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PRESIDENT RELEASES FY 2001 BUDGET PROPOSAL: SCIENCE GETS BIG BOOST

February 7, 2000, Number 3

President Clinton released the FY 2001 proposed budget on February 7th. As promised, it contained what Presidential Science Adviser Neal Lane called “a historic science and technology budget.” What the administration has called The 21st Century Research Fund will increase by \$2.9 billion over the FY 2000 level. The Fund is an attempt to present science and technology budgets as one package.

As noted in his speech at Cal Tech, the proposed budget for the National Science Foundation (NSF) provides the largest dollar increase in its history. The \$675 million, or 17 percent boost would bring NSF funding to \$4.6 billion. Almost one-half the increase, \$320 million, would go to enhance support for core programs, rather than for new Foundation wide initiatives. NSF’s Research and Related Activities account would increase by almost 20 percent to \$3.54 billion. The Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE) would share in this enhancement with a potential increase of close 20 percent to a total of \$175 million. NSF has also made the cognitive, psychological, and linguistic sciences a special emphasis area in the proposed budget. NSF Director Rita Colwell called her proposed largesse, “a 21st Century budget for 21st Century science and engineering.”

The **National Institutes of Health** would receive a \$1 billion increase to almost \$19 billion. Although only a 5.6 percent increase, it is widely expected that the Congress will keep NIH on the “doubling track” and provide a much larger increase than the President’s proposal. NIH Acting Director Ruth Kirschstein noted that NIH’s priorities for FY 2001 include increased attention to health disparities research. An NIH working group, headed by NIH Acting Deputy Director Yvonne Maddox and National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony Fauci, has been established to examine this topic. The NIH budget also includes \$20 million to establish a new Center for Research on Minority Health. Members of Congress have been pushing to create such a center, rather than the current Office of Minority Health in the Office of the Director.

The President’s budget requested a total of \$3.5 billion for the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, a \$201 million or 6 percent increase over FY 2000. If Congressionally approved, the FY 2001 budget for the **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality** would provide a program level of \$250 million, a \$46 million or 22.6 percent increase over FY 2000.

The **Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)** received \$199 million for research, development, and dissemination activities — \$30 million more than its FY 2000 level. The

increase includes funds to double OERI's commitment for the Interagency Education Research Initiative (IERI) which would increase to \$20 million from \$10 million. The **National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)** received a sizeable 24 percent increase to \$84 million from \$68 million in the current year.

The **National Institute of Justice (NIJ)** received an increase in its base funding to \$49 million from its current funding of \$43.4 million. NIJ's overall funding, when including budget transfers, will likely be four times its base funding. The **Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)** received a nearly 30 percent increase — to \$33 million from \$25.5 million in FY 2000.

The **Census Bureau's** funding for the decennial census was reduced, as is common in the year that it is conducted since most of the preparation work is performed in the years leading up to the census. For FY 2001, the Bureau received \$421 million to complete the head count and to compile and publish the data. Additionally, the president's request included \$25 million for continued development and implementation of the American Community Survey (See related story, page X).

For **Agriculture and Rural Development** spending, the President has proposed increasing the National Research Initiative Competitive Grants program to \$150 million from its current \$119.3 million. The administration also announced that it intends to continue spending for the Initiative for Future Food and Agriculture Systems and the Fund for Rural America. Unlike the past few years, the administration is not proposing to cut Hatch Act funds, but to keep it level funded at \$181 million.

COSSA will fully report on the proposed budgets of all federal agencies affecting social and behavioral science research in its annual special issue of UPDATE. Look for it the week of March 6.

CENSUS LONG FORM BRIEFING; PANELISTS SUPPORT ACS

February 7, 2000, Number 3

The Census 2000 Initiative held a February 2nd briefing to discuss the importance of data collected through the so-called "long-form" in the decennial census. Speakers representing various data user groups noted the importance of the vital demographic information that allows local, State, and federal officials to craft public policy and distribute funds. The information gleaned from the long-form, according to one of the speakers, allows many data users groups to answer many questions about "who we are," "where we've come from," and "where we're going as a nation"

The long-form is a census questionnaire delivered to a small segment of the population — approximately 1 out of 6 households receive the long-form. The questionnaire contains 52 questions on 33 different topics. The 33 topics, according to the Census 2000 Initiative, are all included because federal law mandates its inclusion in the decennial census, the legal system requires that the data be collected, or federal law requires it for program implementation and the decennial census is the only or historic source for the information.

The long form asks questions on many different topics, including income, marital status, language spoken at home, place of work and journey to work. It also goes into great detail on housing conditions,

including number of bedrooms, house heating fuel, kitchen and plumbing facilities, telephone services, and selected monthly owner costs (utilities and fuels, mortgages, taxes, and insurance).

Jacqueline Byers, of the National Association of Counties, noted that the demographic data collected through the census is important for county officials because it allows them to determine land-use planning and the proper allocation of space for growth, as well as the infrastructure needs of different communities. David Crowe, from the National Association of Home Builders and representing the Housing Statistics Users Group, noted that the long-form allows communities and home builders to estimate housing demand and housing conditions throughout local communities. Deborah Weinstein, of the Children's Defense Fund, said, "The long-form is important if you care about the health and well-being of our nation's children." She noted that long-form data provide information on school conditions and if they are equipped to handle handicapped children and children who speak English as a second language. Additionally, the data allow officials to determine parents' work patterns, day care needs, demand for after school programs, and what type of racial disparities exist and where.

AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

Weinstein, and the other speakers, offered support for the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), and called on the data users community for their backing of the survey. The ACS is a monthly household survey that when fully operational will provide more timely and up-to-date information on America's communities than the current long form. It will provide information similar to that gathered by the long form, but unlike the long form which updates this data only every ten years the ACS data will be updated every year.

In 1999, the ACS was conducted in 31 comparison sites which will give a good tract-by-tract comparison between the 1999-2001 ACS cumulated estimates and the Census 2000 long form estimates. The comparison process will allow the Bureau to determine the differences between the ACS and the long form. In 2000-2001, the Bureau will conduct the Census 2000 Supplementary Survey of 700,000 household units using methods similar to the ACS to determine whether the ACS is a fair replacement for the decennial long form. The results of this survey will be available in July 2001. By 2003, the Bureau, with Congressional approval and funding, plans to introduce the ACS in every county throughout the country with an annual sample of three million housing units. Once its is up and running, the ACS will sample 250,000 households per month for an annual sample of 3 million households. The Bureau expects to replace the long form with the ACS by the 2010 decennial census.

TO ANSWER OR NOT TO ANSWER? THAT IS THE CONTROVERSY

April 3, 2000, Number 6

The Census Bureau recently found itself in the middle of a political firefight that could seriously undermine the chances of an accurate and successful decennial census. The controversy revolves around the long form which contains 52 questions regarding, among other things, personal income, housing costs and characteristics, and mental and physical disabilities. Census Bureau officials have noted that this long form is shorter than the one used in 1990 and that all the questions were subject to congressional approval. In recent days, however, several Republican leaders have criticized the long form as being

intrusive, and even irrelevant. This is occurring despite Congress' opportunity two years ago to make changes to the long form.

Census Bureau Director Kenneth Prewitt noted that Republicans' calls to not fill out the long form is tantamount to breaking the law. Federal law requires that individuals fill out and return their census forms — the penalty for not doing so is a \$100 fine. Bureau officials are concerned that the criticism may compromise the data used by Federal and local governments when crafting policies. The initial response rate suggests that the criticism may have already stunted mail response for the long form.

Among those in the fray is the presumptive GOP presidential nominee George W. Bush who questioned whether he would fill out the long form if he received it in the mail. Bush said: "If they're concerned about the government intruding into their personal lives, they ought to think about it. We want as accurate a count as possible, but I can understand why people don't want to give over that information to the government. If I have the long form, I'm not sure I would do it either." Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-MS) also criticized some of the questions in the form and has advised people to only fill out those questions they felt comfortable answering. Senator Chuck Hagel (R-NE) has indicated that he will offer a bill that would make it voluntary to fill out all questions except those used for congressional reapportionment.

Data from both the long form and the short form are used by the Federal government to reapportion the House of Representatives, and to distribute nearly \$200 billion in government funds. The long form, which is sent to only one in six households, contains only questions that are either required by law or mandated by Federal court rulings. Long form data are also used by Federal agencies and local governments for many different functions, including to: assess public assistance needs of local communities, develop and fund programs for the disabled and elderly, determine areas subject to ground water contamination or water borne disease, determine areas eligible for urban development programs, and determine eligible recipients for Medicaid and Medicare funds. Additionally, the data captured by the long form are used by Federal statistical agencies to determine several key economic indicators, like the consumer price index and poverty rates.

Democratic leaders and Bureau officials have responded by assuring the public that all answers to census questionnaires are confidential. There is concern among Census Bureau officials, however, that the on-going Republican complaints about the long form have already negatively impacted peoples' willingness to fill out and return their long form. Preliminary numbers show that the response rate for the long form is 10 percent less than the corresponding rate for the short form. The response rate for the long form, however, is historically less than that for the short form. For instance, the response rate for the long form was 4.5 percentage points less than the short form in the 1990 census.

President Clinton echoed the Bureau's calls about the importance of completely filling out and returning census forms. He said: "Those who suggest that filling out your census form isn't essential are plainly wrong. An inaccurate picture distorts our understanding of a community's needs, denies people their fair share of resources and diminishes the quality of life not only for them, but for all of us."

PREWITT RELATES IMPORTANCE OF DATA AND LONG FORM REPLACEMENT

April 17, 2000, Number 7

Census Bureau Director Kenneth Prewitt has been busy recently. Aside from overseeing the Nation's "largest peace time mobilization," he appeared on April 5 before an oversight hearing of the House Census Subcommittee. The next day he appeared before the House Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations Subcommittee to defend his agency's Fiscal Year (FY) 2001 budget request. As expected, both hearings touched on the recent troubles regarding the long form. Additionally, members of both committees showed interest in the data products of the Census and the American Community Survey, the apparent replacement to the long form in the 2010 Census.

Appearing before Chairman Dan Miller (R-FL) and the House Census Subcommittee, the Census Bureau Director noted that operational aspects of the census were going well and that he was "cautiously optimistic" that the Bureau would achieve the targeted 61 percent response rate upon which it based its budget and staffing numbers. (On April 11, the Census Bureau reported that the national response rate had reached 62 percent.)

While optimistic about the national response rate, Prewitt expressed concern with the long form response rate which is lagging the short form's by 12 percent. A disparity is expected, said Prewitt, but this gap is much more than that of the 1990 census (roughly 4.5 percent, according to a National Academy of Sciences' report). Prewitt told the Subcommittee that the recent comments regarding the intrusiveness of the long form have had a negative impact. Representative Danny Davis (D-IL) concurred with Prewitt and noted that long form nonresponse has occurred because of the "power of suggestion" of public officials who have spoken strongly against its intrusiveness (See *UPDATE*, April 3, 2000, Number 6).

Chairman Miller and Representative Paul Ryan (R-WI) indicated their beliefs that long form nonresponse was due in large part because of legitimate privacy concerns. Miller put a lot of the blame on the Internet and computer-based society. He said that while both computer technology and the Internet "have brought tremendous conveniences to our lives , grown our economy . . . they each have also brought new privacy concerns."

Regardless of the reasons for the lowered long form response, Prewitt said that if the gap is not closed data products will be compromised. He added that high item nonresponse — answering certain questions on the long form and not others — "will greatly affect the Nation for 10 years." He expressed concern that high item nonresponse would compromise the reliability and overall quality of the data produced through the long form. The Bureau, he said, would not release data that fall below its threshold level of quality. The Consumer Price Index (CPI), Social Security payments, Federal Title I education money for disadvantaged students, and Head Start funds are all partly dependent on data gleaned from the long form. All of these functions and more, said Prewitt, would be impacted by a poor response rate. "Data," Prewitt said, "is the infrastructure of our society."

During the hearing, Miller stated that the American Community Survey (ACS) would replace the long-form by the 2010 Census. The ACS is a monthly survey of 250,000 households currently in development in 31 sites across the Nation (See *UPDATE*, February 7, 2000, Number 3). When nationally implemented in 2003, said Prewitt, the ACS will make the next census "simpler" and make "it possible to provide detailed socioeconomic and housing data throughout the decade." The ACS is the "cornerstone

of our effort to keep pace with ever- increasing demands for timely and relevant data,” said Prewitt. Even though the questions on the ACS are largely the same as those on the long form, Prewitt indicated that the Bureau would work with local government officials to demonstrate the value of the information.

During the Commerce, Justice, State (CJS) Appropriations Subcommittee hearing, Prewitt noted that the Congress should not go down the “road of the ACS” if it is not prepared to continuously pay for the survey. Prewitt told CJS Subcommittee Chair Harold Rogers (R-KY) and Subcommittee members that the ACS would be a large and costly survey, but that he is confident the Bureau would be able to run it successfully. The FY 2001 request includes \$25 million for the ACS. Although the Bureau has not officially stated an overall cost for the yearly ACS, the total would be much more than the current request.

HOUSE CJS APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE APPROVES FUNDING MEASURE; SLASHES NIJ FUNDING

June 12, 2000, Number 11

By a voice vote late in the evening of June 6, the House Commerce, Justice, State, and the Judiciary Appropriations Subcommittee approved its Fiscal Year (FY) 2001 funding measure. The bill, which will next go the full Appropriations Committee, provided a total of \$34.9 billion for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, State, and the Judiciary, \$2.7 billion less than the President’s request and \$2.8 billion less than the FY 2000 level.

The panel provided the Census Bureau \$392.9 million to complete the 2000 Decennial Census — over \$4 billion less than the current year funding. However, funding is always much less the fiscal year after the census is conducted since most of the preparations have already been performed. The amount approved by the Committee reflects the transition from actually collecting the data to reporting and disseminating the data.

The Committee was not as generous with the Department of Justice’s research and evaluation platform. The base budget for the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) was slashed to \$41.4 million from \$43.4 million in FY 2000. The administration had requested \$49.2 million. This was the second year in a row that the House Subcommittee has cut NIJ’s funding. In more bad news for the NIJ and criminal justice researchers, the Committee did not support the administration’s proposal for a one percent research and program evaluation set-aside. This would have provided as much as \$40 million for the NIJ to support criminal justice research and to conduct evaluations of crime fighting initiatives at the national, State, and local levels. NIJ, though, will still receive considerable funding from other programs.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) received the same amount that it did in FY 2000: \$25.5 million, much less than the request of \$33.2 million. As it did for the BJS, the Committee level-funded the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention at last year’s level of \$287 million — \$2 million less than the request of \$289 million.

The Committee also provided \$213.8 million for the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs at the State Department, a slight increase over last year's level of \$204.2 million but less than the \$225 million request.

The full House Appropriations Committee is scheduled to consider the Subcommittee-approved bill in a mark-up session on Tuesday, June 13.

PROPOSED CENSUS RULE GIVES BUREAU DIRECTOR FINAL AUTHORITY OVER DATA RELEASE; PUBLIC COMMENTS WELCOMED

June 26, 2000, Number 12

Although William Daley left the Department of Commerce to head Vice President Al Gore's presidential campaign, one of his last actions could have a significant impact on the operations of the Census Bureau. On June 20, the Commerce Department issued a proposed rule that would give the Director of the Census Bureau the final decision over whether or not to release data adjusted through scientific statistical methods (also known as sampling). The proposed rule will take effect after a 45 day comment period. It is available in the June 20 issue of the *Federal Register*: www.access.gpo.gov/su_docs/fedreg/a000620c.html. Comments on the proposed rule are due by August 4, 2000 and should be sent to John H. Thompson, Associate Director for Decennial Census, Bureau of the Census, Suitland Federal Center, Suitland and Silver Hill Roads, Building 2, Room 3586, Suitland, Maryland 20233.

Under the proposed rule, the Secretary of Commerce would delegate the authority to determine the "methodology to be used in calculating the tabulations of population reported to States and localities" to the Bureau director. In other words, the director of the Census Bureau would make the final decision over whether or not to release population figures adjusted through sampling or figures obtained solely through the Bureau's direct head count.

To avoid any appearance of impropriety or political manipulation, the Bureau director would make the decision prior to the statutory deadline for transmitting the population data tabulations. For instance, the Director would make the decision before the April 1, 2001 deadline for transmission of population figures to the States for the purpose of redistricting. In this case, the Director would not have seen how the numbers would impact the drawing of congressional lines or the distribution of Federal funds. The decision to release adjusted or unadjusted numbers would be based solely on operational and methodological bases — whether the use of sampling is possible, whether it will increase the accuracy of the census, and whether sampling is compatible with statutory and resource constraints.

The Bureau Director would make his decision in consultation with an "Executive Steering Committee for A.C.E. [Accuracy and Coverage Evaluation] Policy" which would be composed of a number of senior career professionals including: the Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer; Principal Associate Director and Chief Financial Officer; Principal Associate Director for Programs; Chief of the Planning, Research, and Evaluation Division; Chief of the Decennial Statistical Studies Division; Chief of the Population Division; Senior Mathematical Statistician; and the Associate Director for Decennial Census, who would serve as the Committee's chair.

The proposed rule was crafted after the Census Bureau director transmitted to the Commerce Secretary a "Statement on the Feasibility of Using Statistical Methods to Improve the Accuracy of Census 2000." In that document, the Bureau director, Kenneth Prewitt, noted that statistically adjusted numbers would be more accurate than the population figures derived solely from a traditional head count. The statement also indicated that the production of population figures for all non-apportionment purposes could be produced to meet the statutory April 2001 deadline.

Proposal Draws Criticism at House Hearing

As noted in the *Federal Register* announcement, the rule was designed to remove the census and the decision to release sampled or non-sampled numbers out of partisan politics. To insulate the decision from partisan politics, the rule would not allow the Census Bureau Director's decision to be overturned by the Secretary of Commerce. The announcement reads: "Review of the Director's decision by the Secretary of Commerce would at a minimum create the appearance that considerations other than those relating to statistical science were being taken into account, and could well allow the decision to be based on such irrelevant considerations. There is absolutely no role for non-scientific considerations in this process."

Despite the intentions to remove the census and the sampling decision from partisan politics, the proposed rule was the subject of a rancorous hearing of the House Subcommittee on the Census. The June 22 hearing was originally scheduled as an oversight session, but quickly disintegrated into a debate about the merits, and the legality, of the proposed rule. Subcommittee Chair Representative Dan Miller (R-FL) criticized the rule and suggested that the decision of the Commerce Secretary to divest his authority to the Bureau Director was illegal. He called the rule "a half-hearted attempt to remove politics from the Census." The Chairman suggested, as did Representative Tom Davis (R-VA), that the Census Bureau Director, as a political appointee, would fall in lock-step with the administration and support the release of statistically-adjusted numbers.

Prewitt noted that he was not interested in politics but in producing the most accurate census. He noted that the statistically-adjusted or sampled numbers would undoubtedly be more accurate than figures obtained from the direct head count. Miller proceeded to ask Prewitt whether he had ever contributed to a political campaign. Prewitt noted that the professionals at the Census Bureau do not follow the political races occurring throughout the country or the political composition of State legislatures and wholly dismissed the notion that Bureau officials would manipulate numbers to impact State and Federal elections.

PRESIDENT NOMINATES EX-CONGRESSMAN AS NEW COMMERCE HEAD

July 10, 2000, Number 13

President Clinton has nominated Norman Mineta, former Democratic Member of Congress representing the San Jose area of California, to replace William Daley as the new Secretary of Commerce. If confirmed, Mineta would be the first Asian Pacific American to serve in a cabinet position. Mineta currently works for Lockheed Martin Corporation.

As a Member of Congress Mineta was quite active during consideration of the 1990 Census. He successfully advocated for increasing attention to the Asian/Pacific Islander racial category.

The nomination will be the subject of a Senate Commerce, Science, and Technology Committee confirmation hearing likely to occur in the next few weeks. Assuming the nomination makes it through the Commerce Committee, it will go before the full Senate for a final vote.

SENATE COMMITTEE PASSES CJS FUNDING BILL

July 24, 2000, Number 14

The Senate Appropriations Committee approved by a 28-0 margin the Fiscal Year (FY) 2001 funding bill for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies (CJS). The Senate Committee, however, has not yet reported the bill so the details for agency funding levels are unclear. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-MS) has publicly noted his desire to pass the FY 2001 CJS bill before Congress convenes for its August recess. In order to do that, the Senate Appropriations Committee will have to act during the week of July 24.

According to Office of Justice Programs' officials, the bill would provide the **Justice Assistance Account**, which contains the base budgets for the **National Institute of Justice (NIJ)** and the **Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)**, \$426 million, which is \$119 million more than the administration's request. The Committee provided NIJ a \$2.6 million increase to \$46 million from its FY 2000 base level of \$43.4 million. This is equal to NIJ's funding level in FY 1999. The House-passed version of the funding measure cut NIJ's base to \$42.4 million. In addition to its base funding, NIJ will receive transfers of funds from Crime Act offices and block grant programs for research and evaluation. These details, however, are not yet known. Like the House, the Senate does not provide the one-percent research and program evaluation set-aside for the NIJ (See *UPDATE*, March 6, Number 4).

For the BJS, the Committee provided a \$1.8 million increase to \$27.3 million from its FY 2000 level of \$25.5 million.

The committee provided the **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)** \$279.7 million, less than the \$289 million request.

The **Bureau of the Census** received \$693.6 million, nearly \$30 million more than the House approved, but still short of the \$719 million request.

For the **Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs** at the State Department, the Committee provided \$225 million, equal to the administration's request. However, this amount includes \$1.8 million for the North/South Center, previously outside this account and therefore not included in this total.

CENSUS SUBCOMMITTEE HOLDS HEARING ON ACS; RURAL ISSUES KEY CONCERN

August 7, 2000, Number 15

House Census Subcommittee Chair Dan Miller (R-FL) convened a July 20 hearing to discuss whether the American Community Survey (ACS) should be used as a replacement for the decennial census long form questionnaire. Rural issues proved an important part of the discussion as Miller and several witnesses raised issues of importance to rural communities and rural officials.

During his opening statement, the Chair indicated the need to replace the long form, particularly after the privacy concerns raised in the on-going 2000 Census (See *UPDATE*, April 17, Number 7). He said, however, that many questions would first have to be addressed before the ACS officially replaces the long form. It would be a disservice to the American people, continued Miller, if Congress reflexively approved the ACS without answering several questions: Is the ACS cost efficient?; Should the ACS be mandatory or voluntary?; ***Are rural areas getting quality and timely data?*** (emphasis added); Will it be implemented in an accurate, efficient, and consistent manner?; and Does the ACS address the privacy concerns of the American people? The hearing was the first of what will likely be a series of hearings to address the future of the ACS.

Representative Jo Ann Emerson (R-MO), Co-Chair of the Congressional Rural Caucus, and Chuck Fluharty, Director of the Rural Policy Research Institute, addressed the impact of the ACS on rural America. Both noted that rural communities currently suffer from a data bias. Emerson and Fluharty both suggested that rural communities, defined as areas of less than 50,000 people, lack the necessary public “policy decision support tools” to make effective policy decisions.

The lack of data describing demographic, economic, societal, and other changes in these areas is particularly important, said Fluharty, given the recent trend toward devolution of policy decisions. Local areas do not have the resources — manpower or money — to undertake research and gather data on their communities. Therefore, policies are often based on inappropriate data.

Emerson and Fluharty also noted that because rural America is experiencing rapid change — economically and demographically — data gathered by the decennial census at the beginning of the decade is often out-of-date as the decade proceeds. Both noted that the ACS would provide much more timely and relevant information. Fluharty indicated that the more timely information provided by the ACS would “ensure that more timely rural data would be available to equitably allocate and distribute federal and state funds.”

New Commerce Secretary Supports ACS

Five days into his tenure as the newly confirmed Secretary of Commerce, Norman Mineta appeared before the 2000 Census Advisory Committee to discuss the American Community Survey (ACS). During his remarks, Mineta noted the great importance of statistical data collected by the Census Bureau and the Federal government. He indicated, however, that if the picture of our country is based on blurred information, the policies resulting from that flawed data would be bad. As the planned replacement for the decennial census long form questionnaire, the ACS, he said, would provide more timely and accurate information. The ACS, he said, would also be less onerous for respondents to complete than the long form. Mineta concluded his remarks by noting that the ACS is a “great leap forward in census taking.”

The ACS is currently being tested in 31 sites and the Census Bureau plans to have the monthly household survey of 250,000 fully operational by 2003. This, however, is dependent on Congress signing off on the survey and providing the necessary and appropriate funding.

APPROPRIATIONS PROCESS IN CHAOS AS NEW FISCAL YEAR LOOMS

September 25, 2000, Number 17

With ten days to go before the start of Fiscal Year 2001, only two of the thirteen spending bills have been enacted into law. The other eleven are in various states of completion as the Republican led Congress and the Democratic White House maneuver to figure out ways to complete the process to each entity's maximum political advantage. So far, the word "compromise" is still not in either side's vocabulary and Congress will need to enact a Continuing Resolution to keep the government in operation past October 1.

The GOP leadership thought their solution to the problem was to "bundle" spending bills two at a time; sort of a Noah's ark approach. The idea was to take a bill that had come through a House-Senate conference and package it with a controversial bill that had not even been considered by the full Senate and send them on to the President. Congress' first attempt, putting the Legislative Branch funding bill that pays for congressional activities, with the Treasury-Postal Service bill, came to a crashing defeat on the Senate floor on September 19.

The VA, HUD, Independent Agencies bill, which includes funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF) emerged from the Senate appropriations committee on September 13 (see below). It is not scheduled to go to the Senate floor for debate and amendment, but is one of those bills the congressional leadership is looking to attach to another bill. For most of this week, the Transportation bill was the likely candidate. This has now become unclear.

The Commerce, Justice, State (CJS) spending bill is also not currently scheduled for Senate floor action. It too is now a candidate to be bundled with the Transportation bill or the Energy and Water bill. Among its many programs, the CJS bill funds the Census Bureau, National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics, and the educational and cultural exchange programs of the State Department.

The huge Labor, Health and Human Services, Education appropriation emerged from a House-Senate conference at the end of July. However, the conference report has not been made public as the leadership understands they have brought forth a bill the White House will not accept. On September 20, preliminary discussions began to try and negotiate a "signable" bill.

The Agriculture and Rural Development funding bill remains tied up over the Republican leadership's attempt to deny a bipartisan coalition's desire to lift sanctions against sending food and medicine to Cuba. The Interior bill, which funds the National Endowment for Humanities and the National Park Service could move on to the President early in the week of September 25.

AMERICA GETTING OLDER: REPORT CITES NEED FOR BETTER DATA

September 25, 2000, Number 17

A new interagency report, *Older Americans 2000: Key Indicators of Well-Being*, provides a picture of the health and well-being of Americans age 65 or older. The report is the first chart book in what will be a continuing series prepared by the Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics, a coalition of nine Federal agencies. A number of Federal agencies provided data on various aspects of the challenges facing this growing segment of our population.

The publication provides 31 key indicators selected to portray aspects of the lives of older Americans and their families. These indicators are categorized into five subject areas: population, economics, health status, health risks and behaviors, and health care.

Population — The report notes that the “demographics of aging continue to change dramatically.” Today, there are an estimated 35 million persons age 65 or older in the United States, accounting for almost 13 percent of the total population. This population is expected to double over the next 30 years to 70 million by the year 2030. Furthermore, over the next 50 years, the population age 85 and older is expected to grow faster than any other age group.

Economics — The report explains that in general the economic status of older people has “improved markedly over the past few decades.” However, it also finds that major disparities exist, with older blacks and older women reporting fewer financial resources. Social Security accounts for nearly 80 percent of income for people in the lowest two-fifths of the income spectrum.

Health Status — An overwhelming majority of older Americans rate their health as good or excellent. However, chronic disease, memory impairment, and depressive symptoms affect large numbers of older people, and the risk of such problems often increase with age.

Health Risks and Behaviors — Emphasizing that social and behavioral aspects of life for older Americans can make a difference in health and well-being, the report highlights that most older people report being socially active, which may contribute to their emotional and physical health.

Health Care – There are large differences in health expenditures and use of services between persons ages 65 to 69 and persons age 85 or older. These disparities are closely associated with age and disability status.

While the report generally addresses the U.S. population age 65 and older, because life expectancy is increasing and larger numbers of people will be entering older age cohorts, future reports will aim to include information on the populations ages 85 to 94 and 95 and older.

Despite the existing data available, the “Older American” report emphasizes that there are still areas where “scant data exist.” These areas include:

1) More Extensive Age-Reporting Categories

2) Information on Older Minority Americans — There is a lack of basic data about aging minority populations, largely due to the small sample sizes of these populations as well as to language barriers that prevent certain racial and ethnic groups from participating in surveys. Given the increasing number of immigrants, more data on nativity and analysis of generational differences in health and well-being is

necessary. The report further stresses that “policy changes and cultural perceptions have brought increasing complexity to the definition and measurement of race and ethnicity.” Explaining that currently only the decennial census has adequate coverage of some of the smallest racial and ethnic groups, the report emphasizes that even those data lack critical information on health and disability essential to adequately study the well-being of older minorities.

3) Measures of Disability — The report stresses that “the concept of disability encompasses many different dimensions of health and functioning, and complex interactions with the environment.” Further, disability has been measured in different ways across surveys and censuses, and this has led to conflicting estimates of the prevalence of disability.

4) Institutional Populations are Not Represented in National Surveys

5) Different Types of Long-term Care Facilities and the Transitions That Occur Between Them

— Current surveys and censuses that include information on older populations rarely distinguish between types of “institutional” residences.

6) National Statistics on Elder Abuse — The need for a national study of elder abuse and neglect is supported by the growing number of older people, increasing public awareness of the problem, new legal requirements for reporting abuse, and advances in questionnaire design.

7) Understanding the Reasons for Improvements in Life Expectancy and Functioning —

“Understanding the underlying reasons for the improvements in longevity and functioning is a critical first step to further advances towards these goals,” emphasizes the report. Accordingly, information is needed to understand the long-term improvements in the health of the older population stemming from better nutrition, increased access to medical care, improvements in the public health infrastructure, changes in lifestyles, better treatment of chronic diseases through new medical procedures and pharmaceuticals, and use of assistive devices and other technology.

8) Better Data to Measure Both Income and Wealth — Highlighting that collecting data on economic well-being is often a difficult task, the report notes that most surveys use only income-based measures. According to the report, this “type of survey methodology does not capture the accumulated wealth (including the value of future pension payments) and assets on which many older persons rely.” New methods should be encouraged in surveying older people on this dimension.

9) The Impact of Transportation Needs on the Quality of Life of Older Americans — “The ability to move freely from place to place, while often taken for granted, is as crucial to the well being of older people as it is to the rest of the population.” Additional data are needed on the number of trips older persons take and the types of transportation they use.

The Interagency Forum on Aging Related Statistics is made up of the following agencies: Administration on Aging; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Bureau of the Census; Health Care Financing Administration; National Center for Health Statistics; Office of Management and Budget; Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services; and Social Security Administration.

Copies of the report may be viewed at: www.agingstats.gov. Single printed copies are available from the National Center for Health Statistics, at 301/458-4636 or by sending an e-mail request to nchsquery@cdc.gov.

CENSUS 2000 UPDATE - TOWARDS RESULTS

October 9, 2000, Number 18

Now that the 2000 census has been administered and the count is over, the task of processing the information is well underway. Some further interviews may be conducted to fill gaps in the data, but the data collection is essentially complete. So, where are the numbers?

The return rates have been calculated and the figures are posted on the Census website (www.census.gov). Despite the concerns of some over the issue of privacy and the long form, the potential problem of numerous non-responses that might have resulted was less significant than expected.

One of the primary purposes of the Census is to count the population for the purpose of apportioning seats in the House of Representatives among the 50 states. The Census Bureau will release the national and state-level population figures that determine apportionment by the end of December. These figures will also provide the first indication of the degree of a potential undercount when compared to population projections.

The more interesting data for researchers should become available in early March, 2001. This block-level data will first go to the states for the purpose of redistricting. A day or two after the states receive this data, it will become available to the public via CD-ROM and the Internet.

The heated issue of the accuracy and legality of using "adjusted data" (based on statistical sampling) has yet to be settled. On September 28, Norman Y. Mineta, Secretary of Commerce, decided to delegate to the Census Bureau the decision on whether to release statistically corrected figures. This "is designed to ensure that politics are not a part of this important decision," he declared. If adjusted data is ruled more accurate, the adjusted data will become available alongside the non-adjusted data in early March.

The issue of race and ethnicity has gained prominent attention this year as respondents may now check more than one box for race. Demographic profiles compiled from the short form should be available on a flow basis between June and September of 2001. A summary file of data by race *and* place should be released by July, 2001.

Data from the long form at the census tract level is scheduled to be released periodically between December 2001 and 2003.

Also of interest to researchers is the Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) files. These contain records of a sample of housing units (with identifiers removed to maintain confidentiality). The Census Bureau will release the one percent sample in 2002 and the five percent sample in 2003. Both will be available on CD-ROM.

APPROPRIATIONS SPUTTER TOWARD COMPLETION***October 23, 2000, Number 19***

Three weeks into Fiscal Year 2001 and eighteen days before the election, President Clinton and the Republican-controlled Congress continue their annual end-of-session battle over spending priorities. With a fourth Continuing Resolution (CR) in place until October 23 to keep the government open, weeks of non-stop negotiations have brought some progress. Ten of the thirteen bills are now completed, including VA-HUD, which includes funding for the National Science Foundation, and the Agriculture and Rural Development spending bill (see below).

Three bills remain undone. The huge Labor- Health and Human Services-Education appropriation remains stalled over the President's education priorities. The Republicans want to give the states and local school districts flexibility over how to spend federal funds; the President wants them targeted to reducing class size, hiring more teachers and modernizing school buildings. The \$2.7 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health is a non-controversial provision of this bill.

The Commerce-State-Justice bill, which includes funding for the Census Bureau, the National Institute of Justice, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, and the State Department's educational and cultural exchange programs, including Fulbright, is mired over immigration measures and an attempt to attach land conservation programs to the legislation. The Foreign Operations appropriation is stuck over the annual battle to bar funding to international organizations that advocate abortion rights.

As both sides seek an end to the gridlock and a chance to close out the 106th Congress, the hope is that adjournment can occur without resort to a fifth CR. Don't bet on it.

CONGRESS APPROVES FUNDING FOR CJS; BILL AWAITS POSSIBLE VETO

November 6, 2000, Number 20

On October 25, Congress approved FY 2001 funding for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, and related agencies. The bill, which includes funding for the Census Bureau and the National Institute of Justice, passed by small margins in both houses.

The President has indicated he will veto the bill as the Republicans' immigration proposal does not meet his approval. The major point of contention concerns GOP disapproval of President Clinton's amnesty proposal for illegal aliens. Despite the likely veto, it is unlikely that the final bill will contain major changes in funding levels given that the disagreement concerns authorizing language.

Census Bureau Shifts Gears

The bill that cleared Congress provided \$733.6 million for the Census Bureau. This huge reduction from \$4.759 billion last year reflects the transition of Census 2000 from data collection to analysis and data dissemination.

Within the Census Bureau, funding for the American Community Survey (ACS) increased to \$21.6 million from \$20 million in FY 2000. The yearly survey, which is designed to provide timely economic, social, and housing data, is expected to replace the long form of the decennial census by 2010. The Bureau plans to implement the ACS in every U.S. county beginning in 2003 (see *Update*, August 7, 2000). Funding for the Bureau of Economic Analysis increased from \$43.8 million to \$48 million.

National Institute of Justice Sees Increase

Although the House and Senate proposed about \$41.5 million and \$46 million, respectively, for the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the conference agreement provides the Institute with \$70 million. This is a large increase over the \$43.4 million allocated last year. The difference includes \$24.5 million for three new earmarks (one of which is an \$8 million appropriation for smart gun technology research and development) and \$5.8 million for three continuation earmarks.

In addition to the \$70 million appropriation, the agreement provides \$42.7 million to other sources to be administered by NIJ. This includes \$20 million (as was provided in previous years) from the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant to assist local units to select, develop, and purchase new law enforcement technologies; \$17.5 million from technology funding in the Community Oriented Policing Services account for safety technologies for safe schools (\$2.5 million more than last year); and \$5.2 million for NIJ research and evaluation on the causes and impact of domestic violence under the Violence Against Women Grants program (the same amount that was allocated last year).

The agreement provides the Bureau of Justice Statistics \$28.8 million, \$1.5 million more than the Senate amount, \$3.3 million more than the House amount, and \$3.3 million more than last year. This figure includes \$2 million to collect tribal criminal justice statistics and \$725,000 for Computer Crime and Cyber-Fraud statistics.

Juvenile Justice programs will receive \$298.6 million. This includes \$279.1 million for Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention programs, \$11 million “to develop, demonstrate and test programs to increase the perception among children and youth that drug use is risky, harmful, or unattractive,” and \$8.5 million for various programs authorized under the Victims of Child Abuse Act.

Education Programs Receive Increase

The Education and Cultural Exchange Programs under the Department of State were allocated \$231.6 million, a substantial increase of \$26.6 million over FY 2000. Of this amount, the Fulbright Program will receive \$114 million. Other programs include Humphrey Fellowships, the Muskie Fellowship Program, the Citizen Exchange Program, the International Visitors Program, and more.

(Continued next page)

COSSA HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING

December 11, 2000, #22

In the midst of post-election turmoil, unprecedented legal challenges, and prolonged political uncertainty, COSSA held its annual meeting on December 3 in Washington, DC. More than 70 representatives of COSSA's members, affiliates, and contributors attended the event.

The speakers discussed engaging and timely topics, including the 2000 elections, the 107th Congress, the issue of human research protection, the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the social sciences, and the 2000 Census.

NSF: Looking Ahead

NSF Director Rita Colwell presented the day's luncheon speech. Referring to the pervasive influence of science and technology, Colwell remarked that although elections bring many changes, "there are some forces that have a life of their own." NSF just received a 14% budget increase, the largest in its history. If the trend continues, NSF will double its budget in about six years (see *Update*, October 23, 2000).

Colwell, however, made the case that "larger investments are needed to repair the erosion that's occurred in the nation's fundamental research enterprise." Although NSF funds about 10,000 new proposals each year, there are some "real gems" in the 20,000 or so proposals that the agency cannot fund. The nation pays a significant price for such lost opportunities, she remarked. "We need to reduce the cost to the nation of *not* pursuing promising ideas and proposals, and the cost of *not* supporting and training the nation's most talented researchers, students, and educators."

Turning to social science specifically, Colwell discussed the new initiative NSF will be funding in the social, behavioral, and economic sciences (the SBE initiative). "There can be no question that the social sciences are an integral part of NSF's vision of research at the frontiers of discovery."

Therefore, each of NSF's special initiatives, she continued, addresses the need for interdisciplinary research that includes social, behavioral, and economic components. These initiatives include the Information Technology Research Initiative, the Biocomplexity in the Environment Initiative, the 21st Century Workforce Initiative, and the Nanoscale Science and Engineering Initiative.

To clarify the themes of the SBE initiative, Colwell described its five "focal points." These are 1) looking more closely at the process of innovation; 2) increasing the benefits of technology through research on learning and cognition; 3) understanding responses and adaptations to technological changes; 4) illuminating the social, economic, and environmental effects of new technologies; and 5) developing improved methodologies throughout the social sciences.

Colwell concluded by urging everyone to continually explain to those outside the scientific community "why fundamental research not only deserves their support, but why it should be at the top of the national agenda."

(Continued next page)

The 2000 Census

Kenneth Prewitt, Director of the Bureau of the Census, offered his observations on and hopes for the 2000 Census. The most important question concerning the Census, declared Prewitt, is the credibility of the data: "Are they believable?"

Politics, Prewitt said, has surrounded the 2000 Census. The issue of whether to use statistically-adjusted figures in an effort to avoid excluding and double-counting people has been a politically-charged issue, with some in Congress proclaiming that such a methodology would open the door to future political tampering (see *Update*, June 26, 2000).

While discrediting the assertion that it is possible to design a methodology to produce a known, desirable outcome, Prewitt said that the accusation is nevertheless pernicious and that it undermines the integrity of the Census. The accusation "is disastrous for national statistics," he argued.

The 1990 Census, Prewitt explained, was associated with the words "failure" and "partisan." In 2000, the Census Bureau has worked hard to point out the achievements of the current Census, emphasizing its operational successes, which include reversing the trend of declining response rates (which helped to bring the 2000 Census five to six percent under budget) and being on schedule to release apportionment figures. We have to come out of this Census with those charges (of failure and partisanship) laid to rest, Prewitt proclaimed.

When the data come out over the next few years and social scientists analyze them and present them to the public, the really important story will be what the data tell us about ourselves as a society, Prewitt concluded.

Human Research Subjects Protection

Improving the system for protecting the subjects of human research is a prominent issue once again, and COSSA invited two speakers to address the subject.

Greg Koski, Director of the newly formed Office of Human Research Protection (within the Department of Health and Human Services [HHS]), briefly described the present system for protecting human subjects, and then described what a new, better system would look like (see *Update*, October 9, 2000). Prior to Koski's speech, Jonathan Knight of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) provided a summary of the current state of human subjects protection.

Most major research arms of the government, Knight explained, currently subscribe to the Common Rule (the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects). Although only publicly-funded research is required to undergo human subjects review, Knight believes the law will increasingly extend to non-publicly-funded research as well.

Recent studies have questioned the performance of IRBs, Knight remarked. For example, a study performed by the General Accounting Office concluded that the functions of IRBs have been impaired because they relied on researchers' self-assurances that they were following the rules. As a result of

such studies, Knight said, there is strong pressure on institutions to require their IRBs to be more exacting and more rigorous in their reviews.

More and more social science researchers are “expressing surprise and concern that their research is now becoming subject to IRB review,” Knight observed. In an informal survey of social science researchers, the AAUP found that respondents’ experiences with IRBs, both as researchers and as members of IRBs, were mostly positive. However, there were some criticisms. These concerned excessive delays, failures of IRBs to follow rules, IRB members’ low level of familiarity with social science, and the structure of the IRB serving to restrain research. The underlying theme, according to Knight, was a significant concern that IRBs are applying a clinical/biomedical research model to social science research — a model that does not fit.

The AAUP has incorporated the experiences and concerns voiced by the social scientists into a draft report which can be found at www.aaup.org/IRBdoc.htm. Comments are welcome and should be received by January 15, 2001.

Describing the present system for protecting human subjects, Greg Koski remarked that it is based in regulation, which leads to confrontation and a focus on compliance. The system also places sole responsibility for protecting human subjects with the IRB, he added.

A new system must be simpler, more uniform, more efficient, and more effective, Koski asserted. The confrontation associated with regulation should be replaced by collaboration between all parties with an interest in protecting human subjects, he explained. Koski further recommended that the IRB be removed from its position between the investigator and the subject in order to “put the interests of the research participant squarely in the middle and have everyone share responsibility for the conduct of the research.”

Specifically, Koski pointed to the trend towards private-sector, voluntary certification of individuals as an example of one component of an effective system for protecting human subjects. Such recognition, he continued, rewards people for their efforts while providing the latitude necessary to allow them to meet their responsibilities. Koski also described the current effort to pull together other agencies outside of HHS that support social science research into a management group, while at the same time recognizing the individual differences in research.

Koski concluded that amidst public demand for increasing research, “the stars are aligned now,” and the opportunity to develop a better system for protecting human subjects is ripe. “If we’re going to do the research, we need to do it right.”

The 2000 Elections

CBS News’ Kathleen Frankovic tried to make some sense of what happened on Election Day and in the following days and weeks. Interpreting CBS survey data, she began with an analysis of the political landscape of the election season.

Looking first at the voters, Frankovic characterized the electorate as ambivalent. Voters generally believed that both major candidates were capable, both were competent, and both had good knowledge of

the issues; most characterized both Gore and Bush as “establishment candidates”; most also believed that both say what the people want to hear. While 45 percent of voters gave credit for the strong economy to Clinton/Gore, a similar portion (47 percent) gave credit to Congress.

The polls revealed that, overall, voters had equal levels of ambivalence, concern, and reservations about each candidate. “It is no surprise, then,” Frankovic reasoned, “that we had such an incredibly close election.”

Voters did, however, see some differences between Bush and Gore. The polls found that those who believed issues to be more important favored Gore, while those who gave more importance to personal qualities favored Bush. Frankovic also found an interesting contradiction — while 52 percent of voters wanted smaller government, most were in favor of expanding social programs, as both candidates proposed.

When the voters’ attitudes were cast as votes on Election Day, the results, of course, were historic. Al Gore narrowly beat George W. Bush in the popular vote and, when *Update* went to press, the electoral vote was still in dispute. The result has been a post-election period of tension, drama, and uncertainty.

107th Congress: Prospects and Problems

The next Congress will be more evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans than at any time since the Eisenhower administration. COSSA invited a staff member from each party to comment on the next Congress and how it may affect the social sciences. David Goldston, from the Office of Representative Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY), and Mark Harkins, from the Office of Representative David Price (D-NC), both offered their insights.

Summarizing the changes underfoot in the Federal government, Goldston remarked, “The House is plagued by changes in chairmanship, the Senate is plagued by changes in membership, and the Executive branch is plagued by changes in sportsmanship.” Having firsthand knowledge of legislative matters, however, Goldston soon focused on Congress. What can we say, substantively, about the 107th Congress?, asked Goldston. “Nothing . . . but I’ll elaborate,” he quipped.

Goldston, whose boss will probably head the House Science Committee, was commenting on the gridlock that tends to characterize a closely divided Congress. “Everyone has enough votes to block [legislation]; no one has enough votes to pass.” In that atmosphere, he said, contentious legislation is difficult to pass.

Fortunately, support for scientific research is generally not one of the more controversial issues, and wild swings are unlikely on such issues. Research budgets, Goldston predicted, should continue to flourish as long as the economy stays healthy. The National Institutes of Health (NIH), Goldston asserted, “will continue to prosper as long as the sun comes up.” Furthermore, on the issue of social science research, Congress usually takes its lead from the administration, he explained, and within the administration, the President is less consequential than his appointees.

Harkins offered a similar reading of the next Congress. He predicted that the status quo will be maintained: as neither party has a big majority, he explained, everything can be filibustered.

Harkins also addressed the issue of accountability for social science research funding. He noted that research, including social science research, is more likely to attract federal funding if costs are to be shared, private organizations are to be used for leverage, and the results from such research are highlighted.

Because the chairs of committees that affect the social sciences can impact the attention paid to funding, Harkins speculated on who may chair the relevant committees in the next Congress. However, with the uncertainty that characterizes national politics today, even those on the inside cannot predict the organization of the 107th Congress or its consequences with much certainty.