

Consortium of Social Science Associations



Volume 20, Number 9

Celebrating 20 Years of Advocacy

May 21, 2001

CONGRESS FINISHES FY 2002 BUDGET OUTLINE

The FY 2002 budget resolution, setting guidelines for spending decisions to be made later in the year by the appropriations committees, emerged from Congress May 10, when the Senate passed the conference report to H.Con.Res 83 by a vote of 53-47. The House had given its approval a day earlier by a vote of 221-207.

The President, who does not get to sign the budget resolution, nonetheless was quite pleased by the outcome of his first major legislative battle. The centerpiece of the approved resolution was a \$1.35 trillion tax cut spread over 11 years, with provisions for a \$100 billion stimulus reduction over the next two years. The Senate Finance Committee moved quickly to implement this action and the Senate is debating the bill as *Update* goes to press.

On the spending side, President Bush also appears quite pleased that the budget resolution provides a four percent increase in discretionary spending, the number the Administration proposed. This means that \$661.3 billion (a \$26 billion increase over last year) will be divided up among the 13 appropriation subcommittees, which will decide how much funding goes to programs and agencies. The final number is much closer to the House version of \$660.1 billion than to the Senate's \$688.4 billion, which would have amounted to an over eight percent boost. Non-defense discretionary funding is set at \$336.5 billion; defense is set at \$324.8 billion.

Congress did leave itself some breathing room by keeping the option of emergency spending available. This would allow appropriators the opportunity to break these guidelines by designating certain programs "emergencies," as they did with the Census Bureau in Fiscal Year 2000.

House forces again prevailed on Function 250 (Science, Space, and Technology), which includes (see *Resolution*, page 6)

CHAIR OF HOUSE SPENDING PANEL DISAPPOINTED IN NSF BUDGET

Now that the President's budget proposal has been released, agency officials are undergoing the yearly practice of testifying before congressional appropriations subcommittees on their agency's activities and plans.

On May 16 Rep. James Walsh (R-NY), Chairman of the House VA, HUD, Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, opened his panel's session with National Science Foundation (NSF) Director Rita Colwell by expressing his disappointment over the 1.3 percent increase proposed by the Administration for the Foundation's FY 2002 budget. He called it "wholly deficient," particularly the proposed decrease for the Research and Related Activities account. Walsh declared that the proposed budget "sends the wrong message to the academic community and the marketplace." He noted that "science and research go hand-in-hand with economic prosperity." Walsh vowed to provide additional dollars for research and felt "cautiously optimistic for success."

Walsh was joined in these sentiments by Rep. David Obey (D-WI). Making a rare appearance at the Subcommittee's hearings on NSF, Obey called the Administration's proposed budget "a sad sack request." He suggested that the Administration's willingness to put all the funding increases for science into the National Institutes of Health (NIH) represents "a fundamental misunderstanding of how science works." He noted that the successes of NIH

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are “built on a basic science foundation.” He called the request “a dead dog,” and suggested he would work with the Subcommittee Chairman to “make it [NSF’s budget] more real.”

Others on the Subcommittee, including Ranking Democrat Alan Mollohan (D-WV), Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ), and David Price (D-NC), also expressed dismay at the President’s proposed budget and asserted they would work to correct it. Mollohan expressed concern with the underfunding of the core areas of science in order to fund priority initiatives such as nanotechnology, information technology, and biocomplexity; Walsh echoed this concern.

Colwell did her best to defend the Administration’s budget, highlighting the proposed \$200 million Math-Science partnership initiative, the increase in stipends for graduate students, and the interdisciplinary mathematics and statistics emphasis. National Science Board Chairman Eamon Kelly, who accompanied Colwell to the witness table, was unrestrained. He repeatedly suggested that this country has underfunded basic scientific research and continues to do so. He declared that at least three percent of U.S. Gross Domestic Product should be allocated to basic research (around 2.7 percent is currently allocated). He also advocated doubling basic research budgets, including, presumably, the NSF.

Walsh did note that the Subcommittee had not received its allocation yet, which will go a long way towards determining how much he can correct the President’s shortcoming. He also questioned Colwell whether, given the large proposed increase for NIH, the NSF should reduce its funding of the biological sciences and concentrate on the physical and engineering sciences. Colwell suggested this would not be a good idea, as NSF supports different areas of biology than NIH, including plant genome research.

Most of the remainder of the hearing focused on NSF’s education efforts. Members such as Joe Knollenberg (R-MI), Anne Northup (R-KY), Carrie Meek (D-FL), Chaka Fattah (D-PA), Bud Cramer (D-AL), and Price all focused on how to improve the math and science achievements of America’s students. Northup focused on how we teach math, while Meek and Fattah were concerned with inequities in educational opportunities. Cramer and

Price talked about NSF’s programs with community colleges. Rep. Virgil Goode (I-VA) had a number of concerns including how NSF spends the money it receives from H1B Visas for immigrant students. Colwell assured Goode that the funds go for scholarships and programs in K-12 education and only to American citizens.

NIH APPEARS BEFORE APPROPRIATIONS

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is “very important to the American public,” said Rep. Ralph Regula (R-OH), in his opening remarks at a hearing on FY 2002 NIH appropriations. Regula replaces former Rep. John Porter (R-IL) as the new chairman of the House Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations Subcommittee. He is also second in seniority on the full Appropriations Committee.

The friendly May 16 hearing began with Regula’s inquiry of the rationale for doubling NIH’s budget over five years. Acting Director Ruth Kirchstein, accompanied by the 27 Institute and Center Directors, responded that the decision was “arrived at by a number of people,” including members of Congress and the advocacy community. NIH has historically doubled its budget over a span of seven to nine years, said Kirchstein, and given the many scientific opportunities, they felt that doubling the agency’s budget over five years would accelerate the pace of these opportunities and advances. Regula agreed.

The President’s budget purportedly continues the doubling trend in FY 2002, by proposing \$23.2 billion or a 13 percent increase. This sum is slightly less than what is needed to truly keep the agency on the doubling path, according to Senators Arlen Specter (R-PA) and Tom Harkin (D-IA), Chair and Ranking Member, respectively, of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, and Education and Related Agencies. Regula noted that the fourth installment is dependent upon the Subcommittee’s allocation from the full Appropriations Committee.

Ranking Member of the Subcommittee and the full Appropriations Committee Rep. David Obey (D-WI) made a brief appearance at the hearing. Obey protested, “The [Administration’s] health care budget is preposterous,” also pointing to the cuts in the National Science Foundation’s (NSF) research

budget (see related story on page 1) and the budgets for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Health Resources and Services Administration. Shortchanging research is a “mind boggling, stupid thing for the government to do,” decried Obey.

“The NSF deals with the universe,” Obey observed. To cut the NSF’s research budget by two percent is a “warped way” to promote the budget, he continued. “No sensible person who knows anything about science would think that the interest of NIH would be served by it receiving a significant increase while the rest of the science agencies are squeezed,” he argued.

Acknowledging that he did not “begrudge” the increase for NIH, Obey told Kirchstein that the White House and many in Congress will use the support for NIH as a way to mislead the public into believing that there is support for science and health programs in general. “A lot of people think they can get away with carving up other science . . . as long as they are generous to the NIH,” he continued.

Obey also questioned the spending projections for NIH in the fiscal years after 2003 in which only two to three percent growth is assumed by the Administration’s budget. The Office of Management and Budget’s strategy for NIH, observed Obey, appears to be to “piling on the money and then dropping [the agency] off a cliff as the size of the tax cut gets larger and larger.”

Kirchstein informed Obey that NIH has been and is going to be “working very hard over the summer to consider what policies we will need to implement” to address the years following 2003. She stressed that NIH is fully aware [of the] need to provide a stable atmosphere. “There will continue to be exciting opportunities. The science will not stop because the doubling stops.” Regula questioned whether “we are creating a bottleneck of discoveries.”

Focus on Behavioral Science

Noting that behavioral science is integral to all treatment, new Subcommittee member Patrick Kennedy (D-RI) asked Kirchstein what NIH was doing to incorporate more social and behavioral science. She answered by noting that a great deal of behavioral science research not related to mental

illness is being supported throughout NIH. She further noted that the Director of the Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research, Raynard Kington, was cognizant of the work needed. She remarked that Kington is particularly concerned about behavioral research related to minority health.

“NIH needs to do a lot more in behavioral science,” stressed Kennedy. Citing drug abuse, cancer, health disparities, and AIDS as examples, Kennedy emphasized that “we have some serious health problems originating from behavior.” He asked Kirchstein to compile the information and provide him with a briefing.

OERI TESTIFIES BEFORE APPROPRIATIONS

On April 26, the House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Subcommittee held a hearing on the Department of Education’s Fiscal Year 2002 budget request. Sue Betka, the Department of Education’s Deputy Assistant Secretary for Program Policy and Planning, testified on behalf of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI).

Normally, the Assistant Secretary for Educational Research would represent OERI, but the President has not yet filled this position. He has, however, announced the nomination of Russ Whitehurst (see related story on page 7), who has yet to be confirmed by the Senate.

Betka reiterated the President’s past statements that to improve student achievement, educators must use effective, research-based practices and programs. She also described some of the activities and programs that would be funded under the \$188.1 million FY 2002 budget request, including the university-based research and development centers, field-initiated research, interagency research efforts, and research on language minority learners and comprehensive school reform.

Few of the Subcommittee’s questions addressed research directly; of most significance was a question by Rep. Anne Northup (R-KY) about the bridge between education research and practice. The topic has a high profile these days because of the increased attention to education and the perceived failure of the education research community to make

the results of their work improve education in the field.

Northup, who chairs the bipartisan House Reading Caucus with Congresswoman Carrie Meek (D-FL), asked Betka about OERI's efforts to bring the results of research to the field, specifically the findings of the National Reading Panel (NRP). The NRP began in 1997 when Congress asked the Director of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) at the National Institutes of Health, in consultation with the Secretary of Education, to convene a national panel to assess the effectiveness of different approaches used to teach children to read. The NRP released their findings in April, 2000 (see *Update*, April 17, 2000). Northup chided the panelists, who could not describe OERI's efforts to disseminate the results, for being "disturbingly unaware" of the NRP.

NATIONAL ACADEMIES RELEASE GPRA IMPLEMENTATION REPORT FOR FEDERAL RESEARCH

The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), enacted in 1993, increases government accountability by requiring federal agencies and departments to issue annual reports on the results of their activities. The law, however, has placed government research programs in the tough role of having to defend grants that often don't manifest results quickly. As a result, the National Academies have been studying GPRA, as it affects granting departments and agencies, in recent years.

On May 8, the Academies hosted a public briefing to discuss and release their new status report, *Implementing the Government Performance and Results Act for Research*. The report is based on a detailed study requested by Congress, formulated by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, and conducted by a panel assembled by the Academies' Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy (COSEPUP). The "Panel on Research and the Government Performance and Results Act 2000" was co-chaired by Enriqueta Bond, President of the Burroughs Welcome Fund at Research Triangle Park, and Alan Schriesheim, Director Emeritus of the Argonne National Laboratory.

The panel's work, begun in May of last year, built on the findings of the February, 1999 COSEPUP report, *Evaluating Federal Research Programs: Research and the Government Performance and Results Act*. Project staff met at that time with members from 11 grant-providing federal agencies and departments to learn about the modus operandi of the various research programs. In the following months, the panel decided to focus its study on the government's five most extensive supporters of research: the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Five focus groups, comprised of panel members and federal staff, were convened to evaluate the various grant programs.

Based on the findings of the focus groups, the panel made four general recommendations in the report:

- Federally supported programs of basic and applied research should be evaluated regularly through expert review, using the performance indicators of quality, relevance, and where appropriate, leadership.
- Agencies should continue to improve their methods of GPRA compliance and to work toward the goals of greater transparency, more-realistic reporting schedules, clear validation and verification of methods, and the explicit use of the development of human resources as an indicator in performance plans and reports.
- Agencies and oversight bodies should work together as needed to facilitate agencies integrating their GPRA requirements with their internal planning, budgeting, and reporting processes. In addition, they should work together to adjust the timing of GPRA reporting to capitalize on the value of the planning process.
- Agencies should strive for effective communication with oversight groups (i.e., OMB, Congress) on the implementation of GPRA. For their part, oversight bodies should clarify their expectations and meet

more often to coordinate their messages to agencies.

In addition, the report specifically recommends that federal research programs use a three or more year performance schedule for reporting on basic research. This would allow granting agencies and departments to paint a more accurate picture of the impact of government-funded research to oversight bodies. It is unclear, however, whether the report's recommendations will be implemented in the coming months. The full text of the report can be accessed at www.nap.edu/books/0309075572/html.

COSSA BRIEFS WASHINGTON ON ASSESSING THE HEALTH OF OLDER AMERICANS

Amidst all the talk about the aging of the baby boomers and the costs that this imposes on social security and health care, there is less discussion of the actual health of older Americans. To bring to light the data being compiled by federal agencies on the health and well-being of the elderly, COSSA sponsored a Congressional Briefing on Capitol Hill on April 27 entitled, *Living Longer, Staying Well: Promoting Good Health for Older Americans*.

COSSA invited three distinguished scientists to discuss the trends outlined in the report, *Older Americans 2000: Key Indicators of Well-Being* (which can be viewed at www.agingstats.gov), by the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics (see *Update*, September 25, 2000), and their own research on the health of the elderly.

The Social Conditions of Disease

The central plank of American public health policy is living longer and staying well, remarked **Mark D. Hayward**, Director of the Population Institute and Professor of Sociology and Demography at the Pennsylvania State University. Some groups, however, have a harder time living longer and staying well than others. Hayward spoke on "Truncated Lives and Worse Health: The Plight of African Americans and the Economically Disadvantaged."

Demographers, Hayward explained, gauge population health in several basic ways, including measuring mortality (life expectancy), morbidity

(incidence of disease), and healthy life expectancy (the number of years lived without a major health problem). Using data from various sources, such as the Census, the National Health Interview Survey, the Health and Retirement Survey, and death certificates, Hayward examined the differences among various indicators between racial and ethnic groups.

One question Hayward addressed was whether groups with higher life expectancies also enjoy more years of good health, or whether they spend their extended years struggling with disability. Hayward found that on average African Americans experience both a truncated life and more years spent with a chronic disabling condition compared to white and Asian Americans, and that longer life is associated with more years in good health for Asian Americans.

Hayward also focused on chronic disease in different populations. He found that, by middle age, blacks are more likely to be afflicted than whites by hypertension, diabetes, and stroke.

But what is behind these disparities between race and ethnic groups? "The basic public health silver bullets of smoking, exercise, alcohol consumption, and BMI [body mass index] are not responsible," declared Hayward. "Instead it is education. It is income. It is wealth. It is the kind of jobs that blacks and whites work in." In short, Hayward's research found that race disparity in health is largely rooted in the fundamental social conditions that mark disease (especially education levels) rather than behavioral differences.

The Policies That Bind

Living longer and staying well, of course, is also affected by policy. **Toni P. Miles**, Professor in the Department of Family Practice at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio, Texas, spoke on "Chronic Disease and the Policies That Bind."

"What does it take to stay well?" Miles asked. "It takes some behaviors on your part, but it also takes consistent access to a care provider." However, there are instabilities in the health care system, Miles observed, that undermine our ability to look after the growing elderly population, many of whom live with chronic disease.

“Without [my eye glasses] . . . well, you wouldn’t want me driving. . . But with these things, I can make a contribution to society, contribute to the tax base, and stay off the welfare rolls.” Access to health care enables people to be responsible for themselves, Miles asserted. But in Texas last year, 500,000 people were left without care because their Medicare HMO went out of business.

Payment policies can similarly leave people in need of care. If you are “Medicare only,” or without supplemental health insurance, you may be denied access, Miles continued. “It’s not an issue of the providers being greedy, for the most part . . . It’s a matter of keeping [their] office afloat.”

Another problem surrounds medical schools, Miles observed. Medical schools, the only places we have that produce doctors, are having to divorce themselves from the hospitals where they do their training because of financing issues, she said.

Unfortunately, Miles commented, there is very little data on the consequences of these realities. For instance, having to change providers every year or two diminishes the quality of care for people with chronic disease, but we lack data on the experience of changing providers.

Another area where we lack data is in clinical trials, Miles observed. Many groups are excluded from these trials, for a variety of reasons. For instance, pharmaceutical companies try to recruit samples of people who have only the disease of interest, but many older people have more than one disease and are hence excluded from the trial. So elderly people with chronic diseases, some of whom will take the medication when it comes to market, are inadequately represented in these trials, Miles suggested.

Health and Wealth

The findings of the first two speakers suggested a connection between health and wealth. In the final presentation, **Frank P. Stafford**, Director of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, spoke on “Building Wealth Over the Life Course: Who Does, Who Doesn’t, and Why?”

In today’s economy, Stafford remarked, the rate of savings is low; however, overall wealth is growing. The factors in this growth, he posited,

include the occupational migration of women into new industries and jobs and the growth of information technology.

This increase in wealth, though, is not equally distributed – since the early to mid-1980s, average wealth in the U.S. has grown, but median wealth has grown only modestly. One reason is that the rising tide in the value of equities did not lift all ships – African Americans are far less likely to hold equities (or even a bank account), and therefore were left out of the prosperity, Stafford observed.

The effects of these disparities become crucial during retirement years, he said, when public pensions like Social Security are critical. “Some people are just not going to be able to organize their lives to have adequate resources when they retire,” Stafford said.

However, he pointed out, some have argued that public pensions have contributed to the demise of private saving, particularly among poor people. Stafford suggested this view is erroneous, pointing to Sweden, which does not have this lack of retirement wealth in the bottom quartile of its population.

There is wide dispersion in wealth holding even across families at similar points in the life course, Stafford concluded. Many factors contribute to this dispersion. The social science challenge, he said, is to improve our understanding of the fundamentals. “From this understanding others may then be able to shape policy, sustaining a blend of public and private pensions. The ideal policy will provide incentives for saving and at the same time provide sufficient resources to avert poverty among all older American families.”

A transcript of the proceedings will be available in early July. Please email coffa@coffa.org to request a copy.

(RESOLUTION, from page 1)

guidelines for funding the National Science Foundation (NSF), NASA, and Energy science. The conference report did not include the \$1.44 billion the Senate version provided to boost spending for all these agencies and allow a 15 percent increase for NSF in FY 2002, as Senators Christopher Bond (R-

MO) and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) sought (see *Update*, April 9, 2001). The final version of the resolution raises spending for the function by \$600 million over last year.

As the budget process moves into the appropriations phase, remember that the budget resolution provides only guidelines for the actual spending decisions that Congress must now make. The next crucial step is the allocation of the available dollars by the appropriations committees to their 13 subcommittees. In the subcommittees, new pressures build for the science agencies as they compete with funding for veterans, housing, and environmental programs in the case of NSF, and labor and education programs in the case of the National Institutes of Health. In addition, the Administration and many Republicans in Congress have vowed to stick by the budget resolution's overall spending numbers, suggesting that difficulties and tough choices lie ahead.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NSF Seeks New Leader of Social and Economic Sciences Division

With the resignation of William Butz, the National Science Foundation (NSF) is seeking a new director of the Social and Economic Sciences Division of the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate. Butz, who has led the Division since 1995, is leaving this summer to join the International Management and Communications Corporation, where he will lead a consulting group interested in building capabilities in underdeveloped and developing countries to accurately measure poverty.

The NSF position can be filled by a Senior Executive Service federal career person or by an individual interested in an Intergovernmental Personnel Act assignment. The deadline for receipt of applications is June 22, 2001. For further information go to: www.nsf.gov/home/menus/jobs.htm.

OERI Director Announced

The President nominated Russ Whitehurst to be Assistant Secretary of Education for Educational Research and Improvement. Whitehurst currently

serves as the lead professor and Chair of the Department of Psychology at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. He received his Ph.D. in Child Psychology from the University of Illinois, where he also earned a Master's in Clinical Psychology. Secretary of Education Rod Paige said President Bush's decision "reflects his emphasis on science-based teaching methods and early reading."

OJJDP Administrator Announced

The President announced his intention to nominate J. Robert Flores to be Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Flores is currently Vice President and Senior Counsel for the National Law Center for Children and Families as well as Legal Counsel to Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. He served in the Department of Justice from 1989 to 1997 in the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section of the Criminal Division. Flores is a graduate of Boston University Law School.

Seminar on the Funding Opportunity in Survey Research

A consortium of Federal statistical agencies, collaborating with the NSF Methodology, Measurement, and Statistics Program, and supported by the Office of Management and Budget Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology, recently established the Funding Opportunity in Survey Research. The program funds peer-reviewed investigator-initiated projects in basic survey research of potential value to Federal agencies. A June 11 seminar will feature reports by the principal investigators of the four currently-funded research projects. The present status and future prospects of the program will also be discussed.

The seminar is free and open to the public. Please RSVP to Barbara Hetzler by May 29 at bhetzler@cdc.gov or 301/458-4267. The seminar will be held at the BLS Conference and Training Center, Rooms 1, 2, and 3 in the Postal Square Building, 2 Massachusetts Ave., NE, Washington DC. To gain entrance to BLS either e-mail name, affiliation, and name of meeting to Wss_seminar@bls.gov by noon on June 10 or call Karen Jackson at 202/691-7524 by June 9. Photo ID is required.