

CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

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TO: COSSA Members, Affiliates, Contributors, and Friends
FROM: Roberta Balstad Miller, Executive Director

COSSA LEGISLATIVE REPORT

March 12, 1982

The first NSF budget mark-up this year led to significant increases in the House authorization for social and behavioral science research.

As COSSA had urged, the House Subcommittee on Science, Research, and Technology, meeting on March 10, authorized the social and behavioral science research budgets for FY 1983 at their FY 1980 levels. According to Congressional calculations, this means an increase of \$17.6 million for social and behavioral science research at the Foundation.

Under the leadership of Congressman Doug Walgren (D-PA), most of the discussion during the mark-up concerned the importance of adequate research support for the social and behavioral sciences. Differences between majority and minority proposals were not over whether to support this research but rather over how much to increase the Reagan administration's proposals in these areas. Voting for Mr. Walgren's recommendation that social and behavioral science research should be authorized at FY 1980 levels were Congressmen George Brown (D-CA), Bob Shamansky (D-OH), Mervyn Dymally (D-CA), Stan Lundine (D-NY), Allen Ertel (D-PA), and Ralph Hall (D-TX). The Subcommittee's budget recommendations will be presented to the full Science and Technology Committee on March 18. Additional details on the NSF budget and how social scientists can help avert a compromise on this authorization in the full Committee are available elsewhere in the COSSA Legislative Report.

Dr. Philip Abelson, editor of Science magazine, will be the guest of the COSSA Executive Committee for lunch on Monday, March 15, 1982.

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National Science Foundation

The NSF authorization approved on March 10 (H.R. 5748), provides \$201.0 million for the Directorate for Biological, Behavioral, and Social Sciences. This provides BBS with an increase of 14.2% over FY 1982 and states specifically that the programs for the social and behavioral sciences "are brought to the FY 1980 funding level as a base." Overall, the authorization for Research and Related Directorates in the Foundation remains at the level requested by the administration. The additional funds for BBS were obtained by reprogramming. (See attachment #1 for the House budget authorization figures and the Subcommittee analysis.) The Subcommittee authorization also provides for an additional \$30 million for Science and Engineering Education, bringing the total for that budget to \$45 million. Of that amount, \$4 million is to be spent on research. The total authorization for the Foundation is \$1099.5 million.

The full Science and Technology Committee mark-up of H.R. 5748 (the NSF authorization bill) is scheduled for Thursday, March 18. A list of members of that Committee is appended in attachment #2. Social and behavioral scientists who live in the districts of these Congressmen should contact them by telegram, mailgram, and/or telephone before March 18, urging that they support the Subcommittee's authorization for NSF without compromise. A compromise at the Committee level may well endanger the Subcommittee's authorization level for social and behavioral science.

NSF authorization hearings will be held by the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources on April 15, and mark-up of the bill will be on April 20. COSSA will be working with other science and research organizations in the preparation of testimony for the hearings.

Department of Health and Human Services

Institute on Aging

At the request of the Social and Behavioral Research Program in the Institute on Aging, the name of the program was formally changed to the Behavioral Sciences Research Program. The change in name reflects the program's continuing emphasis on psycho-social factors in health and effective functioning. The activities of the Behavioral Sciences Research Program are essentially the same as they were before the name change. The program continues to support a full range of research in the social and behavioral sciences, including research in anthropology, sociology, economics, political science, psychology, history, demography, and epidemiology.

Department of Health and Human Services (cont.)

National Institute of Mental Health

Despite the phasing out of "social research" at the ADAMHA, some funding remains for social science research at NIMH. It is important that proposals continue to flow into NIMH or opponents of funding for social science research will be able to argue that the lack of interest in the NIMH programs among researchers justifies further budget cuts. Researchers submitting proposals will have to be careful to make the links between their projects and NIMH's missions of promoting mental health, preventing and treating mental illness, and rehabilitating affected individuals.

The much-discussed guidelines for social science research essentially require that the mental health of individuals serve as a dependent variable in research designs. As is commonly the case in seeking federal funding, researchers would be wise to discuss their ideas with program managers prior to the submission of proposals. Some examples of the topics on which social science research is likely to be funded include: social conditions which lead people to utilize nursing homes, whole-family treatment for schizophrenia and intra-familial communication processes, the "learned helplessness" model and the occurrence of depression in women, longitudinal studies of cognitive and emotional childhood disorders where the project focuses on family interactions as a source of stress, psycho-social treatment of childhood disorders, the etiology of agoraphobia, behavioral medicine and the encouragement of health promotion behavior, epidemiology, and research on the prevention of mental illness.

Another development at NIMH is the restructuring of the Division of Special Mental Health Programs. The Disaster Assistance and Emergency Mental Health Section and the National Center for the Prevention and Control of Rape are being combined into a new Center for Studies of Emergency Mental Health. Funded studies involving rape are likely to emphasize services to rape victims over research on the causes and prevention of rape.

The Administration has proposed to end NIMH's role as the lead agency for the provision of professional consulting services for victims of major disasters under Section 413 of the Disaster Relief Act of 1974 when that Act comes up for reauthorization this year.

Within the Division of Special Mental Health Programs, the Center for Studies of Child and Family Mental Health, is being replaced by a Center on Prevention.

National Endowment for the Humanities

The House Subcommittee on Post Secondary Education held oversight hearings on the National Endowment for the Humanities budget on March 4 and 5 in Washington and New York City. Subcommittee members expressed great concern over the effect of budget cuts on the Endowment. The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies held hearings for outside witnesses on March 3. According to Moira Egan of the National Humanities Alliance, the Subcommittee will accept written testimony on NEH for the hearing record until April 2. If you or your organization wishes to submit testimony, contact the COSSA office for further details.

National Archives and Records Service

On March 2, COSSA sponsored a press luncheon on the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) with the American Historical Association and the Organization of American Historians. Guests at the luncheon were Barbara Tuchman and Alex Haley. Ms. Tuchman and Mr. Haley were in Washington to testify at hearings of the Government Information and Individual Rights Subcommittee on the effect of budget cuts on NARS. In related hearings held on March 4, Gerald Karmen, administrator of the General Services Administration, announced that an expected 22 day furlough of NARS employees (which would cause a diminution of NARS services) would not take place.

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Impact of Budget Cuts on Internal Revenue Service

Statistical Program

The statistical program at IRS in support of Tax Administration had been growing rapidly in recent years. The budget cuts made in FY 1981 and FY 1982 have had the effect only of slowing this growth. Furthermore, given the initiatives to increase IRS enforcement activities, it can be expected that needed statistical support services will keep pace in the years to come.

A different picture emerges for the IRS statistical programs which provide basic economic statistics and statistics in support of the tax policy process. These efforts, known generically as Statistics of Income or SOI, were already suffering from repeated budget cuts before those made by the Reagan Administration. Furthermore, the new cuts have been very sizable. The fiscal 1982 budget in staff years, including reimbursable work, will be only about two-thirds of the corresponding figure for FY 1980.

Internal Revenue Service Statistical Program (cont.)

The following specific SOI cuts were made because of reduced budget levels:

1) Programs were dropped altogether or will be done at very infrequent intervals (e.g., statistical data on employee pension plans and farm sole proprietors, which were done annually, will be done now only at five year intervals. Note: the pension plan data were originally being obtained as part of a large Department of Labor (DOL) contract with IRS. This reimbursable agreement ended in late FY 1981.)

2) Programs experienced permanent reductions in sample sizes (e.g., for partnerships, individuals, and tax exempt organizations) on the order of 30-50% or more. Samples were redesigned to accomplish this in such a way that major national-level estimates would ultimately be only minimally effected; however, State and substate series have been cut way back.

3) Programs that already were periodic in nature have been stretched out even more and generally will be done with smaller samples. (Studies most affected here are those involving the estimation of personal wealth and capital gains transactions.)

4) High priority programs (e.g., corporations) suffered short-run sample size cuts during the early, necessarily hurried, response to the budget reductions. These are now being restored by introducing new techniques that will reduce unit costs (albeit at some possible loss in quality).

5) Foreign area studies may have to be cut back in future years since the reimbursable portion of this work has ended. A complication here is that many of these projects are mandated by Congress to be done annually. Legislative relief is being sought.

6) Regular and supplemental publications have been reduced by roughly 50% and many services formerly performed gratis now require reimbursement.

As time goes on, the Statistics of Income program will become progressively more focused on the needs of tax policy. Economic statistical series not required for this end, including many done now for the development of the National Accounts, will be carried out only on a reimbursable basis. The principle of full user funding will be applied.

Guaranteed Student Loans

Enclosed is a memo on the effects of excluding graduate students from the Guaranteed Student Loan program (attachment #3). It was prepared by members of several higher education associations and sent to every member of Congress. This information can be used in communications with your Congressmen on this issue.

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SCIENCE & GOVERNMENT REPORT

12th Year of Publication

The Independent Bulletin of Science Policy

P.O. Box 6226A, Washington, D.C. 20015

The hard-lobbying Consortium of Social Science Associations has tallied the number of social scientists on the National Science Foundation's 24-member National Science Board, and reports it found only two. In contrast, the Association says, 34 percent of all doctoral-level scientists in the US are social or behavioral scientists. Citing what it calls an "intellectually unrepresentative" situation, the Association is asking the White House for a more favorable balance on the Board.

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*On assignment to the Budget Committee for the 97th Congress.

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GUARANTEED STUDENT LOANS:

The Effect of Denying Loans to Graduate
and Professional Students

March 2, 1982

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March 2, 1982

A Crisis in Graduate Education

The attached article, "Hard Times Come to Graduate Schools" from U. S. News and World Report, reports on a crisis in graduate education that has been developing for a decade. It describes the closing of Ph.D. programs and the threatened loss of a generation of scholars. The Administration's proposal to eliminate graduate and professional students from the Guaranteed Student Loan Program would compound this already serious problem. The purpose of this paper is to describe the consequences of the Administration's proposal.

Who will be Affected

Students who will be most severely affected are those in the arts, humanities and the social sciences, and those in medicine, law and other professional programs. In the past, many graduate students in science and engineering have been supported through work on federally sponsored research projects. However, the deep cuts proposed in research support for some fields would make students studying in those fields more dependent on the GSL program.

How Graduate and Professional Students Use GSL's

GSL's are a last resort. They are loans that must be repaid, and graduate and professional students anticipate monthly repayments with about the same relish as other people. According to current law, these students may borrow up to \$5,000 per year under the GSL program to help pay tuition and living costs -- costs that in some schools exceed \$12,000 per year.

GSL's provide the basic financial support for a substantial portion of all graduate and professional students. Most parents cannot maintain their financial responsibility after the baccalaureate degree. Although graduate students may apply for college work-study (CW-S) and NDSL loans and certain other programs, those funds are limited and are intended only to supplement other forms of support. In addition, those programs will be reduced substantially under the Administration's budget proposals (NDSL's are eliminated and CW-S is reduced by one-third); programs for health professions students have been almost completely eliminated. Without GSL's, many graduate students will be forced to leave school, enroll in less costly institutions, or seek work that will permit attending school part-time.

ALAS (Auxiliary Loans to Assist Students)

The ALAS program is not a feasible alternative to the GSL program. It has two serious drawbacks. First, there is no assurance that loans will be available when they are needed. To date, only 23 states have passed enabling legislation; only 14 are actually making loans. (The Administration anticipated \$2.5 billion in ALAS loans in FY 1982; as of January 18, ALAS loan volume totaled only \$12.6 million.)

Second, lenders may not shoulder the paperwork burden required to collect monthly interest payments from students, and most banks cannot withstand cash flow delays that would accompany accruing interest while students are in school. Therefore, it is not safe to assume that all states will embrace ALAS or that bankers will lend to graduate and professional students.

For the sake of argument, however, assume that these students can, in the future, get ALAS loans. How do ALAS and GSL loans compare?

GSL vs. ALAS

Under GSL, the government pays interest while students are in school, and it subsidizes interest to keep the rate charged to students at 9%. Under ALAS, interest rates would be 14%, and full-time students would have to pay interest while in school unless banks permit accrual of interest. Part-time graduate students (more than half of the total) would have to pay both principal and interest while attending school.

The following examples illustrate the financial consequences of a shift from GSL to ALAS.

1. A student with an undergraduate GSL debt of \$7,500 and a graduate school debt of \$10,000 would have monthly repayment costs of \$223 for ten years. If the \$10,000 graduate loan is converted to ALAS terms, the increase over GSL would be 37%, producing a monthly repayment of \$305 for 10 years.

Under current law (GSL only), the debt of \$17,500 ultimately costs the borrower \$26,600. If \$10,000 (the graduate portion of the total) were converted to ALAS, the cost would increase to \$36,500, a 37% increase in the loan repayment, reflecting a 109% increase in interest costs.

2. The same calculations for a maximum allowable debt (which is becoming necessary for increasing numbers of students) show: A student with a maximum allowable undergraduate GSL of \$10,000 and a graduate GSL of \$15,000 would have monthly repayment costs of \$315 for ten years. If the \$15,000 graduate loan were converted to ALAS terms, the increase over GSL would be 37%, for a monthly payment of \$435 for 10 years.

Under current law, a debt of \$25,000 would cost the borrower \$38,000. Under the Administration's proposal, with \$15,000 of the total debt loaned under ALAS terms, the cost would increase by 39% to \$52,900 in the loan repayment, reflecting a 115% increase in interest costs.

Faced with maximum repayments for 10 years, not many young Ph.D. graduates could afford to choose an academic career with a starting salary of \$20,000.

A Final Comment

To make the pursuit of knowledge too costly, is to forfeit the claim to national greatness. Graduate education is a commitment by students to an intensive course of study which prepares them to make important contributions to the growth of knowledge, from which all will benefit. The Guaranteed Student Loan Program permits students to invest in their future; government support of the program represents an investment in our nation's future. GSL's are loans, not gifts. Increasing GSL costs are brought about by increasing interest rates -- not increasing tuition rates. Neither institutions nor their students are responsible for high interest rates.

