these environments exert their influence.

Given that HIV/AIDS is a global epidemic that has already killed more than 25 million men, women, and children and 33 million are currently living with HIV, it is clear that prevention of HIV infection should be a priority area of research funding. The research is easy to ridicule if it is taken out of its public health context. The fact is scientists need to explore a range of research avenues in vulnerable populations around the world to learn the best ways to control the transmission of HIV.

In response to previous congressional concerns about whether sexual health research should be funded by the agency, NIH reviewed the entire NIH sexuality portfolio in 2004. That investigation found that all of the NIH grants in areas of sexual health met the rigorous standards of scientific and ethical quality, that they were not funded out of proportion to the public health burden of these diseases, and that the merit review system had been followed.

NIH supports hundreds of thousands of scientists across the country engaged in basic and clinical research, from cellular biology and genetics to studies of health disparities across populations. Each study that eventually receives support from NIH has undergone a rigorous review of both its scientific merit and its relevance to the public's health and NIH mission. Efforts to override the peer review process would undermine one of the core principles of the research enterprise.

Consortium of Social Science Associations
July 24, 2009
Page two

This research provides: knowledge, methodology, and measures that are essential for prediction, prevention, understanding individual variation, and controlling illness; for minimizing the collateral impact of disease; and for promoting health. As you consider this amendment which seeks to stop NIH from funding its current peer-reviewed research projects, we hope that you will consider the importance of preserving the integrity and rigor of the peer review process.

COSSA urges you to reject the practice of subjecting individual research projects to scrutiny based on political and ideological criteria. Doing so threatens the interest of science and the public's health. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Angela Sharpe, Deputy Director for Health Policy at 202.842.3525 or alsharpe@coffa.org.

Sincerely,

Howard J. Silver, Ph.D.
Executive Director

GOVERNING MEMBERS

American Association for Public Opinion Research
American Economic Association
American Educational Research Association
American Historical Association
American Political Science Association
American Psychological Association
American Society of Criminology
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association

Association of American Geographers
Association of American Law Schools
Law and Society Association
Linguistic Society of America
Midwest Political Science Association
National Communication Association
Rural Sociological Society
Society for Research in Child Development

MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS

Agricultural and Applied Economics Association
American Association for Agricultural Education
American Psychosomatic Society
Association for Asian Studies
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management
Association of Research Libraries
Council on Social Work Education
Eastern Sociological Society
International Communication Association
Justice Research and Statistics Association
Midwest Sociological Society
National Association of Social Workers
National Council on Family Relations

North American Regional Science Council
North Central Sociological Association
Population Association of America
Social Science History Association
Society for Behavioral Medicine
Society for Research on Adolescence
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality
Sociologists for Women in Society
Southern Political Science Association
Southern Sociological Society
Southwestern Social Science Association

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Arizona State University
Brown University
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Davis
University of California, Irvine
University of California, Los Angeles
University of California, San Diego
University of California, Santa Barbara
Carnegie-Mellon University
University of Chicago
Clark University
Columbia University
Cornell University
Duke University
Georgetown University
George Mason University
George Washington University
Harvard University
Howard University
University of Illinois
Indiana University
University of Iowa
Iowa State University
Johns Hopkins University
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY
Kansas State University
University of Kentucky
University of Maryland
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse

University of Michigan
Michigan State University
University of Minnesota
Mississippi State University
University of Nebraska, Lincoln
New York University
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
North Carolina State University
Northwestern University
Ohio State University
University of Oklahoma
University of Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania State University
Princeton University
Purdue University
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
University of South Carolina
Stanford University
State University of New York, Stony Brook
University of Texas, Austin
Texas A & M University
Tulane University
Vanderbilt University
University of Virginia
University of Washington
Washington University in St. Louis
West Virginia University
University of Wisconsin, Madison
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
Yale University

CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

American Academy of Political and Social Sciences
American Council of Learned Societies
American Institutes for Research
Brookings Institution
Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences
Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research
Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan
Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research
Institute for Women's Policy Research
National Bureau of Economic Research
National Opinion Research Center
Population Reference Bureau
Social Science Research Council

