



# COSSA

Consortium of Social Science Associations

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American Association  
for Public Opinion  
Research

June 22, 2005

American Economic  
Association

Dear Member of Congress:

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

**On behalf of the Consortium of Social Science Associations, I write to urge you to vote against any amendment to the House FY 2006 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill that would eliminate funding for specific research grants supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).** Supported by more than 105 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. As emphasized by NIH Director Elias Zerhouni at a recent Congressional hearing, 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. Other behavioral factors that are known to increase individuals' risk for disease, disability and early death: obesity, physical inactivity, inadequate social support, environmental contaminants, anxiety, and traits of anger, hostility or depression. Further, 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.

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.

Over the past three years, we have seen repeated attacks by some in Congress on individual grants, most of which are behavioral. Basic behavioral and social science research is critical to the mission of the NIH. Although this work does not directly address disease outcomes per se, behavioral and social processes play a critical role in understanding the links of molecular, genetic, and neural processes with health and disease.

**Howard J. Silver, Ph.D.**  
*Executive Director*

**Myron Gutmann, Ph.D.**  
*President*

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. In a wide range of psychiatric, neurological, and physical illnesses, disturbances and disruptions of normal behavioral and social functioning create the greatest burden for patients and families and create the greatest economic costs.

As you consider any amendments that seek to stop NIH from funding from 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](mailto:alsharpe@coffa.org).

Sincerely,

H. J. Silver

Howard J. Silver, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

# Consortium of Social Science Associations

## GOVERNING MEMBERS

American Association for Public Opinion Research	Association of American Geographers
American Economic Association	Association of American Law Schools
American Educational Research Association	Law and Society Association
American Historical Association	Linguistic Society of America
American Political Science Association	Midwest Political Science Association
American Psychological Association	National Communication Association
American Society of Criminology	Rural Sociological Society
American Sociological Association	Society for Research in Child Development
American Statistical Association	

## MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS

American Agricultural Economics Association	North Central Sociological Association
American Association for Agricultural Education	Population Association of America
Association for Asian Studies	Social Science History Association
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management	Society for Research on Adolescence
Association of Research Libraries	Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics
Council on Social Work Education	Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
Eastern Sociological Society	Society for the Scientific Study of Religion
International Communication Association	Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality
Justice Research and Statistics Association	Sociologists for Women in Society
Midwest Sociological Society	Southern Political Science Association
National Association of Social Workers	Southern Sociological Society
National Council on Family Relations	Southwestern Social Science Association
North American Regional Science Council	

## COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Arizona State University	Maxwell School of Citizenship and Pub. Affairs, Syracuse University
University of Arizona	University of Miami
Brown University	University of Michigan
University of California, Berkeley	Michigan State University
University of California, Davis	University of Minnesota
University of California, Los Angeles	New York University
University of California, San Diego	University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
University of California, Santa Barbara	Northwestern University
Carnegie-Mellon University	Ohio State University
Case Western Reserve University	University of Pennsylvania
University of Chicago	Pennsylvania State University
Clark University	Princeton University
Columbia University	Purdue University
Cornell University	Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Duke University	University of South Carolina
George Mason University	Stanford University
University of Georgia	State University of New York, Stony Brook
Harvard University	University of Texas, Austin
Howard University	Texas A & M University
University of Illinois	Tulane University
Indiana University	Vanderbilt University
University of Iowa	University of Virginia
Iowa State University	Washington University in St. Louis
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY	West Virginia University
Johns Hopkins University	University of Wisconsin, Madison
University of Kentucky	University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
University of Maryland	Yale University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	

## Centers and Institutes

American Academy of Political and Social Science	Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan
American Council of Learned Societies	Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research
American Institutes for Research	National Bureau of Economic Research
Center for Advanced Study in Behavioral Science	National Opinion Research Center
Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research	Social Science Research Council

