

**Statement Submitted by the Consortium of Social Sciences Associations (COSSA) regarding the FY 2008 Appropriations for the Agency for Health Research and Quality (AHRQ), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) including the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), the Institute for Education Sciences (IES), Title VI and Fulbright Hays, the Javits Fellowship Program, and the Thurgood Marshall Legal Opportunity Program to the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Subcommittee, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate, Honorable Tom Harkin, Chairman, April 30, 2007.**

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) appreciates and welcomes the opportunity to comment on the FY 2008 appropriations for a number of agencies in the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education. COSSA is an advocacy group promoting attention to and funding for social and behavioral science research. It is supported by more than 110 professional associations, scientific societies, universities, centers and research institutes. A list of our members is attached.

**AGENCY FOR HEALTHCARE RESEARCH AND QUALITY (AHRQ)**

The mission of AHRQ is to promote health care quality improvement by conducting and supporting health services research that improves the outcomes, quality, access to, cost, and utilization of health care services. As the lead federal agency charged with supporting research designed to improve healthcare, AHRQ-sponsored research provides evidence-based information that empowers healthcare decisionmakers—patients, clinicians, health system leaders, and policymakers—to make informed decisions that impact the quality of healthcare services delivered.

Health services research also addresses issues of organization, financing, utilization, patient and provider behavior, quality, outcomes, effectiveness, and costs. Since FY 2005, AHRQ has lost nearly \$20 million in purchasing power due flat funding from Congress and inflation. **As a member of Friends of AHRQ, COSSA supports the Friends’ recommendation for a funding increase of at least \$30 million dollars—just .0015 percent** of the \$2 trillion we spent on health care annually.

This funding level would allow AHRQ to support ongoing efforts to improve the quality, safety, outcomes, access to and cost and utilization of health care services. In addition, AHRQ will be able to expand its efforts to improve patient safety, modernize health care through health information technology, develop the next generation of researchers, and evaluate the relative value of alternative technologies.

**CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC)**

The CDC is the lead Federal agency for promoting health and safety and providing credible health information through strong partnerships, both nationally and internationally. As the command center for our nation’s public health defense system against emerging and reemerging infectious diseases, the CDC faces unprecedented challenges and responsibilities, ranging from chronic disease prevention, eliminating health disparities, bioterrorism preparedness, to combating the obesity epidemic. COSSA commends the CDC for acknowledging that as human behavior and demographics create new public health challenges, the expertise within the social and behavioral sciences will be critical in keeping the American public healthy. These behavioral factors – tobacco use, poor diet, physical inactivity, risky sexual behavior and illicit drug use – are, according to the CDC, “the underlying causes for nearly half of all deaths in the U.S.”

As a member of the CDC Coalition, a nonpartisan coalition of more than 100 groups committed to strengthening our nation's prevention and health promotion programs, **COSSA supports the Coalition's recommendation of a \$10.7 billion appropriation for CDC (including funding for the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, and the Vaccines for Children Program)**. This funding enables the agency to carry out its mission to protect and promote good health and to assure that research findings are translated into effective state and local programs. CDC's programs are crucial to the health of millions of Americans, a key to maintaining a strong public health infrastructure, and essential in protecting us from threats to our health.

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), housed within CDC, provides critical information to guide actions and policies to improve the health of the American people. NCHS data document the health status of the U.S. population and identify disparities in health status and the use of health care by race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, region, and other population characteristics. New demands for health information exceed the capacity of our current data systems. At few points in recent history has the need for information been greater.

Stagnant and reduced funding throughout most of the last decade has forced significant reduction in some of the NCHS' most important monitoring tools. Since FY 2005, NCHS has lost \$13 million in purchasing power due to a combination of flat funding and inflation. As a result, key NCHS programs are in jeopardy. For example, NCHS lacks resources to collect a full year's worth of vital statistics from states. Without at least \$3 million in additional funding, we will become the first industrialized nation unable to continuously collect birth, death, and other vital information. Funding shortfalls are also preventing the collection of data on many other key health care issues.

**As a member of the Friends of NCHS, COSSA supports the Friends recommendation of a FY 2008 funding level of \$117 million for the agency, an increase of just \$8 million over FY 2007.**

## **THE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES (IES)**

Improving the education of our children may be the most widely shared priority in the United States today. Support for other issues may come and go, but recognition of the importance of education and the government's opportunity to improve the state of education in our Nation seems only to grow. Indeed, through No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the President has made education his top domestic priority. Members from both sides of the aisle have offered legislation to reform and improve the educational system. Yet after the legislation passes, what will guide the policies that underlie the education our children receive? Most people, including the current Administration, would agree that what should guide education policy is what works best. We can accomplish finding what works best through impartial, scientific research that evaluates the efficacy of programs in an objective, systematic way and subjects findings to public scrutiny and scientific peer review.

The Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 reauthorized the Department's educational research, statistics, and assessment activities and placed them in the newly created IES. A cornerstone of the Administration's NCLB initiative is investment in research to identify effective instructional and program practices, as well as data collection needed to track student achievement and measure education reform. The new structural and management reforms underway at IES insure that the Federal investment in education research is well managed and relevant to the needs of educators and policymakers.

The \$162.5 million request for Research, Development, and Dissemination would support IES-sponsored education research, development, and dissemination, and the funding of discretionary grants and contracts that support directed and field-initiated research. The request would also include funding for the *What Works Clearinghouse*, which provides evidence-based information for policymakers, researchers, and

educators on promising approaches and interventions, the National Library of Education, and the Education Research Information Clearinghouse (ERIC). **COSSA supports increasing this amount to \$180 million.** This funding increase would enable IES to continue to support a diverse portfolio of directed and field-initiated research, including its eight national research and development centers. To strengthen the education research enterprise, new opportunities are needed for investigator-initiated studies that move the field forward with innovative methods and research ideas.

**The \$29 million increase for the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which COSSA strongly supports,** would allow it to conduct a pilot study on the development of a postsecondary student level data system that is essential for computing postsecondary completion rates and measuring the true costs of higher education. Funds also would support a new secondary school longitudinal study, scheduled to begin in 2007, which will follow a ninth grade cohort through high school and college.

Assessment is a critical part of the President's education plan No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The FY 2008 budget request includes funding NAEP and the National Assessment Governing Board. **The \$23.5 million increase, which COSSA supports,** will allow the Department to complete preparations for implementing State-level assessments at the 12th grade level in 2009.

Part of the NCLB mission is closing the achievement gap. To this end, the President's budget would provide awards to enhance States' capacity for accurate reporting of high school graduation and dropout data, and to increase the capability of States to comply with Federal reporting requirements. The Statewide Data Systems program supports competitive awards to State educational agencies to foster the design, development, and implementation of longitudinal data systems that would enable States to use individual student data to enhance the provision of education and close achievement gaps. **COSSA supports the proposed increase of \$30 million for this activity in FY 2008.**

## **TITLE VI AND FULBRIGHT-HAYS**

The importance of knowing about foreign cultures, economies, histories, and politics, and the ability to speak other languages besides English is critical to functioning in today's world. On March 27, the National Academies' released its report: *International Education and Foreign Languages: Keys to Securing America's Future*. The report concluded that the programs supported by the Department of Education – Title VI and Fulbright-Hays – were successful and useful and indicated that the country was getting internationally educated people at a small cost, because the universities are able to leverage the money from the Education Department. However, the report also proclaims that the funding for the Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs has not kept up with the expanding pace of their mission as world conditions have changed dramatically.

The historical under-funding of Title VI and Fulbright-Hays combined with expanding needs and rising costs have contributed to the nation's shortfall in specialists today. As the Coalition for International Education (CIE), of which COSSA is a member, has pointed out funding for key Title VI/Fulbright-Hays programs is more than 30 percent below the high point in FY 1967. For example, only 1,561 or 33 percent fewer Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships were awarded in FY 2007 compared to 2,344 in FY 1967. Four years of level funding combined with across-the-board cuts since FY 2003 have begun to erode the earlier gains. There is an urgent need to increase funding for these programs. **COSSA supports the CIE's recommendation of a \$132.6 million appropriation for FY 2008.**

## **JAVITS FELLOWSHIPS AND THURGOOD MARSHALL LEGAL OPPORTUNITY GRANTS**

COSSA supports increasing the funding for the Jacob Javits Fellowship Program, which provides graduate students with the funds to pursue advanced degrees in the social sciences, arts, and humanities. For many years the budget of this program has stagnated and in recent years across-the-board cuts have reduced a rather small budget even further. **COSSA recommends funding at \$12 million in FY 2008.** Providing student support for those pursuing degrees in these fields is important to the future of this country. America does not compete in a rapidly changing global environment by only supporting physicists and engineers!

COSSA also supports the restoration of funding for the Thurgood Marshall Legal Opportunity Grants to help members of underrepresented groups prepare for a legal education. It is imperative that the legal profession look like the American we have become and are becoming. That means offering opportunities to those who need a leg up to obtain a legal education. **COSSA recommends funding at \$3 million in FY 2008.**

In conclusion, COSSA acknowledges the Subcommittee's history of support for these critical programs that promote health, prevent disease, and help educate a new generation of students. We hope that support will continue in FY 2008.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our views.

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# Consortium of Social Science Associations

## GOVERNING MEMBERS

American Association for Public Opinion Research  
American Economic Association  
American Educational Research Association  
American Historical Association  
American Political Science Association  
American Psychological Association

American Society of Criminology  
American Sociological Association  
American Statistical Association  
Association of American Geographers  
Association of American Law Schools  
Law and Society Association

Linguistic Society of America  
Midwest Political Science Association  
National Communication Association  
Rural Sociological Society  
Society for Research in Child Development

## MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS

American Agricultural Economics Association  
American Association for Agricultural Education  
Association for Asian Studies  
Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management  
Association of Research Libraries  
Council on Social Work Education  
Eastern Sociological Society  
International Communication Association  
Justice Research and Statistics Association  
Midwest Sociological Society  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Council on Family Relations

North American Regional Science Council  
North Central Sociological Association  
Population Association of America  
Social Science History Association  
Society for Research on Adolescence  
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues  
Society for the Scientific Study of Religion  
Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality  
Sociologists for Women in Society  
Southern Political Science Association  
Southern Sociological Society  
Southwestern Social Science Association

## COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Arizona State University  
Brown University  
University of California, Berkeley  
University of California, Davis  
University of California, Irvine  
University of California, Los Angeles  
University of California, San Diego  
University of California, Santa Barbara  
Carnegie-Mellon University  
University of Chicago  
Clark University  
Columbia University  
Cornell University  
Duke University  
George Mason University  
George Washington University  
University of Georgia  
Harvard University  
Howard University  
University of Illinois  
Indiana University  
University of Iowa  
Iowa State University  
Johns Hopkins University  
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY  
Kansas State University  
University of Kentucky  
University of Maryland  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse

University of Michigan  
Michigan State University  
University of Minnesota  
New York University  
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill  
North Carolina State University  
Northwestern University  
Ohio State University  
University of Oklahoma  
University of Pennsylvania  
Pennsylvania State University  
Princeton University  
Purdue University  
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey  
University of South Carolina  
Stanford University  
University of Tennessee  
State University of New York, Stony Brook  
University of Texas, Austin  
Texas A & M University  
Tulane University  
Vanderbilt University  
University of Virginia  
University of Washington  
Washington University in St. Louis  
West Virginia University  
University of Wisconsin, Madison  
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee  
Yale University

## CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

American Academy of Political and Social Sciences  
American Council of Learned Societies  
American Institutes for Research  
Brookings Institution  
Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences  
Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research  
Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan

Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research  
Institute for Women's Policy Research  
National Bureau of Economic Research  
National Opinion Research Center  
Population Reference Bureau  
Social Science Research Council

