

COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

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EXCELLENT START FOR NSF FY 1992 APPROPRIATION CLOUDED BY SPACE STATION DECISION *HS*

The House Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Bob Traxler (D-MI), allocated \$2.7218 billion for the National Science Foundation (NSF) for FY 1992. This is only \$200,000 below the president's request and represents a 17.5 percent increase over FY 1991.

The Subcommittee was able to accomplish this by funding the NASA Space Station at \$100 million, rather than the \$2.1 billion requested by the administration.

Research and Related Activities is funded at \$1.9605 billion, a 15.7 percent increase over FY 1991. The \$3 million reduction from the request reflects a \$23.5 million reduction for construction of the Laser Interferometer Gravitational Wave Observatory (LIGO), a \$18.5 million increase above the request for Astronomy, and a \$1.5 million increase above the request for the EPSCOR program.

If the Subcommittee's action on the funding for research endures the many hurdles left in the appropriations process, the requested increase of 18 percent for the social and economic science division will probably survive when NSF allocates its FY 1992 funding later in the year.

The Education and Human Resources Directorate (EHR) as usual received from the Subcommittee a significant (\$40 million) increase above the president's request. The \$435 million allocated to EHR represents a 35 percent increase over FY 1991 and reflects the continued congressional interest in having NSF play a major role in achieving the National Education Goal of making the U.S. number one in mathematics and science by the year 2000.

The Subcommittee rejected the proposed \$50 million instrumentation modernization program. Instead, against the administration's wishes, it

continued funding for the Facilities Modernization program at \$20 million.

Proposed increases for salaries and expenses were reduced by \$12 million, including the \$7 million to pay for moving the NSF headquarters to Northern Virginia.

The action taken by the House subcommittee is the first step toward NSF's FY 1992 funding level. The full appropriations committee will take up the bill after Memorial Day. The full House of Representatives is expected to debate the bill early in June. A major effort will occur, led by Vice-President Dan Quayle, Chairman of the National Space Council, to restore full funding for NASA's Space Station. Under one proposal, this would reduce the FY 1992 NSF research budget by \$250 million.

SUPPORTERS OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION SHOULD WRITE THEIR MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IMMEDIATELY AND URGE SUPPORT FOR THE PRIORITIES FOR SCIENCE ESTABLISHED IN THE BILL PASSED BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE.

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HOUSE SCIENCE COMMITTEE PASSES NSF AUTHORIZATION BILL WITH CAP ON ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

The House Science, Space and Technology (SST) Committee, chaired by Rep. George Brown, reported out a National Science Foundation (NSF) authorization bill, H.R. 2282, that brings the authorization levels closer to the president's request for FY 1992 and more realistic for FY 1993 (see UPDATE May 13, 1991).

The bill also provides for a cap of 26 percent on the administrative indirect costs of conducting research. The amendment to the bill was offered by Science Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Rick Boucher (D-VA). Members admitted this action was an attempt to have Congress "assert its role" and enact "something" in response to recently exposed revelations of wrongdoing by universities in this area. The Committee also suggested this was only a first step toward a multi-committee comprehensive piece of legislation to deal with the problem. (The Health and Environment Subcommittee has included a similar cap in its reauthorization of the National Institutes of Health.)

Also proposed was a committee chaired by the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy to "identify which costs associated with federally funded projects can be properly allocated as direct costs; and the various categories of indirect costs, including buildings, equipment depreciation and use allowance."

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The panel will consist of representatives of the Departments of Health and Human Services, Defense, and Energy, as well as the National Science Foundation and the Office of Management and Budget and 5 representatives of "the higher education community." It is further charged with examining the "current practices of institutions of higher education in allocating costs for library expenses and for operation and maintenance of research facilities" and determining if changes in such practices are necessary.

In the meantime, the Office of Management and Budget has issued proposed revisions to A-21, the circular which governs indirect costs (see FEDERAL REGISTER May 5, 1991). OMB is requesting comments by June 14, 1991.

COSSA URGES CONGRESS TO SUPPORT SOCIAL SCIENCE INITIATIVE IN AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Stating that social science can improve the quality of life in rural America, Gerald Klonglan, Professor of Rural Sociology at Iowa State University, represented COSSA on May 13 before the House Rural Development, Agriculture, and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Jamie Whitten (D-MS). Klonglan presented testimony prepared with the help of Loren Geistfeld, Professor of Family Resource Management, Agricultural Economics, and Rural Sociology at Ohio State University.

Klonglan urged the Subcommittee to appropriate funds for the Markets, Trade and Policy (MTP) part of the National Research Initiative of the Cooperative State Research Service (CSRS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Last year the competitive grants program received \$73 million, but no funds for MTP research. The president's budget requests \$125 million for the competitive grants program in FY 1992, with \$2 million for MTP. The National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges has recommended that this should be increased to \$11 million, an argument echoed in the COSSA testimony.

"The research tools of the social scientist can help rural America become a better place to live," Klonglan explained. He concluded that "research on ways to increase international trade will provide the income base needed to create an environment

supporting the well-being of families, youth and the elderly" in rural America.

Similar testimony was submitted under Geistfeld's name to the Senate Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies Subcommittee chaired by Sen. Quentin Burdick (D-ND).

PSYCHOLOGIST TESTIFIES AT SENATE JUVENILE JUSTICE HEARING

Gary B. Melton, Carl Adolph Happold Professor of Psychology and Law at the University of Nebraska, testified at a May 22 hearing of the Senate Juvenile Justice Subcommittee, chaired by Sen. Herb Kohl (D-WI).

The hearing, "Status Offenders: Risks and Remedies," was the first of a series of hearings on the issue of juvenile justice in America to be conducted by the subcommittee, which last met in 1986. The series will conclude next year with the reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act passed in 1974.

Melton appeared before the panel to discuss the current state of juvenile justice as well as the links between status offense jurisdiction -- the institutionalization of youths who commit offenses such as curfew violations, truancy, and running away from home -- and instances of child maltreatment.

Professor Melton was sharply critical of government efforts in the area of juvenile justice. "At least for the past decade, government has rarely exerted leadership in either child protection or juvenile justice. When leadership has been attempted, it often has been misdirected in the service of ideology more than the welfare and dignity of children," he said.

Citing a "disregard by Federal officials of their roles in generation and diffusion of scientific knowledge and models of policy and practice relevant to important social problems," Melton spoke of the need for increased research on juvenile justice issues by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) which he said, "simply put, has not been doing its job." Melton said there has not been a single research article on the issue of status offenders published since 1988.

De Facto Punishment

In linking status offenses with child abuse, Melton argued that institutionalization acts as a "de facto punishment for being maltreated" by failing to distinguish offenders from victims. He stated that this occurs most frequently in cases of sexual abuse and behavior. According to Melton, the common thread running through status offense cases is serious family dysfunction.

Melton stated that the Children in Custody study conducted by the Census Bureau for the Department of Justice showed that those charged with status offenses regard the restrictive setting of an institution as aversive to their self-esteem and ability to resolve conflicts with themselves and their families. Melton said, "Detention because of maltreatment is likely to confirm the belief of some victims that they deserve blame for maltreatment." He stated that the frequent resort to the court system for family services reflects the lack of these services elsewhere rather than a need for judicial intervention.

Also testifying at the hearing were former Senator Birch Bayh (D-IN), author of the 1974 act, several former status offenders, and representatives from organizations which provide shelter and counselling for runaway youths.

Senator Kohl has introduced legislation to create demonstration programs and research grants to address the issue of female runaways and status offenders. He intends to offer this as an amendment to the Violence Against Women Act authored by Senator Joseph Biden (D-DE).

SENATOR BLASTS SMITHSONIAN FOR "POLITICAL AGENDA"

An visibly angry Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK) lashed out at Smithsonian Secretary Robert McC. Adams at a recent Senate Appropriations Committee hearing over what Stevens termed a "political agenda" being pursued at the Smithsonian.

The committee, chaired by Senator Harry Reid (D-NV) held a hearing on May 15 to review the Smithsonian's Fiscal Year 1992 budget request. Stevens used the occasion to lambaste Adams over the political content of several recent exhibits, and threatened funding cuts for the institution if his concerns were not addressed.

At issue are several programs which offer revisionist accounts of events surrounding the settlement of the American West and also of the founding of America by the Spanish. Both programs are funded primarily by outside sources, but are under the auspices of the federally-funded Smithsonian.

The National Museum of American Art's "The West as America" exhibit challenges traditional views of America's westward movement by questioning the fate of the American Indian and examining the damage caused to the environment by the new settlers. In the exhibit, this revisionist viewpoint is juxtaposed with a display of traditional artwork which glorifies the conquering of the West by whites.

Upon viewing the exhibit, former Librarian of Congress Daniel J. Boorstin wrote in the museum guest book that the program was, "a perverse, historically inaccurate, destructive exhibit. No credit to the Smithsonian."

Fuentes a "Marxist Mexican"

The other object of Stevens' ire was a television program, sponsored by a Spanish publishing firm and also by \$250,000 in non-federal funds from the Smithsonian, which looks at the founding of America. The program is part of the Smithsonian's commemoration of the 500th anniversary of Columbus's voyage. The controversy lies in Mexican author Carlos Fuentes serving as the director of the program. Stevens labelled Fuentes a "Marxist Mexican" and a "non-citizen" who is pursuing a political agenda in his work at the expense of the American taxpayer.

Smithsonian head Adams was noticeably taken aback by Stevens lengthy and animated criticism of the Smithsonian. Adams repeatedly denied pursuing a political agenda and urged Stevens to take a holistic view of these exhibits, rather than criticize the aspects of them he did not agree with politically. Adams stated a scholarly responsibility to examine all perspectives of historical events, and recognized that this could result in airing views some may find troubling.

Stevens, supported in his arguments by Senator Slade Gorton (R-WA), told Adams that he intends to pursue the matter further and warned, "You're in for a battle. I'm going to get other people to help me make you make sense."

IMPROVED ECONOMIC STATISTICS FOCUS OF SENATE PANEL

Declaring a "lack of public confidence" in government statistics, especially forecasts of the U.S. economy's performance, Sen. Herb Kohl (D-WI) convened a hearing of the Senate Subcommittee on Government Information and Regulation on May 15. Michael Boskin, Chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers (CEA), while noting that "economic forecasting is an imprecise science" because it must make judgments about human behavior, offered the Bush administration's strong support for a new initiative to improve economic statistics.

Boskin, as he had at previous hearings held by the Joint Economic Committee in March, described the initiative developed by the Working Group of the White House Economic Policy Council to chairman Kohl. A key step toward implementation of the Working Group's recommendations are proposed FY 1992 funding increases of \$30 million concentrated in three agencies: the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Bureau of the Census, with smaller increases requested for the National Agricultural Statistical Service and the National Science Foundation. "Cumulatively, the administration is prepared to spend \$230 million between FY 1992 and FY 1996 to improve economic statistics," Boskin pledged.

Improving the quality of the current National Income Accounts and moving toward the U.N. System of National Accounts are high priorities of the initiative, Boskin noted, stating that this would modernize and improve the accuracy, breadth and international comparability of these accounts. It would also improve coverage and detail of the international flow of funds and services.

Output of Service Sector

Another great need, according to Boskin, is to increase coverage of the service sector of the economy. Under the initiative, the BLS would conduct basic research to develop accurate, replicable, standardized measures of output for the service sector. These measures of output would permit the introduction of new service sector price indexes into programs that generate measures of producer prices and international prices.

Also included in the initiative are funds to create a Center for Survey Methods. The

President's FY 1992 budget proposal would house the Center in the social and economic division of the National Science Foundation. It would provide interdisciplinary graduate degree programs and non-degree training courses for current and prospective Federal employees in order to improve the skills of workers in the Federal statistical system.

The sharing of information among statistical agencies raises large questions about confidentiality. The administration, Boskin said, is preparing legislation to provide a standardized mechanism for the limited sharing of confidential statistical information. "Sharing would be solely for statistical purposes between statistical agencies under stringent safeguards," according to the CEA Chairman.

Could Fall to Budget Axe

The initiative was supported by a panel of witnesses, although all warned that the arcane nature of the subject could provide an excuse for congressional appropriators to ignore its importance when they decide how to spend scarce funds.

Gail Fosler, Chief Economist of the Conference Board and former Senate Budget Committee staff member, argued that "it was time to get our statistical house in order," since "while our economy is dynamic; our yardsticks for measuring the economy are not." She suggested "much of American business has virtually abandoned government statistics as a key source of market information." Fosler argued for better and more timely regional data as a key need.

Courtney Slater, President of Slater-Hall Information Products and formerly Chief Economist of the Commerce Department in the Carter administration, praised the proposed improvements to the systems of national accounts. Her major fear was that the initiative would die, if its major supporter, Chairman Boskin, were to leave the government.

Need to Rethink Concepts

Joel Popkin, president of his own company and former Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, noted that the proposed Center for Survey Methods should include training by both social scientists and statisticians. He was concerned that it was not enough to improve the numbers, but that the concepts behind the numbers needed rethinking. Training in the social sciences, Popkin argued, would help current and prospective federal statisticians understand concepts that need measure-

ment and also expose them to how the data are used for analysis and forecasting. "The experience with data use is particularly useful in improving existing data," he asserted.

David Devlin, Vice President of Citibank, focused on needed improvement in international economic statistics. He further argued for better understanding of the impact of foreign affiliates of U.S. firms and of U.S. affiliates of foreign firms on this nation's economy.

ACCURATE COUNT OF HOMELESS IS "MISSION IMPOSSIBLE" SAYS JOINT SENATE-HOUSE HEARING

The daunting task of counting America's homeless population was characterized as "Mission Impossible" by Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI), chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Government Information and Regulation, at a May 9 hearing on the quality and limitations of the S-Night (for "Shelter and Street Night") homeless count. The hearing was jointly-sponsored by the House Subcommittee on Census and Population, chaired by Rep. Tom Sawyer (D-OH).

The validity of the S-Night count-- an attempt to enumerate people living on the streets and in shelters over the night of March 20-21, 1990, which resulted in a total count of 230,000--has come under attack from many quarters, including members of Congress who are concerned about the potential misuse of these data in housing policies and programs. Specifically, some members are concerned about draft regulations already printed for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that would require the use of the S-Night numbers for the allocation of federal dollars, numbers that by most accounts do not accurately reflect the true size of the homeless population.

In his opening statement, Senator Kohl asserted, "If counting the homeless can be compared to "Mission Impossible," then using the S-Night count for policy purposes is more like "Fantasy Island"--totally unscientific, no basis in fact." This critique of the results of the homeless count was echoed by Rep. Sawyer who asserted: "Frankly, HUD is wrong to use those numbers. We don't know what those numbers mean, except that the Census Bureau added people to the census count."

Barbara Bryant, Director of the Census Bureau, was brought to the hearing to defend the validity of the data generated from the S-Night count, and to clarify their limitations. Bryant reiterated the Bureau's position that "this operation was not a census of the homeless." Rather, it was "an effort to include persons in the census who might not have been counted using standard census procedures," she said. She also noted that since there is no agreed-upon definition of the homeless, "the Census Bureau did not attempt to define it for the 1990 census."

Detailing a number of logistical problems that made the S-Night count difficult, Bryant defended the value of the data for estimating the shelter population while disclaiming their ability to accurately estimate the street population.

GAO Critical of Census

Any claims for the validity of the S-Night count were greatly undermined by the remaining witnesses at the hearing. First, L. Nye Stevens of the General Accounting Office (GAO) delivered a scathing attack on the Census Bureau's approach, saying that its "failure to undertake a rigorous planning effort after the 1980 census for enumerating components of the homeless population led it to adopt a methodology for 1990 that may in some respects be inferior to the approach used in 1980." In specific, Nye mentioned Census's decision to conduct the homeless enumeration at night, even when there was existing evidence that as much as two-thirds of the homeless street population might be missed. When asked by Senator Kohl what the value of the S-Night count was for policy purposes, Nye responded, "The number has one value--it adds to the overall population figure of the country; it has no other policy value." Nye also emphasized the underlying problem of the absence of a generally agreed-upon and measurable definition of homelessness.

"Observers" testify of Undercount

Nye was followed by a panel of researchers from four cities who had been involved in Census-sponsored evaluations of S-Night enumeration activities. These researchers dispatched "observers" to shelters and street sites to monitor the behavior of the enumerators on S-Night. Findings from all locales indicated serious undercounting by enumerators. Joel Devine, Professor of Sociology at Tulane University in New Orleans, reported on his experi-

ment with deploying "decoys," who were instructed to "hang-out" in the streets in such a manner that they would appear to be homeless. While the Census enumerators were instructed to count everyone they encountered on the streets that night, they counted only 19 of the 29 decoys in New Orleans. This was a better result than in other cities, which had a "hit rate" of about 50 percent. Furthermore, Devine reported, in New Orleans, "among the homeless persons we interviewed later that morning, not one who had spent the night out-of-doors reported having been enumerated."

New York City Problems Similar

The experience in New York City was similar, as recounted in testimony by Kim Hopper, the Principal Investigator there and an anthropologist employed as a Research Scientist at the Nathan S. Kline Institute for Psychiatric Research in Orangeburg, New York. Hopper reiterated Nye's critique of the choice to conduct the count at night, arguing that a daytime count (a possibility considered but rejected by the Census Bureau) "treats homeless individuals with the dignity they deserve as persons capable of understanding and answering rather simple questions pertaining to one's social status, rather than as mute wildlife to be observed and enumerated by stealth and statistical jugglery."

Hopper tried to move the discussion to larger questions about the definition of homelessness itself, suggesting that a mere count of people in shelters and on the streets one night in ten years doesn't move us any closer to understanding the phenomenon. "What if..the root dynamics of homelessness have to do less with the traits of individuals, or the location of their bed or pallet on a given night, than with the increasingly common (and often unrecognized) condition of residential instability itself," he said. For program and policy purposes, he suggested, what we really need to know is "the number of people who are precariously housed" rather than "the number of those who are overtly homeless on a given night."

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

COSSA provides this information as a service and encourages readers to contact the agency for further information or application materials. Additional application guidelines and restrictions may apply.

Undergraduate Course and Curriculum Development Program

Undergraduate education in the sciences and mathematics is fundamental in the preparation of our Nation's future scientists, engineers, mathematicians and teachers and provides literacy essential for all citizens. In recognition of this critical role, the National Science Foundation (NSF) announces the continuation of a program to support the development of improved and innovative introductory-level undergraduate courses and curricula in the sciences, engineering and mathematics. This program is part of the NSF's overall plan to strengthen undergraduate science, engineering and mathematics education throughout the United States. It includes the social and behavioral sciences.

Application Procedure: All applicants must submit twelve copies of their proposal. One copy of NSF Form 1225 attached to the copy of the proposal bearing original signatures. Current and Pending Support Form (1239). One copy of a Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form for proposals requesting more than \$100,000. Two sets of the following extra forms: (a) one copy of the Cover Sheet; (b) one copy of the Project Data and Summary Form; and (c) one copy of the Budget, including explanation pages. These materials should be submitted to: Proposal Processing Unit, Room 223, Attn: Undergraduate Course and Curriculum Development, National Science Foundation, 1800 G Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20550.

Eligible Applicants: Proposals may be submitted for support in all fields supported by the Foundation. Proposals are invited from two-year colleges, four-year colleges, universities, professional societies, consortia of institutions and other education related organizations in the U.S. and its territories.

Budget: FY 1991 funds for this program were \$9.5 million. The number and size of awards for FY1992 will depend on the quality of the proposals received and the availability of funds for this program. Projects may request support for up to five years.

Review Process: Proposals will be evaluated by mail and/or panel review, according to the criteria outlined in Grants for Research and Education in Science and Engineering (NSF 90-77).

Deadlines: September 16, 1991 or June 15, 1992.

Contact: Undergraduate Course and Curriculum Development Program, Division of Undergraduate Science, Engineering and Mathematics Education, Room 639, National Science Foundation, 1800 G Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20550, (202) 357-7051.

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