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COSSA Washington Update

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FY 2010 APPROPRIATIONS: HOUSE 12; SENATE 4.

As the Congress moves into its summer recess, the attempt to finish all the FY 2010 appropriations bills before the beginning of the fiscal year on October 1, 2009 remains an iffy proposition. The House accomplished its goal of completing work on all 12 spending bills before leaving town on July 31. The Senate has passed only four of the 12 by its August 7 recess date.

During August, staff will begin discussions on reconciling differences in the four bills ready for conference and final passage: Homeland Security; Agriculture and Rural Development (the Senate passed this bill on August 4, for details regarding research and data see Update [July 13, 2009](#)) ; Energy and Water; and Legislative Branch.

All the other Senate bills have made it through the Appropriations Committee except for Defense. The two major bills that encompass many of the agencies that support social and behavioral science research - Commerce, Justice, Science, and Labor, Health and Human Services, Education - await full Senate consideration in September as do the six other remaining bills.

Finishing all the bills on time will be a tough task and so the prospect of a Continuing Resolution and another possible Omnibus Spending bill may become part of the denouement of the budget process once again this year.

LABOR, HHS, EDUCATION SPENDING BILL FOR FY 2010 EMERGES FROM SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

The Senate's version of the FY 2010 spending bill for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education emerged from the Senate Appropriations Committee on July 30. The full Senate is expected to consider the

legislation in September. No amendments to defund NIH grants, as happened in the House (see Update [July 27, 2009](#)), were offered at the Committee level, but this does not preclude such mischief occurring on the Senate floor.

The Senate this year took a different approach to the legislation, according to Subcommittee Chairman Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA), head of the panel that oversees these three departments. The American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) was a major factor in shaping the bill, Harkin admitted. "Instead of providing even more increases to programs that did very well in the Recovery Act, this bill emphasizes several other important programs," Harkin told his colleagues and stakeholders. The Committee report accompanying the bill includes lots of language affecting research agendas for social and behavioral science studies.

National Institutes of Health

One consequence of Harkin's pronouncement is that the increase for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) over the FY 2009 funding level, not including the \$10.2 billion in ARRA funds, is only \$441.8 million, the same as the President's request. This would have total NIH funding for FY 2010 at \$30.759 billion, below the House recommendation of \$31.259 billion.

Like the House, the Senate panel rejected the Administration's proposals "to earmark an increase of \$268 million for research on cancer and an increase of \$19 million for research on autism." The report argued that the President's plan would set a dangerous precedent. "The Committee has long subscribed to the view that funding levels for individual diseases should be determined without political interference. If Congress were to earmark funds for cancer and autism, advocates for a multitude of other health problems would justifiably demand similar treatment. In the long run, no one's interest would be served if Members of Congress with no professional expertise in medical research were asked to make funding decisions about hundreds of diseases and health conditions."

The Committee recommends \$549.1 million for the Common Fund, the same amount as the budget request. The FY 2009 level was \$541.1 million.

Commenting on the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research [OBSSR] Systems Science Initiative, the Committee acknowledged the collaborative work of OBSSR with other institutes and centers to encourage methodological advances in systems science and help cutting-edge areas of behavioral and social sciences research evolve and advance.

Unlike the past two years, the Committee's bill does not include a specific amount of funding for the National Children's Study [NCS]. Although supportive of the initiative, the Committee was upset that the NIH did not provide it the revised estimates of NCS' cost until recently -- "The Committee considers this withholding of information to be a serious breach of trust." "Given the lack of transparency involved with the study so far, the Committee believes it should have the most up-to-date information possible before settling on a specific funding level, if any, for the NCS, and thus will delay that decision until conference." The House provided \$194.4 million for FY 2010 for the study.

In the report, the National Cancer Institute receives commendation "for its efforts to incorporate innovative social psychological theories into cancer prevention research, and encourages additional work in this area."

In its discussion of the work of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS), the report notes that the "Committee is pleased that the Institute will co-chair with the National Institute on Aging (NIA) the development of a new blueprint to coordinate and augment research on basic behavioral and social science." The Committee also reports its pleasure that the NIGMS is "supporting research on the modeling of social behavior, which will clarify the process by which individual interactions lead to collective group behaviors." However, the panel expresses its continued concern that the "NIGMS is still not funding investigator-initiated research by behavioral scientists, as it is authorized to do so by way of its statute and multiple congressional requests."

The Senate panel, like the House, cites the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's continued support of trans-NIH behavioral and social research initiatives on disasters and health outcomes to develop more data on the consequences of natural and man-made disasters for the health of children and vulnerable groups. Further, the Committee "encourages the Institute to continue its investment in large-scale data sets, such as the New Immigrant Study and National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, because of their value and accessibility to researchers worldwide." Finally, the Committee urges the Institute to continue "research on (1) how the structure and characteristics of the work environment affect child and family health and well-being and (2) how health and well-being in the early years (including before birth) affect health and well-being later in life."

Reiterating language from the House report, the Senate document also notes that in 2010 the NIA will be making five-year awards as part of its Demography of Aging Centers and Roybal Centers for Research on Applied Gerontology

programs. The Committee urges the NIA, with support from the NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research and Office of AIDS Research, to fund at least the existing number of centers, and more if possible. In addition, the Committee encourages the NIA to substantially increase the minority sample size of the Health and Retirement Study to understand the impact of the economic downturn on pre-retirees and retirees.

The Committee also asks NIA "to promote joint efforts with other institutes to explore the interface of behavior, neuroscience, and epidemiology in studies of normal aging. One such area is affective neuroscience, with particular emphasis on the ways in which basic psychological processes such as emotional regulation, motivation, and executive function contribute to health and functioning over the life span."

Discussing the National Institute on Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse, the report "encourages the NIAAA to support interdisciplinary research that integrates biomedical, psychological and social science perspectives on mechanisms of behavior change." At the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the Committee commends "the Institute's continued support of behavioral research on the relationship between cognitive development and childhood experience, especially in children gestationally exposed to drugs, and encourages further research to better understand the complex relations among socioeconomic status, cognitive development and life experience."

At the National Institute of Mental Health, the Senate panel supports additional research on "how to change the behaviors that lead to HIV acquisition, transmission, and disease progression, and how to maintain protective behaviors once they are adopted, with a better understanding of the social and cultural factors that may impact different populations." The Committee also wants NIMH to examine the adaptation, development, health, and mental health needs of diverse immigrant populations.

The Senate Committee encourages the National Human Genome Research Institute to continue its emphasis on the development of real-time environmental monitoring technologies, and the advancement of tools to measure psychosocial stress and its influence on gene expression.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) received \$6.829 billion from the Senate panel. The House provided \$6.681 billion. The FY 2009 appropriation, without ARRA's \$300 million, was \$6.67 billion. Only \$40.1 million is from Evaluation set-aside money, in contrast to the House version, which has \$368.9 million from this pot. The Senate Committee included regular appropriated funds of \$291.8 million to cover FY 2010 funding for the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) and other programs in the Health Information and Service account. The House had allocated \$138.7 million for NCHS, all in evaluation set-aside funds.

At the same time, like the House, the Senate panel includes language expressing concern about cuts to sample sizes within the core surveys of the NCHS. The Committee "expects NCHS to protect core surveys without comprising data quality or accessibility, particularly with regard to minority populations. Further cuts to the sample sizes of these surveys could compromise our ability to monitor health disparities."

The report language commends the Department of Health and Human Services "for the prioritization of the domestic HIV/AIDS testing among African-Americans. The Committee requests a comprehensive report on the progress of this initiative to date to be included in fiscal year 2011 budget justification."

With regard to health promotion and prevention funds, the Committee wants CDC to expand its background community assessment of health and related social and environmental conditions in the Mississippi Delta, an area with very high rates of chronic diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension, obesity, heart disease, and stroke. It included \$5 million for this purpose in FY 2010 funds.

The Committee calls for the renewal of the National Youth Fitness and Health Study suggesting that after a more than 20 year gap, "repeating and enhancing this survey is a critical investment that can make a difference in improving the health of our Nation's youth." In addition, the Senate panel "recognizes the importance of the built environment to promoting healthy behaviors" and encourages the CDC to work with the Secretary of Transportation, CDC grantees and local transit officials to coordinate the goals of population level prevention programs with transportation projects and infrastructure that support healthy lifestyles and enhanced physical activity." The Committee also provides an increase for tobacco prevention activities to support expanded counter-marketing programs.

Under its injury prevention programs, the Senate Committee "encourages the CDC to increase research on the psychological sequelae of violence against women and expand research on special populations and their risk for violence, including adolescents, older women, ethnic and racial minorities, women with disabilities, immigrant women, and other affected populations."

Finally, the Committee expresses its strong support for CDC's public health and prevention research, "which bridges the gap between medical research discoveries and behaviors that people adopt." CDC accomplishes this "by identifying the best strategies for detecting new diseases, assessing the health status of populations, motivating healthy lifestyles, communicating effective health promotion messages, and acquiring and disseminating information in times of crisis."

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) would receive \$372.1 million from the Senate panel, same as the House, the budget request, and FY 2009 funding without the ARRA money.

The Committee redirects \$17.2 million from AHRQ's health IT (Information Technology) portfolio in order to fund investigator-initiated research. The Committee states that it values AHRQ for its unique role in research relating to comparative effectiveness, patient safety and the prevention of healthcare-associated infections. Yet, the panel also notes that while funding for these specific priorities has increased in recent years, "AHRQ's investigator-initiated research activity has languished. New and original research on other topics in AHRQ's portfolio, such as research on health disparities, health care financing and organization, as well as access and coverage, could yield important contributions to health care reform." In addition, the Committee includes \$23.6 million within the Health Costs, Quality and Outcomes Account for this purpose and urges AHRQ to use these funds to develop a more balanced research agenda, supporting all aspects of health care research.

For the Medical Expenditure Survey (MEPS), the Senate panel provided \$55.3 million, same as the House, the request, and the FY 2009 funding.

Education

The Senate panel treated the graduate education programs as the House did, level-funding them for FY 2010. These included the Javits Fellowship program at \$9.7 million, Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN) at \$31 million, and Thurgood Marshall Legal Educational Opportunity Program at \$3 million.

Unlike the House which provided a \$9.3 million increase, the Senate agreed with the Administration and provided level-funding of \$118.9 million for International Education and Foreign Language programs. In the Senate bill, Domestic Programs would receive \$102.3 million, the Fulbright-Hays Overseas program, \$14.7 million, and the Institute for International Public Policy, \$1.8 million. The Committee bill includes language that allows the funding "to support visits and study in foreign countries by individuals who plan to utilize their language skills in world areas vital to the United States national security in the fields of government, international development, and the professions." As in previous years, bill language also allows up to one percent of the funds provided for program evaluation, national outreach, and information dissemination activities.

The Committee recommends \$85.6 million for the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). The comparable House number was \$133.9 million. The Senate version, like the House's, comes loaded with congressional directed spending. Although there is no specific number for the Comprehensive Competitive program, the Committee notes that "within the funds provided, the Committee has included sufficient funds to create a consortium of institutions of higher learning that offer interdisciplinary programs which focus on poverty."

With regard to the Institute of Education Sciences, the Senate panel is more generous than the House. The Senate provided \$15 million more; \$679.3 million compared to \$664.3 million, both of which were below the requested funding level for FY 2010 of \$689.3 million.

The Committee allocates \$211.2 million for education research, development and national dissemination activities. This is \$12 million above the House level, \$44 million above FY 2009, and \$13 million below the request.

Similar to the House and the President's budget request, the Senate provides \$108.5 million for the National Center for Educational Statistics. The Committee appropriates \$65 million for Statewide Data Systems, the same amount as the budget request. The FY 2009 funding of \$315 million for this program included \$250 million from ARRA. For assessment, the Senate panel includes \$138.8 million, the same amount as the House, FY 2009 funding, and the budget request. Within the funds appropriated, the Committee gave \$8.7 million to the National Assessment Governing Board [NAGB].

Labor

For the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the Senate Committee recommends \$611.3 million, slightly less than the House's \$611.6 million, but still an increase of a little over \$14,000 from FY 2009 funding. The report notes the Committee's continued concern about the significant discrepancies found in comparisons of BLS injury and illness survey data, which are based on employer-reported injury logs provided to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration [OSHA], and State worker compensation information. The research identified that the BLS data were only capturing as few as one-third of injuries under certain State worker compensation systems. Therefore, the Committee recommendation includes \$1.3 million "to continue BLS efforts to: strengthen the current BLS examination of the differences between workers' compensation information and BLS survey data; better understand employer injury and illnesses recording practices and conduct a pilot study of using multiple data sources to capture injury and illness data." Similar language is found in the House report.

The Senate panel also provides \$12.5 million for the Workforce Data Quality Initiative, a new program proposed in this year's budget. The budget request includes \$15 million for this initiative. These funds will assist States to incorporate comprehensive workforce information into longitudinal data systems under development with the support of the Department of Education. The initiative also will help improve the quality and accessibility of performance data produced by training providers. The funds requested will also support competitive grants to help workers access green training and green career pathways.

SENATE AND HOUSE PANELS PROVIDE SET-ASIDE FOR HUD RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

On July 30, the FY 2010 funding for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) emerged from the Senate Appropriations Committee. The Committee provided \$48 million for the Office of Policy Development and Research (OPDR), \$2 million less than the House and the President's request, but a significant increase over the FY 2009 funding level, once the transfer of the University Programs to the Community Development Block Grant are taken into account.

In the report accompanying the Senate bill, the Committee asserted that the additional funding "will allow the Department to gather the data necessary to track and evaluate trends in the housing market, including better regional data. This information should allow the agency to identify, among other things, the potential impacts various mortgage products may have on the stability of the housing market in regions and across the country as a whole."

The Senate Committee also agreed to fund the HUD Transformation Initiative proposed by new HUD Secretary Shaune Donovan. In addition to the requested appropriation of \$20 million, the panel provided up to \$208.6 million as transfer funds from other HUD accounts for: Research, Evaluation and Performance Metrics; Program Demonstrations; Technical Assistance and Capacity Building; and Information Technology. The Committee limited the amount of transfer funding available from the tenant-based rental assistance, project-based rental assistance, and public housing operating fund accounts.

With regard to research, demonstrations, and evaluations using the Transformation Fund set-aside, the Committee "supports HUD's effort to fund important research that will result in more informed and data-driven housing policies." It allows the Secretary discretion as to allocating for the research, demonstration and evaluation functions. Yet, the panel also directs the Secretary to undertake: a Native American housing needs assessment, a demonstration on pre-purchase counseling, an evaluation of the Moving to Work Demonstration program; and a demonstration on the conversion of public housing to Section 8 project-based vouchers.

Earlier the House panel had also provided for the \$20 million request for the Transformation Initiative, but also granted the transfer authority of up to one percent from many HUD accounts for the functions noted above. (This is a correction to the article in Update, [July 27, 2009](#).) In the report accompanying the bill, the House Committee said it "could not agree more that these are areas that require greater effort and focus than the Department has previously granted."

The House also put limits on this transfer authority. Certain accounts were exempt; voucher programs and the Public Housing Operating Fund. The Committee listed areas where the transferred funds must be spent; among them "research on home equity conversion mortgages...and a demonstration on cities in transition."

BILL FOR SOCIAL/BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH PROGRAM AT DOE ADVANCES THROUGH S&T PANEL; OPPONENTS CHARGE 'MIND CONTROL'

As noted in Update, [July 27, 2009](#), Rep. Brian Baird (D-WA) has introduced legislation to create a social and behavioral research program at the Department of Energy (DOE). On July 29, the full House Science and Technology Committee (S&T), chaired by Rep. Bart Gordon (D-TN), held a markup and reported the bill, H.R. 3247, to the House floor for consideration. The markup included one of the more ludicrous assertions heard on the Hill in a long time.

Baird, his Democratic colleagues on the panel, and the two Republican Ph.D.s on the Committee, Rep. Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD) (Physical Biology) and Rep. Vern Ehlers (R-MI) (Physics), all argued that establishing such a research program in DOE would provide awareness of how people will react to new energy technologies and how people can by making choices save energy today. Baird again cited hearings held by the Research and Science Education Subcommittee in 2007 and the Energy and Environment Subcommittee in 2009, both of which he chaired, where witnesses "identified new and continuing areas of basic research in the social sciences that could significantly improve our ability to design effective technologies and policies" and discussed "how improved understanding of attitudes and behaviors that motivate people to take action" can reduce personal energy use.

Bartlett declared that social and behavioral research "is precisely what we need" for helping this country reduce its dependence on foreign sources of energy or what Baird called the "Petrodictators." Ehlers noted that DOE does not do a very good job of understanding how to get people to reduce energy consumption and this new program would help. Others who spoke out forcefully for the bill included: Rep. Donna Edwards (D-MD); Rep. Marcia Fudge (D-OH); Rep. Parker Griffith (D-AL); Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY); and Rep. David Wu (D-OR). The Committee also accepted two amendments sponsored by Edwards to ensure diversity in the research program and to clarify definitions.

Most of the Republicans on the Committee, led by Ranking Member Ralph Hall (R-TX), opposed the bill. Their primary argument was that the National Science Foundation (NSF) already funded the research program proposed in the legislation. The Committee accepted an amendment sponsored by Rep. Bob Inglis (R-SC) to ensure coordination between DOE and NSF when preparing solicitations and awarding grants. When Baird noted that NSF also funds physics studies, the major component of DOE research, the argument shifted.

Social and Behavioral Research and 'Mind Control'

Rep. Dana Rohrbacher (R-CA), who throughout his congressional career and service on the S&T Committee has expressed his contempt for social and behavioral research, then proclaimed that the legislation would lead to psychiatrists exercising 'mind control' over Americans telling them what cars to drive and when to turn out their lights. This was picked up by Rep. Mario Diaz-Bahlart (R-FL), who argued that the social and behavioral research program at DOE was the first step on the slippery slope toward Americans' loss of freedom. Rohrbacher also appeared on the Glenn Beck TV program, where he and the host proceeded to reiterate and reinforce this message while also denigrating behavioral research.

Another tactic to derail the legislation was produced by Rep. Paul Broun (R-GA). He proposed substituting "market forces" for "social and behavioral" as the focus of the new program's research agenda. Baird noted that even economists have recognized the importance of behavior to economic decision making, citing Daniel Kahneman's Nobel Prize in Economics. Hall's response to this argument and achievement was to dismiss it because of the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Republican attempts to derail the legislation through the amendment process were defeated and the bill now moves to the House floor. In response to the brouhaha created by the Glenn Beck show and other stuff in the blogosphere, Baird felt compelled to produce a justification for the legislation and a retort to the 'mind control' charge on his web site www.baird.house.gov.

CHICAGO FOCUS OF HEARING ON K-12 STEM EDUCATION AT HOUSE SCIENCE SUBCOMMITTEE

On July 30, the House Committee on Science and Technology's Research and Science Education Subcommittee held a hearing to examine how the public and private stakeholders in an urban K-12 system can work together to improve science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education both inside and outside of the classroom. Given

the Subcommittee Chairman, Rep. Daniel Lipinski (D-IL), and the new Secretary of Education, Arne Duncan, are from the city, the hearing focused specifically on the Chicago Public Schools (CPS).

Subcommittee members heard testimony from witnesses representing many of the key stakeholders in K-12 STEM education. In his opening statement Lipinski recognized Chicago as playing a leading role in bringing diverse stakeholders together to get students excited about STEM subjects and that improvements in the nation's STEM education system are vital to maintaining and strengthening economic competitiveness. "In hearings and reports we have repeatedly heard that innovation is key to maintaining a high standard of living for all Americans, and that we need more teachers and more graduates in the STEM fields if we want our country to continue to lead in the global economy," said Lipinski. He continued: "But we know there is no panacea and no one entity that can solve this alone. Reform of our STEM education system will require coordination on multiple fronts and across many diverse stakeholders."

Lipinski further insisted that Chicago's diverse population represented in its over four hundred thousand public school students, its top-notch universities, and the commitment of local industry, the school system, and city leaders, would make it an ideal case study for understanding what works in improving STEM education and what can be done at the federal level to encourage best practices across the country.

Wanda Ward, Acting Assistant Director for Education and Human Resources at the National Science Foundation (NSF), testified about the NSF's role in providing support for systemic approaches to STEM education through programs such as the Math and Science Partnerships program. "The National Science Foundation recognizes that STEM education is at a crossroad, in need of increased attention from a broad array of stakeholders who have the common goal of promoting STEM excellence for all learners." Ward went on to say that NSF believes that the field is ready to pursue innovative ideas to advance current understanding of STEM education by linking novel approaches and best/effective practices to STEM-specific challenges for the 21st century. "Our vision will be aligned with the STEM priorities in the American COMPETES Act (and/or the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act," she told the panel.

Donald Wink, Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Chemistry, and Director of Graduate Studies in the Learning Sciences Research Institute at the University of Illinois, Chicago, also discussed the university's role in helping with K-12 STEM education, through NSF support. Wink contended that in order to have the strongest impact and make the most efficient use of our own resources, a more strategic approach to providing science education experiences is needed to partner with educational organizations.

Highlighting the successes and challenges of the many STEM education partnerships and initiatives that have been developed in Chicago, Michael Lach, Officer of Teaching and Learning at CPS, insisted that partnerships are needed to continue to work towards closing the achievement gap. "We have made great progress with mathematics and science instruction in Chicago. Student performance has risen considerably over the past five years, and the rate of improvement is faster than that of the state... however we really depend on the assistance and partnership of others—the local community groups, colleges and universities, museums and laboratories as well as the federal government to advance our work," he testified.

Katherine Pickus, Divisional Vice President of Global Citizenship and Policy at Abbott Laboratories located in Illinois, testified about the role that her company's scientists play in improving STEM education in their own communities. "Our focus on STEM education represents an investment along the full K-12 spectrum. This investment is part of Abbott's global science education platform serving students of all ages, with authentic, engaging and developmentally appropriate science learning experiences." To reach young children, and encourage greater participation from parents, she noted that Abbott has formed a partnership with the non-profit Family Science organization to create Abbott Family Science. This, according to Pickus, is a unique informal educational program that bring kids, parents, teachers and scientists together for an exciting, hands-on experience focused on fundamental science and 21st century skills (observation, problem-solving, teamwork) and building confidence as life-long science learners.

Also appearing before the Subcommittee was Maggie Daley, Chair of After School Matters, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing informal science educational activities, including STEM, to Chicago's high school students. She asserted that "it is clear that any plan for improving the reach and effectiveness of science and technology education in this country must give informal educators a prominent role."

In closing Lipinski, concluded that America needs to achieve success in improving STEM education. Without it, he said, "we will lose our capacity for innovation and diminish our country's economic strength and competitiveness in the international marketplace. I am confident that Americans can do it, and we can maintain our world leadership."

For witness testimony and more information about the hearing go to:
http://science.house.gov/publications/hearings_markups_details.aspx?NewsID=2562.

CNSTAT PANEL RECOMMENDS CHANGES IN SIPP

The U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) began in 1983 and in 2013 will introduce a major redesigned and reengineered version. SIPP was originally developed to "fill gaps in the available information on the short-term dynamics of income, household composition, employment, and eligibility for and participation in government assistance programs experienced by families in America."

In 2006, the Bureau decided to reengineer SIPP to reduce its costs and improve data quality and timeliness. At the time, the Bureau asked Congress to discontinue the original survey. Congress rejected that request and has continued to restore its funding and sample size.

The Census Bureau proposed to make greater use of administrative records, move to annual interviews, use event history calendars, and modernize its collection and processing systems. It asked the Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT) of the National Academies to address specific aspects of the reengineering design. John Karl Scholz of the Department of Economics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison chaired the CNSTAT panel. The report, *Reengineering the Survey of Income and Program Participation*, was released on July 2.

The Committee concludes that SIPP "is a unique source of information for a representative sample of household members on the intrayear dynamics of income, employment, and program eligibility and participation, together with related demographic and socioeconomic characteristics." Furthermore, "this information remains as vital today for evaluating and improving government programs addressed to social and economic needs of the U.S. population as it did when the survey began 25 years ago." However, the panel criticizes the survey for falling short of its original promise with regard to timeliness, usability, and maintenance of data quality.

Therefore, the panel recommends that any redesigned SIPP should have as its primary goal "to provide data for policy analysis and research on the short-run (intra-year) dynamics of economic well-being for families and households, including employment, earnings, other income, and program eligibility and participation."

Surveys and Administrative Records

To accomplish this, the report argues that the "Census Bureau must continue to use survey interviews as the primary data collection vehicle." It rejects replacing the survey with administrative records from federal and state agencies, "primarily because they do not provide information on people who are eligible for—but do not participate in—government assistance programs and, more generally, because they do not provide all of the detail that is needed for SIPP to serve its primary goal." Furthermore, the Committee indicates, that many records are also difficult to acquire and use because of legal restrictions on data sharing, and some of the information they contain may be erroneous.

At the same time, the Committee recommends that "information from administrative records that is relevant to SIPP and likely to improve the quality of SIPP reports of program participation and income receipt in particular can and should be used in a reengineered SIPP." It calls on the Census Bureau to investigate ways to obtain these records from federal and state agencies and proposes that "the Statistical and Science Policy Office in the U.S. Office of Management and Budget establish an interagency working group on uses of administrative records in SIPP."

Commenting on the plan to make SIPP an annual survey utilizing event calendar histories, the panel indicates that it is not aware of conclusive evidence that a 12-month event history calendar framework "is capable (or not) of generating accurate monthly information on income, program participation, and other topics that are covered in SIPP. The lack of evidence about the ability of an event history calendar to collect monthly data places considerable pressure on the Census Bureau, not only to design an effective pretesting program for the event history methodology, but also to make its survey reengineering plans for SIPP sufficiently flexible so that it can modify its plans if the pretesting reveals unanticipated, negative evidence on the likely success of the proposed methodology in providing high-quality monthly information."

In addition, the report calls on the Bureau to study the trade-offs in survey quality and respondent burden in comparison to survey costs between longer but less frequent event history-based interviews in a reengineered SIPP and more frequent interviews in the traditional SIPP. Noting that data from the 2004 SIPP panel were generally released more than 2 years after being collected, the Committee urges the Bureau to make SIPP data available within one year of data collection.

Finally, remarking on SIPP's checkered history of funding cutbacks leading to sample reductions and other problems, the report cites an earlier Committee on National Statistics panel review, *The Future of the Survey of Income and Program Participation*, published in 1993. That document suggested SIPP would benefit from a project director with

full management and budget authority for design, evaluation, and operations and a budget that always included adequate research and development funding, "since SIPP is a major ongoing survey that requires regular evaluation and improvement."

For a copy of the new report go to: <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/12715.html> .

REPORT AND BRIEFING FOCUS ON 'WORKING LEARNERS'

The Center for American Progress held a briefing on, July 31, in conjunction with the release of their new report, *Working Learners: Educating our Entire Workforce for Success in the 21st Century*.

The term working learners applies to people already in the workforce who lack postsecondary credentials, are not currently taking classes, and are needed wage earners for themselves or their families. Currently, there are an estimated 75 million of these people, which is about 60 percent of the total workforce.

According to the report, America's postsecondary system does not adequately provide for the education of working learners. On the one hand are the tightly structured, traditional universities and colleges that serve the needs of full-time students. However, this system, the report notes, is not suited to workers who receive their education over longer periods of time and with occasional gaps. On the other hand, the more flexible workforce development training system doesn't provide a structured program and often fails to lead workers to a career path or help them obtain the necessary educational credentials.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that by 2016, fifty percent of new job growth will require some sort of postsecondary education. In this new labor market climate, the report declares, it is imperative that working learners obtain a degree or the training necessary for career and financial success. Postsecondary education determines a worker's future earnings. According to economic research, a person with a bachelor's degree can expect to earn about 61 percent more over a 40-year working life than a typical high school graduate. Someone with an associate degree can expect to earn 28 percent more than a typical high school graduate over that same time period.

Education can also affect employment status. According to BLS, in March 2009 the unemployment rate for workers with a bachelor's degree was 4.3 percent and 7.2 percent for workers with an associate degree. In comparison, 9 percent of workers with a high school diploma were unemployed, and 13.3 percent of workers with less than a high school education were unemployed.

Louis Soares, the report's author, made several policy recommendations to help make it easier for working learners to obtain their postsecondary credentials. These included the creation of a new Micro-Pell Grant. The Pell Grant program, Soares contended, is not currently designed for students who just want to take one course per semester or obtain an occupational certificate. This inflexibility makes the program less accessible for many working learners. He also suggested modifying the Higher Education Act to create a special Pell Grant without restrictions, funded with an additional \$2 billion available from other changes in the program.

Representing the Obama Administration, Jane Oates, the new Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training at the Department of Labor and a former staff person to Sen. Edward Kennedy as well as a former COSSA Annual Meeting speaker, spoke at the briefing. She agreed with the report's recommendation for increased investment in community colleges suggesting that they need greater resources to help give them the equipment they would need to transform themselves into colleges that serve a broader range of students.

Soares also asserted that community colleges are in a strong position within their communities to play a leadership role in meeting the workforce needs of employers and the educational needs of working learners. He called for the creation of a new Office of Community College Innovation. This office would be a partnership between the Offices of Adult and Vocational Education and Postsecondary Education at the Department of Education and the Employment and Training Administration at the Department of Labor.

Rep. John Tierney (D-MA) opened the briefing and stated the need to turn our system of unemployment into a system of re-employment where workers can easily transition into new jobs having received the training or education necessary to make these transitions.

For a copy of the report go to: http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/06/working_learners.html.

IRIS F. LITT NEW HEAD OF CENTER FOR ADVANCED STUDY AT STANFORD



Iris F. Litt

Iris F. Litt, the Marron and Mary Elizabeth Kendrick Professor in Pediatrics, Emerita at Stanford University, has been named the new director of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences (CASBS) at Stanford University. She replaces Claude Steele who left to become the Provost at Columbia University.

Litt will serve for one year, while the Center, under its new Board Chairman, former Columbia Provost Jonathan Cole, searches for a permanent replacement for Steele. In addition, Robert Scott will return to his former position as Associate Director replacing Anne Petersen, who is moving to the University of Michigan.

The CASBS is dedicated to advancing knowledge about human behavior and fostering contributions to society. It does this through several programs, primarily residential fellowships. Other programs include special projects within the residential year, extended seminars involving groups of scholars who meet at the Center over two to three years, and summer institutes.

While at Stanford, Litt has been the Director of the Institute for Research on Women and Gender, and Director of Adolescent Medicine at the Stanford University School of Medicine. She has also been the National Director of the Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars Program, as well as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Physician Faculty Scholars Program

Prior to coming to Stanford in 1976, Litt was a teaching fellow at Cornell Medical College and taught pediatrics at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx. She spent eight years on the faculty in Adolescent Medicine at Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx, including appointments as Director of the New York City Juvenile Detention Center and Medical Director of the Adolescent Service at Rikers Island.

Her research has focused on health problems of adolescents, including substance abuse, prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, gender differences, compliance with medical regimens, and, most recently, the long-term consequences of eating disorders in young adolescent women.

For over fourteen years, Litt was Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Adolescent Health and she also served as the President of the Society of Adolescent Medicine. She is the author of numerous books and articles, including *Taking Our Pulse: The Health of America's Women* and *Child and Adolescent Development: Clinical Implications* (with Victor Vaughan). In 1997, Stanford established the Iris F. Litt, M.D. Fund to support Stanford faculty conducting research on women and gender.

Litt has a B.A. from Cornell University, earned her M.D. at the State University of New York, Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York. She took her internship and residency in pediatrics at the New York Hospital, and is board certified in pediatrics, with a subspecialty in adolescent medicine.

EDITOR'S NOTE: UPDATE'S RECESS

With Congress in recess until after Labor Day, Update will also take a break. The newsletter will return on September 14. The COSSA staff wishes you a great rest of the summer!

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