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COSSA Washington Update

IN THIS ISSUE:

- [Congress Pushes FY 2008 Spending Bills; President Threatens Vetoes](#)
- [House Appropriations Committee Forwards CIS Spending Bill To Floor; Census Loses \\$30 Million](#)
- [House Approves FY 2008 Labor, HHS, Education Funding Bill; NIH Receives Largest Increase In Four Years](#)
- [FY 2008 Agriculture Funding Bills Emerge From House And Senate Panels](#)
- [HUD Policy Research Gets Boost Over FY 2007; House Tells OPDR To Make MTO Info Available To Researchers](#)
- [Senate Examines Cost Of 2010 Count; Coburn Wants Internet Census](#)
- [Girls Missing In Science And Engineering](#)
- [Key National Indicators of Children's Well-Being 2007 Report Released; Additional Indicators Needed](#)
- [Research Proposals Wanted Regarding Outcomes In Children With Mild To Severe Hearing Loss](#)

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CONGRESS PUSHES FY 2008 SPENDING BILLS; PRESIDENT THREATENS VETOES

The Democratically-controlled Congress keeps moving the FY 2008 spending bills through the appropriations process. Although the House is behind schedule and will most likely have all 12 bills through the body by the August recess rather than the July 4th recess, as usual the Senate is moving slower. Although almost all of the bills are through the Senate Appropriations Committee, none so far has made it to the floor. Down the road, the White House is still threatening to veto almost all the bills because of excessive spending. This suggests another year of Continuing Resolutions and Omnibus Appropriations bills, with the worst-case-scenario suggesting a repeat of 1995-96, which featured a confrontation between President Clinton and the Republican Congress that led to a temporary shutdown of government offices and programs.

The following stories suggest the spending levels and directions Congress has given the agencies for FY 2008 so far. All of this is may be subject to change before the process is complete.

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE FORWARDS CJS SPENDING BILL TO FLOOR; CENSUS LOSES \$30 MILLION

After a delay of more than a month, the full House Appropriations Committee reviewed the decisions of its Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee (CJS), chaired by Rep. Alan Mollohan (D-WV), on July 12. The bill will get full House consideration the week of July 23.

During the markup, Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA) offered an amendment that passed, transferring \$30 million from the Census Bureau's FY 2008 funding to a program that reimburses states for the costs of incarcerating undocumented aliens. Honda's amendment took \$25 million from the Bureau's Salaries and Expenses account and \$5 million from the Periodic Censuses, which funds the 2010 count and the American Community Survey (ACS). Rep. Jose Serrano (D-NY) spoke vehemently against the amendment and Mollohan criticized Honda for taking the funds from the Bureau and promised to correct this later in the appropriations process.

With completion of the full committee markup comes the release of the Committee's report and the language that offers direction to the agencies. For the 2010 Census, the Committee recommended a total of \$566.3 million. This includes \$13 million, not requested by the Administration, to support partnership and outreach efforts in preparation for the 2010 count. The ACS received \$187.2 million, which is the same as the request and \$10.7 million above the FY 2007 level. The Economic Census and the Census of Governments are funded at the requested levels.

The Committee provided an additional \$19 million to keep the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) alive and enable it to collect a full sample of 45,000 participants. Congress also wants the Bureau to work with stakeholders to "reengineer the SIPP to develop a more accurate and timely survey to capture the economic dynamics of the country." It is clear that Congress did not think the Census Bureau's proposed Dynamics of Economic Well-Being (DEWS) was that survey.

The Committee provided an additional \$1.5 million to the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) "to expand and improve the timeliness of regional data." The Committee also recommended full funding of BEA's request to measure the impact of research and development activity in the National Income and the Gross Domestic Product accounts. In addition, the Committee directed BEA to "examine the effect of both offshoring work abroad and outsourcing of imported labor domestically and how data can be improved in the future" and report back to the panel.

NSF Told to Provide SBE with 'Increases Comparable to Other Directorates'

The National Science Foundation's (NSF) recommended funding is \$6.5 billion, \$592 million above the FY 2007 appropriation, and \$80 million above the President's request.

For the Research and Related Activities account, which funds the directorates, including the one for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE), the panel allocated \$5.1 billion, which is \$473.8 million above the FY 2007 level, and \$8 million above the request. The \$8 million increase will go to the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (ESPSCOR), a program for states to build research capacity at their research universities. The Committee also directed that \$10 million of the R&RA funds should go to "a new and dedicated program emphasizing transformative research," and requesting a report that would define "transformative research." This follows the recommendations of a National Science Board document (see Update July 9, 2007).

In addition, the Committee report noted that although it strongly supports increases for the math and physical sciences, computer sciences, and engineering directorates, it also believes that: "As the Innovation Agenda moves forward, it is important to note that maintaining U.S. competitiveness will depend on advances in, and the interactions among, all fields of science." Therefore, "the Committee expects NSF to ensure that the biological sciences, geosciences, and social, behavioral, and economic sciences directorates receive increases in fiscal year 2008 that are comparable to the other directorates."

The Education and Human Resources directorate (EHR) received \$822 million, \$72 million above FY 2007, and \$25.9 million above the request. The Committee provided increases for the Robert Noyce scholarship program, the Math and Science Partnership program, undergraduate/graduate student support for the programs that

broaden participation in math and science, and for Graduate Teaching K-12 Fellowships. It also allocated \$10 million for a climate change education program that would train students in the using information of Earth observations from space, as outlined in a National Academies report.

The report language encourages NSF to “work within its peer-reviewed process” for EHR programs “to incorporate rural communities, universities, and school districts so that they may attract highly qualified math and science professionals to educate the youth of rural America.”

House Says NCVS ‘A Critical Source;’ Huge Senate Cut for BJS ‘A Misprint’

The House panel provided \$60 million for the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and \$45 million for the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). The NIJ figure represents a \$5 million boost from FY 2007 base funding. NIJ will also receive \$2 million from the allocation for the Office on Violence Against Women and \$10 million from the Justice Assistance Grants appropriation.

The figure for BJS represents a \$10 million increase over FY 2007 and is the same as the Administration’s request. The Committee included report language noting the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) as “a critical source of information” and “the largest national forum of victims to describe the impact of crime and characteristics of violent offenders.” The Committee also included language stating: “that any statistical studies undertaken by the [BJS], as well as press releases describing the results of these studies shall be publicly released by the Bureau without alteration or clearance by persons outside the Bureau.”

In other good news for BJS, COSSA has learned that the \$10 million allocated by the Senate Appropriations Committee for FY 2008 funding was, according to a spokesperson for CJS Subcommittee Chair Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), a “misprint.” The Senator’s press secretary indicated that the mistake would be corrected and “full funding” for BJS recommended later in the appropriations process.

HOUSE APPROVES FY 2008 LABOR, HHS, EDUCATION FUNDING BILL; NIH RECEIVES LARGEST INCREASE IN FOUR YEARS

On July 19, after a three-day debate and the defeat of many amendments seeking to reduce funding, the full House of Representatives passed the Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), Education Appropriations bill by a vote of 276-140. Earlier, on July 11, the House Appropriations Committee endorsed the funding recommendations approved by its Labor, HHS, Education Subcommittee on June 7 (see Update, [June 11, 2007](#)).

For the National Institutes of Health, the House provided \$29.65 billion. In the report accompanying the bill, the Committee noted that in FY 1999, “Congress made a commitment to double the NIH budget over five years in order to capitalize on scientific advances. ... Since the completion of the doubling period, however, the Congress has reversed direction. The NIH enterprise has languished with inadequate budget increases since fiscal year 2003, and even received a funding cut in fiscal year 2006, the first cut in 36 years.” In an effort to reverse this, the Committee “made the difficult choices necessary to provide a \$750 million increase” over the FY 2007 funding level for NIH. The sum is \$1.03 billion more than the President’s request and “the largest increase in four years.” The Committee expressed its desire to put the NIH “on a path of stable, sustainable funding rather than the feast or famine approach of the last decade.”

The report also noted that the “investment” will accomplish a number of “important goals:” 1) increase the number of new and competing research grants by nearly 545 new grant over the last year for a total of 10,666 (total new and continuing grants will rise to 39,003); 2) provide a two-percent increase in the average costs of new research grants, which has been frozen for two years; 3) reaffirm strong support for the National Children’s Study by providing \$110.9 million in support, the Administration zeroed out the funding for the study; 4) allocate \$300 million for the Global Fund for AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis; and 5) consistent with NIH reauthorization, allot \$495.2 million as a set-aside within the Office of the Director for the Common Fund rather than through an assessment of institute and center budgets.

The bill also continues funding for the Bridge awards (\$91.5 million), the New Innovator awards (\$40 million), and Pathways to Independence awards (\$31 million). These programs are designed to support the next generation of researchers. The Committee believes that the Director's Pioneer Awards are an effective tool to encourage high risk, transformative research and provided \$27 million within the Common Fund for this purpose. The bill also increases funding for NIH's research infrastructure to ensure adequate facilities for NIH-supported scientists.

With regards to minority research training programs, the Committee expressed support for the recommendations put forward in the 2005 National Academy of Sciences' (NAS) report on NIH minority research training programs. The Committee believes that "the training of research scientists is a critical component of the NIH mission, and urges NIH to improve its data systems so that more complete information about NIH-supported graduate and post-doctoral research assistants and trainees is available. Without adequate data, the NIH programs cannot be properly evaluated or monitored. As proposed by NAS, the Committee recommends the NIH develop an integrated NIH-wide trainee and research assistant data tracking system. The Committee further encourages NIH to engage trainees and research assistants in the data tracking process to document outcomes such as future funding awards, including those programs that are targeted to underrepresented minorities."

Below is a sampling of additional report language pertaining to social and behavioral science research:

Basic Behavioral Research - The Committee is aware that basic behavioral research focused on such areas as cognition, perception, emotion, social interaction, and learning have led to important advances and improved treatments for depression, bipolar and other affective disorders, diabetes, compliance on behavior change related diabetes, heart disease, cancer, obesity, and more effective public health announcements and interventions. In view of the fact that eight out of the ten leading causes of death have a significant behavioral component and that basic research is the underpinning of advances in behavioral research, the Committee is concerned with the continued lack of focus of the scientific leadership at NIH for this important field of science.

The Committee, however, views the new Office of Portfolio Analysis and Strategic Initiatives (OPASI) within the Office of the Director as a potentially important source of leadership in encouraging NIH investment in behavioral sciences research. The recent NIH reauthorization placed the Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research (OBSSR) within OPASI. As OPASI begins to perform its function of analyzing balance and content in all NIH areas of research, it would be appropriate for OPASI to set as an initial task a review of the NIH basic behavioral research portfolio. The Committee requests that the Director of NIH instruct OPASI, using OBSSR expertise, to prepare a strategic plan for basic behavioral research. This plan should include the amount spent on basic behavioral research, and a plan for NIH's investment in basic behavioral research for fiscal year 2008 and beyond. This strategic plan should also identify any gaps in the NIH basic behavioral research portfolio. The Committee expects to receive the strategic plan no later than May 1, 2008.

National Institute on Aging (NIA) - The Committee encourages NIA to sustain its commitment to the demography of aging centers program. These centers coordinate key data collection and dissemination activities that benefit the entire field of population aging research and inform public policy issues, such as reform of federal entitlement and health care programs. The Committee also congratulates NIA for elevating the dialogue surrounding global aging issues by hosting with the Department of State the Summit on Global Aging. The Committee expresses its full support for the Edward R. Roybal Research Centers on applied Gerontology. The Committee suggests that NIA consider expanding the number of centers, developing new topics for research especially in the area of diversity and ethnic and minority communities, and providing opportunities for collaborative, interdisciplinary research between the Roybal centers and other program initiatives such as the resources' centers for minority aging research and the demographic centers.

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) - The Committee commends NIAAA for its interdisciplinary approach to understanding and addressing underage drinking within the context of overall physical development. The Committee further commends NIAAA for spearheading research projects to engage health systems in identifying and addressing underage drinking, particularly in rural areas.

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) - The Committee is very concerned about the well-known connections between drug use and crime. Research continues to demonstrate that providing treatment to individuals involved in the criminal justice system significantly decreases future drug use and criminal behavior, while improving social functioning. The Committee strongly supports NIDA's efforts in this area, particularly the criminal justice drug abuse treatment studies (CJ-DATS). The Committee understands that drug abuse and

addiction continue to fuel the spread of HIV/AIDS in the U. S. and abroad, and that drug abuse prevention and treatment interventions can be very effective in reducing HIV risk. Research should continue to examine every aspect of HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, and addiction, including risk behaviors associated with both injection and non-injection drug abuse, how drugs of abuse alter brain function and impair decision making, and HIV prevention and treatment strategies for diverse groups. The Committee notes that the consequences of drug abuse disproportionately impact minorities, especially African American populations and is pleased to learn that NIDA continues to encourage researchers to conduct more studies in this population and to target their studies in geographic areas where HIV/AIDS is high and/or growing among African Americans, including in criminal justice settings.

The Committee encourages NIDA, NIAAA, and the National Institute of Mental Health to address the behavioral health research needs for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) populations, including studies focused on AAPI incidence and prevalence data for substance abuse and co-occurring disorders; . . . nature of substance abuse among AAPI populations; appropriate ways to evaluate AAPI substance services; and the etiology, causes and impact on AAPI populations as a result of substance use and abuse.

National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) - The Committee strongly encourages NIMH to strengthen its investment in finding ways to better identify the risk factors for suicide in adolescents, improving the criteria for identifying those at risk, and examining the outcomes of actions take to assist those found to be at risk. The Committee notes that a national crisis in geriatric mental health care is emerging, and action must be taken to avert serious problems in the future. It also notes that for the past five years, the Committee has urged NIMH to strengthen research devoted to older adults; however, the geriatric mental health research portfolio supported by NIMH continues to be dramatically disproportionate to the increasing number of Americans. The Committee requests that NIMH provide data on funding targeted toward geriatric mental health research in 2002-2006 and the amount of funding provided to new investigators in late-life mental health research.

Institute of Education Sciences (IES) - For research, development, and dissemination in FY 2008 the Committee cut \$5 million from the FY 2007 funding. In the report, the Committee maintains its support for IES to use "rigorous methodologies, particularly random assignment, that are capable of producing scientifically valid knowledge regarding which program activities are effective." The panel criticizes the What Works Clearinghouse, noting that despite an investment of \$36 million since FY 2002, the Department has yet "to produce a user-friendly database" to provide educators, policymakers, researchers, and the public scientific reviews of effective interventions to help improve student achievement.

The Committee did not approve funds for the National Assessment of Educational Progress to conduct the 12th grade assessments in math and reading, but "looks forward" to the 8th grade arts assessment. The panel included funds to the National Center for Education Statistics to support a new longitudinal study beginning with an eighth grade cohort, but refused to recommend \$25 million for a pilot study to develop a student unit record system, claiming "the Department has not made a convincing case..." The Statewide data systems account received \$37.5 million from the Committee, almost \$13 million more than the current year, but \$11.6 million below the President's request.

International Education and Foreign Language Studies - The Committee provided \$100.3 million for Title VI domestic programs, \$8.8 million above both FY 2007 and the budget request. This is the first step in the Committee's "high priority" to restore previous years' budget cuts to the Title VI programs. Recognizing the recommendations of the National Academies' report (see Update [April 2, 2007](#)), the Committee "urges the Department to establish a coordinating group on international education and foreign language studies." The Fulbright-Hays Overseas programs received a \$1 million boost to \$13.6 million, while the Institute for International Public Policy allocation was \$1.7 million, a slight \$100,000 raise over FY 2007.

The Committee level-funded the Javits Fellowship program at \$9.7 million, allowing for 226 new awards for graduate students in the Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities in FY 2008. The panel also provided \$2.9 million to the Thurgood Marshall Legal Education Opportunity Program, same as FY 2007. With the return of earmarks after a one-year hiatus, the budget for the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) went back up to \$63.3 million, \$41.3 million over FY 2007. Almost all of the increase will go to special projects deemed worthy by Members of Congress.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) - The bill included \$576.1 million for the BLS, almost \$28 million above FY 2007. The Committee directs the agency over the next two years to “develop a methodology for determining the cost of living by State that accounts for the different costs of housing, goods and services in each State.” Additional funds are also provided to “conduct focused research studies on work-related injuries and illnesses.”

FY 2008 AGRICULTURE FUNDING BILLS EMERGE FROM HOUSE AND SENATE PANELS

The House Agriculture and Rural Development Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), took its recommendations to the full Committee on July 19, and with a few changes the panel sent the bill to the House floor. On the same day, the Senate Appropriations Committee reviewed the bill prepared by its Agriculture and Rural Development Subcommittee, chaired by Sen. Herb Kohl (D-WI), and sent it on to the Senate floor. Aside from the differences in the substance of the bills noted below, the House is likely to act on the legislation before the August recess, while the Senate will wait until September at the earliest.

The Committee recommendations for payments under the **Hatch Act** are from House \$195.8 million; from the Senate \$214.9 million. In FY 2007 because there were no earmarks in the bill, Congress boosted Hatch Act funding to \$322.6 million, allowing universities and others to use these funds to keep previously funded projects going. With the return of congressionally-directed spending for individual projects, Hatch Act funding decreases.

The **National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program (NRI)**: House \$190.9 million; Senate \$244 million. The FY 2007 figure was also \$190.9 million. The House-Senate difference is accounted for by the Senate’s willingness to accept the Administration’s request to move specific programs previously funded under the Integrated Activities account into the NRI. The House rejected that request.

With the return of earmarking, the House panel provided \$110.2 million for specific projects, while the Senate included only \$67.3 million. In addition, the Senate Committee report proclaims “specially awarded grants should be used to meet specific research, education, and extensions objectives rather than primarily to supplement other funding sources on an indefinite basis.” In addition, beginning in FY 2008 the Committee will place a three-year limitation on special research grants. The House and the Senate panels provided the Rural Policy Institutes (RUPRI) \$1.2 million.

The House Committee funded the **Economic Research Service (ERS)** at \$79.3 million, the Senate panel at \$76.5 million. FY 2007 funding was \$75.2 million, but the FY 2008 Administration request was \$82.5 million. The House Committee report includes an increase of \$1.5 million to strengthen and enhance the ERS market analysis and outlook program and analysis of global and differentiated product markets.

The **National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)** received \$166.1 million from the House Committee and \$167.7 million from the Senate panel. The FY 2007 figure was \$147.3 million and the request was \$167.7 million. Within these recommendations, the House included \$52.8 million for the Census of Agriculture, while the Senate provided \$54.3 million.

HUD POLICY RESEARCH GETS BOOST OVER FY 2007; HOUSE TELLS OPDR TO MAKE MTO INFO AVAILABLE TO RESEARCHERS

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has an Office of Policy Development and Research (OPDR) that “undertakes programs of research, studies, testing, and demonstrations related to the HUD mission.” The Office also provides grants, under its University Partnership program, to institutions of higher education which serve underrepresented groups. HUD is now funded in the Transportation, HUD Appropriations bill, which has also cleared both the House, on July 11, and the Senate, on July 12, Appropriations Committees.

The House bill provides \$58.1 million, an \$8 million boost over FY 2007, but almost \$7 million below the request. The Committee allocated the FY 2008 funding as follows: \$29.7 million for basic research, \$22.4 million for the grants to institutions of higher education, and \$5 million for the Pathways to Advanced Technology in Housing (PATH) program and directs these funds to be competitively awarded. The Committee also directs OPDR to incorporate research on “green, sustainable housing construction” into the PATH program. The House panel’s

report also chastises OPDR for refusing to share information about the Moving to Opportunity (MTO) program with scholars and researchers and instructs HUD to make this information available while protecting confidentiality, so that they may be "scrutinized by a variety of academic researchers."

The Senate panel provided OPDR with \$59 million for FY 2008. The report talks mostly about PATH, which also gets \$5 million from the Senate. The Senate panel also denies OPDR "demonstration authority except where approval is provided by Congress in response to a reprogramming request."

SENATE EXAMINES COST OF 2010 COUNT; COBURN WANTS INTERNET CENSUS

On July 17, the Senate Subcommittee on Federal Financial management, Government Information, Federal Services and International Security held a hearing "Preparing for 2010: Is the Census Bureau Ready for the Job Ahead?" The hearing included testimony from the Governmental Accountability Office (GAO) that key components of the Census Bureau's new efforts may not be ready, may not work, or may cost significantly more than originally planned.

Chairman Tom Carper (D-DE) showed concern about the increased cost of the 2010 count. "I don't understand why the price tag...is so high," commented Carper. The per capita cost for the Census has increased from \$0.01 during the first census in 1790 to a projected \$36.43 for 2010. The Bureau replied that these cost increases are due to a growing need for more accuracy, a growing resistance from Americans to provide information, and a diversifying population with new language and cultural hurdles. Carper contended that with the technology advances made overtime, the high price tag on the decennial census is very difficult to justify.

The hearing also focused on the Bureau's proposed use of new technology. For the first time, field data collection will be made through the use of hand-held computers and census takers will be able to utilize GPS technology to locate addresses. The GAO reported that the 2010 count is vulnerable to potentially fatal management and technical failures, as well as the massive cost over-runs that have characterized each Census in recent decades, but the Bureau argued otherwise. While it is still too early to evaluate the Dress Rehearsal, testified U.S. Census Bureau Director Louis Kincannon, the address canvassing operation was completed on June 26th and the overall durability and usability of the handheld computers has been successfully affirmed. "Based on the Dress Rehearsal experience, as well as our ongoing planning efforts, we are confident that we can and will effectively implement the use of handheld computers," Kincannon related.

Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK) stressed that the Bureau is overlooking an efficient means of gathering responses for the 2010 census that would reduce overall costs, increase efficiency, and fulfill the Constitutional mandate to count every American: the Internet. "The Census Bureau has refused to provide an option to Americans to be counted online, despite the fact that more than 70 percent of American adults are online," declared Coburn.

Coburn, who announced plans to introduce a rider to the Senate's Commerce, Justice and Science spending bill to require the Census Bureau to allow Internet responses as part of the decennial, also issued a challenge to the private sector calling for proposals to address the rising census cost. The challenge, he said, will go out to those in industry, academia, government, and elsewhere who may have innovative ideas for bringing the cost down. The objectives of the Census Challenge, according to Coburn, will be:

- To receive numerous proposals from successful businesses, technology and logistics experts and creative citizens throughout America for innovative ideas for ways to conduct the census for less than \$90 a household and still maintain high data quality.
- To collect the proposals and to present them to the Secretary of Commerce and the Director of the Census Bureau for their consideration and comment.
- To consider the possibility of legislative remedies that may assist the Census Bureau in conducting a more efficient and effective decennial census.

Andrew Reamer, Fellow of the Metropolitan Policy Program at the Brookings Institution, stressed the fundamental importance of the Census to the American government and economy. He remarked that the

architecture of our representative democracy rests on the foundation provided by the decennial census. Reamer went on to say that the decennial census is essential not only for determining the allocation of power within government, but the effective performance of the duties of government as well. It also helps, Reamer testified, to structure programs at all levels of government, including the allocation of federal funds.

GIRLS MISSING IN SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

According to a recent study by the National Academies' Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy (COSEPUP), women are a small portion of the science and engineering faculty members at research universities, and they typically receive fewer resources and less support than their male colleagues. The report, *Beyond Bias and Barriers: Fulfilling the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering*, concluded that the representation of women in leadership positions in academic institutions, scientific and professional societies, and honorary organizations is low relative to the numbers of women qualified to hold these positions. The committee attributes this discovery largely to unintentional biases and outmoded institutional structures that hinder the access and advancement of women not the lack of talent. Go to www7.nationalacademies.org/womeninacademe/ to view more information on the study.

These findings were echoed on July 18 during a COSSA co-sponsored congressional lunch briefing held by Women's Policy, Inc. speakers included: Jacquelynne S. Eccles, McKeachie Collegiate Professor of Psychology and Research Professor, Institute for Research on Women and Gender and the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, and Laurel L. Haak, Science Director, Discovery Logic, Inc., and former National Academies' study director. Eccles, who presented on "Gender and Educational and Occupational Choices," provided her perspective on why women are still less likely to go into engineering and the physical sciences. She cited 'parenting' as a key factor. "Parents," Eccles proclaimed, "have different views of their sons' and daughters' abilities despite comparability in their actual performance." She also reported that parents provide different opportunities to engage in science related activities to sons and daughters and that parents make different attributions for their child's performance in math and science.

Referring to the Michigan Study of Adolescent Life Transitions (MSALT) longitudinal study, Eccles found that girls had lower confidence in their math abilities than boys from grade 7 on. In a second study these differences were already established by first grade. Eccles concluded that gender differences emerge quite young and are heavily socialized in the family. They are also reinforced in classrooms and by the children themselves.

Haak claimed women have the drive and ability to succeed in science and engineering and overcome these socialization differences. For more than 30 years, Haak noted, women have earned more than 30 percent of doctorates in the social and behavioral sciences and more than 20 percent in the life sciences. Yet, Haak detailed that at top research institutions women hold only 15 percent of full professorships in the social and life sciences and less than 10 percent of full professorships in other scientific fields but are very likely to face discrimination in every field of science and engineering. "Female and minority scientists and engineers have had to function in environments that favor white men." She also pointed out that minority women are virtually absent from leading science and engineering departments.

Haak strongly asserted that in order to enhance our nation's competitiveness we have to reduce career impediments for women, providing the nation with a source of talented and accomplished scientists and engineers.

Recommendations from the Field

Beyond Bias and Barriers suggests that eliminating gender bias in academia requires immediate overarching reform, including decisive action by university administrators, professional societies, federal funding agencies and foundations, government agencies, and Congress. The report claims that women are simply opting out of academic careers, such that increasing the number of women earning S&E doctorates would have little effect on the number of women in academic positions unless attention is paid to recruiting women to these positions and retaining them once hired.

The study includes a number of recommended actions that if implemented and coordinated across public, private, and government sectors, will help to improve workplace environments for all employees while strengthening the foundations of America's competitiveness. The report urges trustees, university presidents, and

provosts to provide clear leadership in changing the culture and structure of their institutions to recruit, retain, and promote women, including minority women, into faculty and leadership positions. It also wants federal funding agencies and foundation practices, including rules and regulations, to support the full participation of women and not reinforce a culture that fundamentally discriminates against women. (For more on the report and its reception by NIH, see Update [June 11, 2007](#).)

KEY NATIONAL INDICATORS OF CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING 2007 REPORT RELEASED; ADDITIONAL INDICATORS NEEDED

On July 13, the Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics released its 2007 report, *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2007*. The report is one in a series of annual reports to the Nation on the conditions of children in America. The Forum was informally established in 1994, when the Office of Management and Budget joined with six other Federal agencies. In 1997, it was formally established through Executive Order No. 13045 and charged to develop priorities for collecting enhanced data on children and youth, improve the reporting and dissemination of information on the status of children to the policy community and the general public, and produce more complete data on children at the State and local levels.

The report presents 38 key indicators on the various aspects of children's lives which are easily understood by broad audiences, objectively based on substantial research, and balanced so that no single area of children's lives dominates the report. The indicators are measured regularly so that they can be updated to show trends over time, and are representative of large segments of the population rather than one particular group. Currently, 22 Federal agencies and private research organizations participate in the coordination, collaboration, and integration of this data.

In celebration of its 10th anniversary, the Forum restructured the report into seven sections that cover the areas of (1) family and social environment, (2) economic circumstances, (3) health care, (4) physical environment and safety, (5) behavior, (6) education, and (7) health. These indicators either characterize an aspect of well-being or influence well-being. The report does not distinguish between the two types of indicators nor does it address the relationships between them, but considers all of the indicators important to assessing the well-being of children. Reviewing structure of the report led to recommendations for a number of new indicators: child maltreatment, oral health, drinking water quality, lead in the blood of children, child injury and mortality, adolescent injury and mortality, sexual activity, college enrollment, and asthma. The report also reflects the Forum's efforts to create guidelines for presenting data involving race and ethnicity with greater consistency and continuity, according to Katherine Wallman, head of the Office of Management and Budget's Office of Statistical Policy, in the report's forward. The 2007 report contained a number of highlights.

Family and Social Environment -- indicators that characterize or are related to children's family and social environment.

- In 2006, 67 percent of children ages 0-17 lived with two married parents, down from 77 percent in 1980.
- The non-marital birth rate in 2005 increased to 48 per 1,000 unmarried women ages 15-44 years, up from 46 in 2004. The recent increases in non-marital birth rates have been especially notable among women age 25 and older. Births to unmarried women constituted 37 percent of all U.S. births, the highest level ever reported.
- In 2005, 20 percent of school-age children spoke a language other than English at home and 5 percent of school-age children had difficulty speaking English.
- The adolescent birth rate for females ages 15-17 continued to decline in 2005. The rate fell by more than two-fifths since 1991, reaching 21 births per 1,000 females ages 15-17 in 2005. The 2004-2005 decline was particularly steep among Black, non-Hispanic and Asian or Pacific Islander adolescents. The birth rate for Black, non-Hispanic adolescents dropped three-fifths during 1991-2005.
- In 2005, there were 12 substantiated reports of child maltreatment per 1,000 children.

Current data collections systems at the national level do not provide extensive detailed information on children's families, their caregivers, or their environment. More details are needed on family structure and interactions, and time use.

Economic Circumstances -- indicators that characterize or are related to children's basic material needs.

- In 2005, 18 percent of all children ages 0-17 lived in poverty; among children living in families, the poverty rate was 17 percent.
- The percentage of children in families living below the federal poverty threshold has fluctuated since the early 1980s: it reached a high of 22 percent in 1993 and decreased to a low of 16 percent in 2000.
- The percentage of children who had at least one parent working year round, full time rose from 77.6 percent in 2004 to 78.3 percent in 2005.

The report explains that economic security is multifaceted, and several measures are needed to adequately represent its various aspects. This year's report continues the practice of providing some information on economic and food security, but additional indicators are needed on economic well-being, long-term poverty among families with children, and homelessness.

Health Care -- indicators that characterize determinants of, or use of, health services.

- In 2005, 89 percent of children had health insurance coverage at some point during the year, down from 90 percent in 2004.
- In 2005, 48 percent of children ages 2-4 had a dental visit in the past year, compared with 84 percent of children ages 5-11 and 82 percent of children ages 12-17. In 2003-2004, 23 percent of children ages 2-5 and 14 percent of children ages 6-17 had untreated dental caries (cavities) upon dental examination.

Information on a limited number of key indicators on health care is provided. Information on other aspects of health care is needed to fully understand the effect of health care on children's well-being. Additional indicators are needed on the adequacy of health care coverage and the quality and content of health care.

Physical Environment and Safety -- indicators that characterize children's environmental conditions or are related to children's safety.

- In 2005, 40 percent of households with children had one or more housing problems, up from 37 percent in 2003. The most common type of housing problem is cost burden, followed by physically inadequate housing and crowded housing.
- In 2004, the injury death rate for children ages 1-4 was 13 deaths per 100,000 children.
- The leading causes of injury-related emergency department visits among adolescents ages 15-19 in 2003-2004 were being struck by or against an object (33 visits per 1,000 children), motor vehicle traffic crashes (25 visits per 1,000 children), and falls (20 visits per 1,000 children). Together, these causes of injury accounted for half of all injury-related emergency department visits for this age group.

It is noted in the report that children are exposed to many different contaminants in the environment. Increasing efforts are underway to assess exposures through "body burden" measurements - contaminants levels in samples of blood and other fluids, such as blood lead levels. Data are needed to more thoroughly characterize children's potential exposure to drinking water contaminant. They are also needed for food and soil contaminants and for cumulative exposures to multiple environmental contaminants that children encounter daily.

Behavior -- indicators that characterize personal behaviors and their effects.

- The percentages of 8th-, 10th-, and 12th-grade students reporting illicit drug use in the past 30 days remained stable from 2005 to 2006. However, past month use among all three grades significantly declined since 1997.
- In 2005, 47 percent of high school students reported ever having had sexual intercourse. This was statistically the same rate as in 2003 and a decline from 54 percent in 1991.

A broader set of indicators than those presented in the report is needed to adequately monitor the behaviors and social environments of young people. Other behavioral and social environment measures are needed on positive behaviors and youth violence. The participation of young people in positive activities and the formation of close attachments to family, school, and community have been linked to positive outcomes in research studies. Additional research, however, needs to be conducted to strengthen the understanding of positive activities and the aspects of those activities that protect youth from risk. Likewise, additional work is needed to produce a more comprehensive and useful picture of the number, experiences, and characteristics of youth within the criminal justice system.

Education -- indicators that characterize or are related to how children learn and progress in school.

- The percentage of children ages 3-5 not yet in kindergarten who were read to daily by a family member was higher in 2005 than in 1993 (60 versus 53 percent). A greater percentage of White, non-Hispanic and Asian children were read to daily in 2005 than were Black, non-Hispanic, or Hispanic children (68 and 66 percent, compared with 50 and 45 percent, respectively).
- Between 1982 and 2004, the percentage of high school graduates who had completed an advanced mathematics course almost doubled, increasing from 26 to 50 percent. Likewise, the percentage of graduates who had completed a physics, chemistry, or advanced biology course almost doubled, increasing from 35 to 68 percent.
- In 2005, 69 percent of high school completers enrolled immediately in a 2- or 4-year college. This rate was not statistically different than the historic high of 67 percent reached in 2004.

Regular, periodic data collections are needed to collect information on young children's cognitive, social and emotional development. While the report offers indicators of young children's exposure to reading, and early childhood education, a regular source of data is needed to monitor specific social, intellectual, and emotional skills of preschoolers over time.

Health -- indicators that characterize or are related to physical, mental, and social aspects of children's health.

- The percentage of infants with low birth weight was 8.2 percent in 2005, up from 7.9 percent in 2003 and 8.1 percent in 2004 and has increased slowly but steadily since 1984 (6.7 percent).
- In 2005, 5 percent of children ages 4-17 were reported by a parent to have serious (definite or severe) emotional or behavioral difficulties. Among the parents of these children, 81 percent reported contacting a health care provider or school staff about their child's difficulties, 40 percent reported their child was prescribed medication for their difficulties, and 47 percent reported their child had received treatment other than medication.
- The proportion of children ages 6-17 who were overweight increased from 6 percent in 1976-1980 to 11 percent in 1988-1994 and continued to rise to 18 percent in 2003-2004.
- In 2005, about 9 percent of children ages 0-17 were reported to currently have asthma, and about 5 percent of children had one or more asthma attacks in the previous year. The prevalence of asthma in children is particularly high among Black, non-Hispanic and Puerto Rican children (13 and 20 percent, respectively).

National indicators on several key dimensions of health are not yet available as a result of the difficulty in reaching consensus on relevant definitions and measurements. The Forum identified disability as a priority for indicator development. It is very interested in an improved measure of functioning that can be derived from regularly collected data. Such a measure is often referred to as a disability measure. Disability is a complicated multidimensional concept, hence the difficulties in developing such a measure. There is little agreement regarding which aspects of functioning should be included or how they should be measured.

To download and read the report see <http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/index.asp>

RESEARCH PROPOSALS WANTED REGARDING OUTCOMES IN CHILDREN WITH MILD TO SEVERE HEARING LOSS

The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD) seeks research applications that are multidisciplinary to investigate outcomes in young children with mild to severe hearing loss. Applications should also have a primary focus on determining the impact of intervention, child, and family factors on communicative, educational, and social development outcomes in young children.

The request-for-applications (PA-07-394) follows a NIDCD-sponsored workshop on Outcomes Research in Children with Hearing Loss, held in December 2006 by the Institute. The workshop was designed to determine and prioritize research needs and discuss design considerations unique to outcomes research in children with hearing loss. It considered not only the auditory, speech, and linguistic capabilities of children, but all factors influencing "the child as a whole," including family, cultural, demographic, and individual child characteristics.

According to NIDCD, as many as 33 children with significant hearing impairment are born every day in the U.S. Understanding the impact of intervention, child, family, and social variables on child outcomes is requisite to designing optimal strategies to support and maximize auditory, speech, language, academic and psychosocial development in children with hearing loss. There are very young children with hearing loss that are currently engaged in varying intervention programs with little data-driven outcomes research available to guide clinicians and early interventionists, the Institute notes. Accordingly, NIDCD believes that there is a need for a new generation of evidence-based research to guide current clinical practices. Few studies have looked at the "whole child" in efforts to determine how the child with hearing loss functions in real world environments, beyond speech and language, to include learning, academic and psychosocial issues. The Institute notes that the "whole child" perspective is inherently multidisciplinary, requiring collaborations among fields, including but not limited to audiology, speech-language pathology, linguistics, developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, education, early intervention, pediatrics and otolaryngology. The research approach may be longitudinal, experimental, multi-site and/or multidisciplinary. Investigations in response to the request may include, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- Determination of conditions that influence outcomes either positively or negatively;
- Evaluation of combinations and sequences of technological and behavioral interventions;
- Development of effective interventions tailored to developmental status as well as to child and family variables;
- Evaluation of interactions between child, family, and social variables affecting outcomes;
- Determination of the interactions and influences of specific intervention program features and child and family characteristics on outcome;
- Determination of the influence of the intervention service provider (e.g., home, school, clinic based) on outcome;
- Studies of family engagement and adherence to intervention programs
- Identification of aspects of the service delivery settings that impact access, utilization, quality, outcomes, and costs of care;

- Determination of socioeconomic factors that affect access to services;
- Determination of the efficacy of specialized behavioral therapies in understudied populations, including minorities and low socioeconomic communities.

For more information see <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-07-394.html>.

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