

# Consortium of Social Science Associations



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## THINGS HAVE CHANGED III

It is the morning after President Bush's speech to the joint session of Congress, ten days after the terrorist attacks. Once again Washington, and indeed the world, is a changed place. The disputed presidential election and lingering doubts about the legitimacy of this presidency – gone. The switch of Jim Jeffords to give Democrats control of the U.S. Senate – ancient history. Concern about using the social security surplus to pay for government spending – evaporated. Partisan bickering over appropriations – finished. The nation is united for a war against terrorism to, as the President declared, “lift the dark threat of violence from our people and our future.”

For COSSA, whose office is three blocks from the White House, it has been a time of contemplating our own good fortune, and to join the rest of the country in expressions of sorrow over losses and admiration for acts of courage, and to attempt to make some sense of it all. There is also a continuing fear of what could happen next that has made Washington edgy. But life and work does go on.

Congress has pledged to cooperate with the President in a bipartisan manner and to move quickly. Although the original adjournment target of October 5 will not be met, there is no longer any discussion of the session running until Thanksgiving or later. The Democratic and Republican leadership, previously quite chilly in their relationships with each other, are now working together with a sense of purpose. Congress has already passed a \$40 billion emergency package to help fund the military response, enhance airport security, help survivors, and rebuild New York and the Pentagon. It will soon enact legislation to help the nation's beleaguered airlines. The Justice Department has submitted legislation to strengthen its weapons against terrorism.

As for the FY 2002 appropriations process, everyone acknowledges the need to finish as soon as possible with a minimum of disagreement.

Congress expects to pass a short-term Continuing Resolution to keep the government operating through the middle of October. Six of the thirteen bills are now ready for conference, including VA, HUD, Independent Agencies, which includes funding for the National Science Foundation. Congress hopes to finish these six bills within the next two weeks and send them to the President. Differences between House and Senate versions, for the most part, will get reconciled by splitting those differences.

The other seven appropriations bills, including Defense and Labor, HHS, Education, may get wrapped together in an Omnibus bill some time in mid-October. The administration has announced that it will not veto any individual appropriation bill as long as the President's cap of \$679 billion for total discretionary spending is met. Divisive policy riders to these bills are expected to be minimal. There is a sense of urgency in bringing spending debates to a close.

With the economy reeling, the administration and Congress are contemplating attempts at stimulation. Although the initial rush to enact further tax cuts, including for capital gains, is on hold because of statements by Alan Greenspan and Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill, something in this area is expected.

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## JUVENILE JUSTICE BILL CLEARS THE HOUSE WITH BIPARTISAN BACKING

Enjoying broad bipartisan support, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 2001 (H.R. 1900) passed the House on September 20. The bill reauthorizes the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) through 2006.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. James Greenwood (R-PA) and cosponsored by Reps. Bobby Scott (D-VA) and Michael Castle (R-DE), is very similar to the legislation that passed the House in the last Congress. It combines the current discretionary programs into a prevention block grant to the states, which is based on each state's juvenile population and crime statistics. The legislation also calls for a study on gun violence among youths.

After the original authorizing legislation expired in 1996, attempts at reauthorization "collapsed in partisan controversy," according to Rep. Scott. Following these failures, a bipartisan working group was convened to review the issue, streamline the measure, and reduce its controversy. A group of Democrats expressed their approval that, "instead of emphasizing punishment and 'adult-like' incarceration, H.R. 1900 affirms the rehabilitative purpose of the juvenile courts while recognizing several present-day realities that state and local juvenile justice systems face in addressing juvenile crime."

### CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), an advocacy organization for federal support for the social and behavioral sciences, was founded in 1981 and stands alone in Washington in representing the full range of social and behavioral sciences.

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Rep. Scott heralded the legislation resulting from the working group as "a bipartisan agreement that promotes sound juvenile crime policy which is based on proven research."

The bill was considered under suspension of the rules, which speeds up action by suspending the rules and requires a two-thirds majority vote. Final enactment of the bill awaits passage by the Senate, which has yet to take up their bill this session. Congress created OJJDP in 1974 to help states and local communities develop and implement prevention and intervention programs and improve the juvenile justice system.

## NATIONAL BIOETHICS ADVISORY COMMISSION ISSUES FINAL REPORT

The National Bioethics Advisory Commission (NBAC) issued its final report, *Ethical and Policy Issues in Research Involving Human Participants* on September 12. NBAC, established by Executive Order in 1995 by President Clinton and chaired by former Princeton University President Harold T. Shapiro, will be replaced by a new President's Council on Bioethics, chaired by Leon Kass, professor and biomedical ethics expert at the University of Chicago. NBAC's charter expires on October 3, 2001. A September 19 meeting by the Commission to discuss outstanding issues was cancelled and has not been rescheduled.

A key conclusion of the Commission's report, observed Acting Executive Director of NBAC Marjorie Speers, is that the federal oversight system should protect the rights and welfare of human research participants regardless of whether the research is publicly or privately sponsored. NBAC has repeated this assertion throughout its deliberations, and recommendations in this regard appear in its four previous reports.

To accomplish this goal, NBAC recommends a "unified, comprehensive federal policy embodied in a single set of regulations and guidance." Any central coordinating body, argues the Commission, should be open to public input, have significant political or legal authority over research involving human participants and have the support of the executive and legislative branches of government. Currently no federal entity has the authority to develop policy for all research involving human

participants. Consequently, the Commission calls for legislation creating a single, independent federal office.

NBAC acknowledges that adoption of its recommendations will generate additional costs for all involved in research, but urges sponsors of research, whether public or private, to work together with institutions carrying out the research to make the necessary funds available.

### **Additional Ethics Research Needed**

NBAC also recognizes that its report raises many questions about ethical issues that cannot be answered because of insufficient or nonexistent empirical evidence. "Current thinking about ethical issues in research – such as analysis of risks and potential benefits, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, and vulnerability – would greatly benefit from additional research." Accordingly, the Commission recommends that the federal government (along with academic institutions and professional societies) "should facilitate discussion about emerging research protection issues and develop a research agenda that addresses issues related to research ethics."

*Ethical and Policy Issues* is the result of a review of the current system for the protection of human participants in research. Through a series of meetings held throughout the United States, the Commission examined the effectiveness of the oversight system, with particular attention to the "Common Rule." In addition, the Commission investigated the purpose and structure of the oversight system, ethical issues in the review of research, and the role of research sponsors, investigators, institutions, and Institutional Review Boards.

Copies of the report and the accompanying commissioned papers can be downloaded or requested via the NBAC website: [www.bioethics.gov](http://www.bioethics.gov).

### **President's Council on Bioethics**

According to President Bush, the new President's Council on Bioethics responsibilities "will include studying the human and moral ramifications of developments in biomedical and behavioral science and technology." In addition, the

Council will explore such issues as embryo and stem cell research, assisted reproduction, cloning, genetic screening, gene therapy, euthanasia, psychoactive drugs, and brain implants, says the President. A time frame for appointing the Council's members has not been established.

### **UPDATE ON CENSUS AND ACS**

- The thorny issue of whether to statistically adjust Census figures to correct for the undercount (see *Update*, February 26, 2001) will rear its head again soon. The Census Bureau is set to release its recommendation on whether to release adjusted data for non-apportionment purposes on October 15.
- The Census Subcommittee in the House of Representatives is set to expire at the end of the year, and may be merged with the Civil Service and Agency Organization Subcommittee, also part of the Government Reform Committee. The Census Monitoring Board is also due to expire, on September 30 of this year.
- The nomination of Louis Kincannon as Director of the Census Bureau, widely regarded as a highly qualified candidate, has yet to be formally sent to the Senate. Bill Barron remains as Acting Director.

### **American Community Survey**

Support for the American Community Survey (ACS) (see *Update*, July 30, 2001; June 18, 2001) still seems strong in Congress, despite continuing concerns over some issues. The full Senate passed its Commerce, Justice, State appropriations bill on September 13, which includes funding for the ACS. "Continuous measurement," which covers continued data collection at ACS test sites, was funded at \$26.2 million, \$0.9 million less than the request. However, funding for development of the ACS also comes from the Periodic censuses and programs line item, funded at \$348.5 million which, when combined with a \$27 million carryover, brings this account to \$375.4 million, \$0.8 million above the President's request.

According to Chip Walker of the Census Subcommittee, the Bureau will request \$130 million for the ACS in the following fiscal year (FY2003).

Among concerns that certain members of Congress have with the ACS are:

- Whether the ACS should be mandatory: The survey would replace the long form in the decennial census. People in the Bureau feel that, since the Census is mandatory, the ACS would be too. However, some members are concerned that some of their constituents may be unhappy if they receive the survey (which would be sent to a sample of Americans) more than once over a ten-year period. Concerns also include privacy and the confidentiality of responses.
- Whether Congress needs to authorize ACS: The Bureau contends that the ACS, as a cheaper alternative to the long form, is simply a part of the decennial census (already authorized by Title 13 of the U.S. Code), and would therefore not need a new authorization. Others fear that, without that express support, Congress may find it easier to raid ACS funds in the future.
- How the content of the survey should be determined: Some members are concerned that the Census 2000 long form was too long and a burden for their constituents. Issues yet to be settled include how the questions will be determined, how many there will be, and what the process will be for changing them.
- Whether the sample size is adequate: Some data users in rural areas are concerned about whether the sample size will be large enough. The Bureau is worried that if the sample grows too large, the project will no longer be cost-neutral. Another question is whether sample size will grow as the country's population grows.

At a meeting of organizations that produce and use federal statistics, Terri Ann Lowenthal, a policy consultant and former Staff Director of a subcommittee that focused on the Census, suggested that in the aftermath of the recent tragedies, the statistics community can document the effects of the bombings, using our expertise to help the nation in this terrible time as well as demonstrating the societal benefits of statistical research.

## CULTURE COUNTS IN MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH, SAYS SURGEON GENERAL

According to a new report by the U.S. Surgeon General, *Mental Health: Culture, Race and Ethnicity*, there are striking disparities in knowledge, access, utilization, and quality of mental health care for racial and ethnic minorities. The report is a supplement to the 1999 first-ever Surgeon General's report on mental health. A hallmark of the supplement is its focus on the role culture and society play in mental health, mental illness, and the types of mental health services people seek.

"Mental health is fundamental to a person's overall health, indispensable to personal well-being, and instrumental to leading a balanced and productive life," asserted Surgeon General David Satcher. "The revolution in science that has led to effective treatment for mental illnesses needs to benefit every American of every race, ethnicity, and culture. . . . Critically, culture counts. That means that we need to embrace the nation's diversity in the conduct of research," notes Satcher in the 200-page report.

The report acknowledges that more is known about the disparities than the reasons behind them. While not the sole determinants, culture and social influences do play important roles in mental health, mental illness, and service use, when added to biological, psychological, and environmental factors, the supplement states.

Culture is broadly defined as a "common heritage or set of beliefs, norms, and values." The report also emphasizes that the term "culture" is as applicable to whites as it is to racial and ethnic minorities.

Secretary of Health and Human Services Tommy Thompson called the report "groundbreaking." According to the Secretary, "an exemplary feature of this supplement is its consideration of the relevance of history and culture to our understanding of mental health, mental illness, and disparities in services. In particular, the national prevention agenda can be informed by understanding how the strengths of different groups' cultural and historical experiences might be drawn upon to prevent the emergence of mental health problems or reduce the effects of mental illness

when it strikes. This supplement takes a promising first step in this direction.”

### A Gap in Knowledge

The report reveals that despite the fact that good science is an “essential underpinning of the public health approach to mental health and mental illness, the science base on racial and ethnic minorities is limited, but growing.” The lack of ethnic-specific analyses for minority groups, however, “does not mean that current treatment guidelines are ineffective for racial and ethnic minorities. It does highlight a gap in knowledge,” the report says.

The supplement documents that minorities receive less accurate diagnosis than whites and calls for additional research to address issues such as clinician bias and diagnostic accuracy.

Addressing the opportunities for researchers to study culture, Satcher remarked “It is inherently better to prevent an illness from occurring in the first place than to need to treat it once it develops. Just as the other areas of medicine have promoted healthy lifestyles and thereby have reduced the incidence of conditions such as heart disease and some cancers, so now is the time for mental health providers, researchers, and policy makers to focus more on promoting mental health and preventing mental and behavioral disorders.”

For more information, see [www.surgeongeneral.gov](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov).

### NATIONAL ACADEMIES RELEASE STEM CELL RESEARCH REPORT

On September 11, scientists and policymakers on their way to work were likely abuzz about the impending release of the National Academies’ report, *Stem Cell Research and the Future of Regenerative Medicine*. The terrorist attacks of that day, however, gripped world headlines and placed a hold on unrelated policy debates. As Congress attempts to exhibit bipartisanship and unity in the coming weeks, it is likely that votes on divisive issues such as embryonic stem cell research will be put off, perhaps until next year.

Once the question of federal funding for this research returns to the forefront, however, those

involved in the debate are sure to turn to the Academies’ report, which was compiled by a committee formed by the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine, as they seek guidance on the difficult issues facing the government. The text clarifies what is known about the scientific potential of stem cells and how advances can be realized, while maintaining a respect for “the wide array of social, political, legal, ethical, and economic issues that must be considered in policy-making in a democracy.”

Key points in the report include:

- Studies of both embryonic and adult human stem cells will be required to most efficiently advance the scientific and therapeutic potential of regenerative medicine.
- While there is much that can be learned using existing stem cell lines if they are made widely available for research, concerns about changing genetic and biological properties of these stem cell lines necessitate continued monitoring as well as the development of new stem cell lines in the future.
- Proposals to work on human embryonic stem cells . . . should be strictly scrutinized for compliance with existing and future federally-mandated ethical guidelines.

This last recommendation would be guided by “a national advisory group composed of exceptional researchers, ethicists, and other stakeholders established at NIH to oversee research on human embryonic stem cells.” This committee would be separate from the President’s Council on Bioethics, which was created as part of President Bush’s August 9 address on federal stem cell funding.

Bert Vogelstein, Professor of Oncology and Pathology, Johns Hopkins University, served as the committee’s chair. Copies of the report are available from the National Academy Press: 202/334-3313 or 800/626-6242.

## NIH SOLICITS HIV PREVENTION RESEARCH

In recognition of the influence of the social environment on individual risk behaviors, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), and the National Institute for Nursing Research (NINR) are seeking applications proposing studies of school-based and other community-centered prevention programs for adolescents and youth and minority communities.

The HIV/STD Prevention Programs for Adolescents RFA (request for applications) (MH-02-007) is designed to:

- Identify the community, school-system, and parental attitudes and concerns associated with establishing collaborative relationships necessary to plan and implement school-based and other community-centered intervention programs.
- Identify in-school factors such as teacher characteristics, peer influences, or the needs of special populations that are key to delivering developmentally appropriate and effective intervention programs.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate school-based and other community-centered HIV/Sexually Transmitted Disease preventive interventions.

A letter of intent is due by **November 14, 2001** and the application is due by **December 14, 2001**. For more information on this and the following RFA, contact: Nicolette Borek (NIMH) 301/443-4526 or nborek@mail.nih.gov; Hilary Sigmon (NINR) 301/594-5970 or hilary\_sigmon@nih.gov; or Susan Newcomer (NICHD) 301/435-6981 or snewcomer@nih.gov.

Similarly, the Institutional Pathways Towards Strengthening HIV Prevention In Minority Communities RFA (HD-01-017) is devised to address the recognition that “the design of prevention strategies that effectively harness environmental influences has lagged behind” realization of the influence of the social environment on individual risk behaviors. The RFA seeks to:

- Expand the understanding of a major feature of community environment – local community institutions (churches, voluntary organizations, workplaces, and commercial establishments) – and

explore the roles that these institutions play in contributing to or impeding HIV prevention.

- Examine the potential mechanisms through which local institutions can enhance prevention efforts, beyond providing the venue for individual-level interventions.

The RFA represents the first phase of a larger initiative to develop innovative intervention approaches that effectively involve local community institutions in HIV prevention. A letter of intent is due **December 17, 2001** and the application is due **January 18, 2002**.

### Communication Research

The National Institute on Drug Abuse joins NICHD, NIMH, and NINR in issuing a program announcement (PA) PA-01-139 seeking applications to address the creation, dissemination, and consumption of messages designed to deter the spread of HIV.

Until cures and vaccines for HIV infection are a practical reality, prevention of infection must rely upon individuals practicing protective behavior. Now into the third decade of HIV/AIDS, say the sponsors, prevention messages designed and presented through mainstream media have had limited success in deterring the spread of the disease in many populations.

The PA invites research that will improve the understanding of how communication can best facilitate HIV prevention efforts. Studies that examine the interrelationships among various attributes of communication about HIV risk and prevention, and the consequences of communication for individuals, groups, and populations are encouraged. Additionally, research that examines how people consume, understand, retain, and use or act upon information about HIV risk and prevention is also urged.

For more information contact: Susan Newcomer (NICHD) 301/435-6981 or snewcomer@nih.gov, Hilary Sigmon (NINR) 301/594-5970 or hilary\_sigmon@nih.gov, or Willo Pequegnat (NIMH) 301/443-1187 or wpequegn@nih.gov. All of the announcements may be viewed at: <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/2001/01.09.21/index.html>.

## SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT

COSSA provides this information as a service and encourages readers to contact the sponsoring agency for further information. Additional application guidelines and restrictions may apply.

### **National Science Foundation: Research on Survey and Statistical Methodology**

The Methodology, Measurement, and Statistics (MMS) Program in the Division of Social and Economic Sciences invites research proposals that further the development of new and innovative approaches to surveys and to the analysis of survey data. Although proposals may address any aspect of survey methodology, priority will be given to basic research proposals that are interdisciplinary in nature, have broad implications for the field in general, and have the greatest potential for creating fundamental knowledge of value to the Federal Statistical System. Potential topics for consideration include basic research on survey measurement issues, data collection procedures, technological issues related to survey design, methods for small area estimation, and statistical approaches for the analysis of survey data.

Topics for consideration could include but: measurement issues, questionnaire design, survey technology, analytical issues, and small-area estimation. NSF expects to fund three to seven awards, with an approximate duration of one to three years, and an expected award range of \$60,000 to \$125,000 per award per year.

Proposals are due **November 30, 2001**. For additional information, contact: Research on Survey and Statistical Methodology Program; Cheryl L. Eavey, Program Director, Methodology, Measurement, and Statistics; Room 995; 703/292-7269; ceavey@nsf.gov.

### **National Institute of Justice**

The National Institute of Justice has extended deadlines for several of their open solicitations. New deadlines for solicitations listed in prior editions of *Update* include:

- Solicitation for Research Into the Investigation and Prosecution of Homicide: Investigating the Federal Death Penalty System (see *Update*, July 30, 2001). New deadline: **December 19, 2001**
- Crime Mapping Research: Funding for Spatial Data Analysis (see *Update*, July 2, 2001). New deadline: **November 19, 2001**

### **NIJ – Research and Evaluation in Corrections**

In collaboration with the Office of Justice Programs' Corrections Program Office (CPO), the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) seeks proposals to conduct research and evaluation in the area of corrections.

Applications are sought for research and evaluation that focus on topics of current interest in the area of adult correctional management. Topics include, but are not limited to: management of violent offenders in correctional institutions and systems; the management and treatment of special populations; problems and issues in the effectiveness of substance abuse treatment programs in influencing offenders' behavior or the role of treatment programs in the operation of correctional institutions; and recent trends in the size and composition of correctional populations and their effects on the operations and management of correctional systems.

The solicitation will provide up to \$1.5 million to support a limited number of projects, not to exceed \$750,000 each, to conduct research and evaluation in corrections. A nonbinding letter of intent briefly describing the proposed research is due **November 1, 2001**. Deadline for applications is **January 16, 2002**. For more information see [www.ncjrs.org/txtfiles1/nij/sl000492.txt](http://www.ncjrs.org/txtfiles1/nij/sl000492.txt).