

**Statement**

of the

**Consortium of Social Science Associations  
(COSSA)**

**Howard J. Silver, Executive Director**

submitted for the record on the

**Fiscal Year 2004 Appropriations**

for the

**National Institute of Justice**

**Bureau of Justice Statistics**

prepared for the

**Subcommittee on the Departments of Commerce, Justice,  
and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies**

**Committee on Appropriations**

**U.S. House of Representatives**

**The Honorable Frank Wolf, Chairman**

**April 11, 2003**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) greatly appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Fiscal Year 2004 appropriations for programs under the Subcommittee's jurisdiction, including the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (OJP).

**We urge an NIJ appropriation of \$60 million in FY 2004. We strongly support the \$35.8 million requested by the President for BJS in FY 2004.**

COSSA is an advocacy organization supported by more than 100 professional associations, scientific societies, universities, and research institutes that promotes attention to and federal funding for the social, behavioral, and economic sciences. It serves as a bridge between the research community and the policy-making community. COSSA's justice initiatives include disseminating the results of research on criminals - both adult and juvenile - and criminal careers to help law enforcement select successful intervention strategies using behavioral and social science research. Our member organizations include the American Psychological Association, American Society of Criminology, American Sociological Association, and the Association of American Law Schools. A complete list is attached to the testimony.

Mr. Chairman, with the war in Iraq, heightened security throughout the United States, and Federal agencies facing competitive sourcing, these are adverse times. Prior to 2002, both the FBI's Uniform Crime Report (UCR) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), two major sources of crime data, reported significant decreases in crime. Homicide rates had been on a decline since 1993 and juvenile homicide arrests fell nearly 20 percent between 1994 and 1998. In 1999, violent crime rates reached the lowest level ever recorded.

Unfortunately, crime could not continue to drop indefinitely – crime rates cannot go negative. The crime drop of the 1990's has ended and upturn has started in a slow way. There are indications that it will persist and progressively worsen. The recurrence of crime is occurring because there are fewer jobs opportunities for young people, a diversion of police to terror and related alarms, a reduction in social-service spending by state and local governments because of budget shortfalls, a reduction in the net flow into prison and so less incapacitation, and a potential resurgence of violent drug markets.

Despite this, we are at an auspicious point in time because we have the opportunity to prevent the recurrence of high crime rates. The challenge before us is to **keep the crime rate low**.

This requires that we first identify and analyze what led to the decline in crime that began in the early 1990s. While a police commissioner may attribute a local crime drop to his police force and an advocate for prisons may attribute falling crime rates to increased incarceration, only scientific, evidence-based approaches can indicate the true causes of the decline in crime.

They are numerous, and are not easy to separate, as Alfred Blumstein (former President of COSSA) and Joel Wallman assert in *The Crime Drop in America*,<sup>1</sup> a scholarly and highly praised examination of the 1990's decline in crime.

Second, keeping the crime rate low requires evaluating crime prevention and reduction programs, continuing effective initiatives, terminating ineffective and inefficient ones, and developing new ideas to keep up with a changing nation. As the Congressionally-mandated University of Maryland crime study, *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising*<sup>2</sup> demonstrates, we simply do not yet know enough about the active ingredients of successful crime programs.

Even with successful prevention programs, we need to know how crime infiltrates and manifests within society. This calls for research that will specify the early warning measures of crime resurgence. NIJ recognizes the need for research to develop and test improved approaches for prevention, apprehension, and rehabilitation.

**COSSA is extremely concerned about any attempts to remove supervision, management, oversight, and control of the nation's crime and justice statistics and research programs in BJS and NIJ from the scientific staff of these agencies. The scientific integrity, quality, and long-term continuity of crime and justice statistics and research are essential for sound and effective criminal justice policy. These functions are inherently governmental and should not be subject to competitive outsourcing to the private sector.**

We applaud the following language from the FY 2003 Omnibus Appropriations bill: "The Department has reported to the Committees on Appropriations on a competitive sourcing effort. To support this effort, the conferees must be assured that effectiveness is improved and savings are attained. The conferees direct that OJP provide the Committees on Appropriations with detailed plans on this effort before proceeding with changes." We urge you to insert similar language into the FY 2004 report.

## **National Institute of Justice (NIJ)**

The **National Institute of Justice** engages the Nation's brightest criminal justice researchers in understanding the causes and correlates of crime, and determining the most effective methods of preventing crime. Created by the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, the NIJ is the Nation's primary source of research and development in the field of criminal justice. The 1968 crime bill specifically calls on NIJ to sponsor special projects and research and development programs to improve and strengthen the criminal justice system and reduce and prevent crime. NIJ supports both extramural (universities and other research institutes) and intramural (within the NIJ) research, which is lauded by the criminal justice community as well as the research community at large for its highly rigorous scientific standards.

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred Blumstein and Joel Wallman, eds. *The Crime Drop in America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence W. Sherman *et al.*, *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising: A Report to the United States Congress*

Recognition of the value of the scientific approach to addressing social problems appears to be growing. **Science-based research and evaluation exposes costly, ineffective programs and forms the basis of efficient, effective programs.** Indeed, President Bush has repeatedly stressed the need for *research-based* and *evidence-based* approaches to issues like improving education and combating crime and drug abuse.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, modest funds spent on crime and criminal justice research at NIJ work to ensure that more sizeable amounts directed to crime-fighting programs are spent wisely and will serve to keep the Nation's crime rate at the low level we enjoy today.

One example of such a program is NIJ's **ADAM (Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring)** program. As the only national drug research program built upon data collection at the local level, ADAM collects information about drug use from arrestees in urban areas. Using both interview data and drug testing, the program reveals patterns of drug abuse and its relationship with crime, and allows policymakers and law enforcement to develop effective enforcement, treatment, and prevention strategies.

Another significant program within NIJ is **Breaking the Cycle (BTC)**, a joint project with the Office of National Drug Control Policy, which tests the idea that early identification and assessment of drug-using defendants, followed by individualized treatment, intensive supervision, and strong judicial oversight, can reduce drug use and crime. According to Adele Harrell of the Urban Institute, the availability of supervision, drug testing, and penalties for continued drug use increased the willingness of the courts to release arrestees while their cases were pending, and offered the justice system strategies for addressing factors that contribute to the risk of reoffending. BTC findings indicate that efforts to reduce drug use directed at all felony defendants under supervision in the community can also produce gains in public safety.

Although drugs, crime, and technology may be at the forefront of NIJ's research, the Agency is also concerned with the youth of America. NIJ-funded research, conducted by the National Survey on Adolescents (NSA), indicate the rates of interpersonal violence and victimization of youths are extremely high in the United States. However, the emotional consequences that youths experience because of victimization, such as psychological disorders, substance abuse and dependence, and delinquency problems, are often overlooked in research. NSA results signify a clear relationship between the experience of youth victimization and mental health problems and delinquent behavior. NSA research will be essential in examining the temporal sequence of problem development as well as risk and protective factors that are related to victimization.

NIJ has also supported research on the effects of arrest on intimate partner violence. Christopher Maxwell and his colleagues found that arrest is associated with less repeat offending and that this does not vary by jurisdiction. They also found that a small minority of suspects continued to abuse their partners regardless of intervention. Future research should focus on this group. Other NIJ supported studies include Jeff Fagan's recent research on crime and place extends findings from the late 1960's that crime persisted in certain places over generations despite demographic changes.

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<sup>3</sup> *A Blueprint for New Beginnings: A Responsible Budget for America's Priorities; and No Child Left Behind*

With the life expectancy of Americans constantly rising, the elderly population seems to be rapidly increasing. However, as the elderly get older they are more susceptible to elder abuse and victimization. NIJ has supported research on elder abuse. Conducted by Robert Davis and Juanjo Medina, the Elder Abuse Prevention Experiment indicates that violence from the perpetrator gets worse if police intervene. The lack of a good understanding of elder abuse and its consequences is troublesome especially to an aging population.

NIJ research is also contributing to our nation's ability to combat terrorism. A grant from NIJ was given to Gary LaFree and Laura Dugan of the University of Maryland to analyze and code the Pinkerton Global Intelligence Service, an Interpol database of 74,000 terrorist incidents from 1970 to 1997. NIJ needs further support to expand this project to keep the data current.

**Disseminating research findings** so that society as a whole can realize the benefits of progress in criminal justice research is a crucial aspect of any research agency. NIJ has established a robust and healthy relationship with both researchers and law enforcement officials in the criminal justice community. Through its Research in Progress lecture series, NIJ ensures that the community is informed about important criminal justice research and practices. This lecture series also allows NIJ to actively solicit the views of the criminal justice community. In addition, NIJ sponsors a major research conference each July that attracts hundreds of practitioners to hear about the latest results of NIJ-supported studies.

Unfortunately, the full value of these programs is difficult to realize under the current discretionary funding level. That is why *COSSA strongly advocates for a base appropriation of \$60 million for NIJ in FY 2004*. This will strengthen NIJ's ability to continue developing such initiatives, help us to understand the factors that led to the 1990s decline in crime, and allow the dividends from previous years' investments in criminal justice research to continue to be paid out. Ultimately, all Americans receive these dividends in the form of low crime rates. With the help of researchers at the National Institute of Justice and America's research universities and institutes, we will seize the opportunity and play an active role to help our crime rates *remain* at historic lows.

## **Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)**

The **Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)**, the Nation's primary source for criminal justice statistics, collects, analyzes, publishes, and disseminates information on crime and the criminal justice system. The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), BJS' largest single data collection, offers insights into the nature of crime, its consequences, the relationship between victims and offenders, and the willingness of victims to report crimes to law enforcement officials. Increased funding in FY 2004 will allow this survey to become a fully automated data collection.

BJJ also maintains a wide array of statistical programs in the areas of law enforcement, adjudication, and corrections. Examples include: the Cybercrime Statistical Program; data on correctional populations and facilities from the Federal, state, and local governments; nationally representative prosecution data on resources, policies, and practices of local prosecutors; law enforcement data from over 3,000 agencies on the organization and administration of police and sheriff's departments; court and sentencing statistics, including Federal and state case processing data. **These data are essential to ensure that justice is both efficient and evenhanded.**

*COSSA strongly supports the FY 2004 budget request for BJS.* In its data collection, analysis of crime and justice statistics, and dissemination of research findings, BJS is a fundamental component of the Nation's criminal justice efforts. With adequate backing, BJS can provide the hard data and objective analysis to underlie effective criminal justice operations.

Additionally, BJS fosters the states' ability to develop, collect, analyze, and disseminate criminal justice statistics through its support of state Statistical Analysis Centers (SACs). Because the dynamics of crime, policy, and population vary from place to place, it is essential to possess the capability to address criminal justice issues at the state level. SACs conduct objective analyses to meet critical planning needs and address state-wide and system-wide criminal justice policy issues.

Like NIJ, BJS does an outstanding job disseminating research results to government officials and policy makers in a timely manner to keep them informed of important criminal justice research findings. BJS publishes numerous research reports that are valuable to local, state, and Federal law enforcement communities.

COSSA greatly appreciates the support the Subcommittee has provided the National Institute of Justice and the Bureau of Justice Statistics over the last several years. Thank you for the opportunity to present our views.

## BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT FOR DR. HOWARD J. SILVER

Dr. Silver serves as the Executive Director of the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) in Washington, DC, a position he has held since 1988. The Consortium, supported by over 100 professional associations, scientific societies, universities and research institutes, promotes attention to and federal funding for the social, behavioral, and economic sciences and serves as a bridge between the research community and the Washington policy making community. Dr. Silver previously served COSSA as its Associate Director for Government Relations from 1983-88.

Prior to joining COSSA, Dr. Silver was a consultant for legislative and political research, a political campaign manager, and a legislative analyst in the U.S. Department of Education. He has taught political science and public policy at a number of colleges and universities. Dr. Silver came to Washington in 1980 as an Institute for Educational Leadership Policy Fellow.

Dr. Silver has testified before Congress, spoken at many professional meetings on federal funding of science, and written extensively on executive-legislative relations, the federal budget process, and science policy as it affects the social and behavioral sciences. In 2001, to celebrate the Consortium's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, he co-wrote and edited, *Fostering Human Progress: Social and Behavioral Research Contributions to Public Policy*.

Elected by his science policy advocate colleagues, Dr. Silver served from 1994-2000 as the Chairman of the Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF), an ad-hoc advocacy group with membership from scientific and engineering societies, higher education associations, and industrial groups. A tribute to his leadership of CNSF appeared in the November 1, 2000 issue of the *Congressional Record*. In 1998, he was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

He is a co-founder of the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Systems. He is also currently a member of the Board of Advisory Editors for *SOCIETY*. From 1998-2000 he served on the Council of the American Political Science Association (APSA). Prior service includes: President, Treasurer and Program Chair of the Section on Applied Political Science of the American Political Science Association, the Council of the National Capital Area Political Science Association, the Executive Committee of the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics, and the steering committees of the National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools and the Coalition for the Advancement of Foreign Languages and International Studies.

Dr. Silver received his Ph.D. in Political Science from The Ohio State University in 1975. A native of New York City, he obtained his B.A. from the City College of the City University of New York in 1969. He and his wife, Marilyn, a consultant to the U.S. Department of Labor, live in Fairfax, VA. His son, Mark, is a recent graduate of Stanford University.

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