

COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

Volume X, Number 18

October 7, 1991

NSF FUNDING PASSES CONGRESS: RESEARCH UP 11 PERCENT, EDUCATION 44 PERCENT *HS*

The FY 1992 VA-HUD-Independent Agencies Appropriations bill emerged from the Congress on October 2, one day after the start of the new fiscal year. The National Science Foundation (NSF) received \$2.578 billion in this bill and is expected to pick up another \$105 million from the Department of Defense appropriations bill for a total appropriation of \$2.683 billion, a 15.8 percent increase over FY 1991. (The funds from DOD will pick up the logistical costs for NSF's Antarctic program.)

The research appropriation once again was the victim of the need to support other programs within the disparate jurisdiction of the VA-HUD-Independent Agencies appropriations subcommittee. During their respective markups the House provided \$1.961 billion and the Senate \$1.926 billion for research. The conference committee's action, ratified by the full Congress, was to reduce that figure to \$1.879 billion. This is still a 10.9 percent increase over FY 1991 funds, but \$84 million below the administration's requested 15.9 percent increase. The conferees increased the budget request for astronomy facilities, advanced optics, arctic research and facilities, and the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCOR).

The programs of the Education and Human Resources Directorate continue to receive generous treatment from the Congress. The conference committee accepted the Senate's allocation of \$465 million, a 44 percent increase over FY 1991. The conferees significantly increased from the budget request funding for teacher preparation and enhancement, mostly for increased summer institutes (+\$27 million). Also receiving enhancements to the budget request were the statewide systemic initiative (+\$5 million), informal science education (+\$10 million), distance learning programs utilizing advanced technology (+\$5 million), studies, evaluation, and dissemination (+\$3 million), and a career access summer science camps program (+\$2 million). A new \$23 million graduate traineeship program also received appropriations.

The bill also provides \$16.5 million for an instrumentation program and \$16.5 million for a facilities program. The administration had asked for \$50 million for instrumentation and zero funding for facilities.

Housing and Urban Development Secretary Jack Kemp, unhappy with congressional action on his housing proposals, has asked President Bush to veto the bill. However, the bill also includes \$2 billion to continue funding for NASA's Space Station. The administration, led by Vice-President Quayle, fought hard to successfully reverse the decision of the House subcommittee to eliminate the station's funding. Thus, a veto of the bill is unlikely.

The allocation of the appropriation to NSF's programs will be delayed pending possible reorganization of the Foundation's directorates. An announcement concerning restructuring is expected on October 11 during the meeting of the National Science Board.

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, STATE APPROPRIATIONS PASS CONGRESS: CENSUS FUNDS RESTORED *HS*

The conference agreement on the FY 1992 Commerce, Justice, State appropriations bill passed both Houses of Congress on October 3. (For earlier descriptions of the bill see UPDATE August 5 and July 8, 1991).

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The bill appropriates \$165 million for the Census Bureau's periodic accounts; \$7.3 million less than the House provided, but \$20 million more than the Senate. Following the Senate's action, members of the social science and statistical community lobbied hard to restore the funding to allow publication of all the information, statistics, and other products from the 1990 Census and other periodic censuses. According to the conference report: "This data includes information on commuting patterns, income, education, housing patterns, and other products of vital interest to state and local governments, demographers, planners, and other interested parties."

The conference agreement also includes \$1.4 million for the National Academy of Sciences' study on the 2000 decennial census provided for in legislation passed by the House and the Senate (see UPDATE September 23, 1991). The appropriations bill provides \$125.3 million for the salaries and expenses appropriation of the Census Bureau, a 9 percent increase over FY 1991 funding.

Economic and Statistical Analysis at the Commerce Department received \$40.4 million, a 9 percent increase over FY 1991. The conference agreement includes: \$1.3 million "to stop the deterioration of GNP statistics;" \$500,000 "to modernize and extend the Standard National Accounts;" and \$500,000 "to improve balance of payments statistics." These are all part of the Boskin initiative to improve the federal government's economic statistics.

For the National Institute of Justice the conferees approved \$23.7 million, a slight (less than

1 percent) decrease from the FY 1991 figure. The Bureau of Justice Statistics received \$22.1 million, the same as last year. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) was appropriated \$76 million, including \$3.4 million for administration, a less than 1 percent increase over FY 1991. The discretionary grants program received a slight increase to \$18.1 million.

The conferees reiterated language from the Senate committee report expecting OJJDP to continue funding the "five year effort of the program on the causes and correlates of delinquency being conducted at the Universities of Pittsburgh and Colorado, and the State University of New York at Albany through fiscal year 1992. This will permit the centers the time necessary to obtain support through other sources in fiscal year 1993."

Educational and Cultural Exchange Programs at the United States Information Agency received \$194.2 million, an 18 percent increase over FY 1991 funding. Part of the increase results from transferring the U.S.-Soviet Exchange Program and the Education Exchange Enhancement Act into this appropriations account. The Fulbright program received an 8 percent increase to \$110 million.

NICHD ADVISORY COUNCIL BLASTS SULLIVAN OVER CANCELLATION OF SEX SURVEY *JA*

At its September 23 meeting, the National Advisory Council for the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) voted to send a letter to Secretary of Health and Human Services, Louis Sullivan, expressing members outrage over his cancellation of the American Teenage Study (ATS), an already-approved and funded NICHD grant at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

The letter, signed by all the regular council members and sent the same day, accused the Department of HHS of having "no legitimate cause for suspending this grant." The Council noted that the ATS had been peer reviewed and approved by a scientific review panel, the Advisory Council, and the leadership of the NIH. Council members expressed concern about the precedent being set by suspending a grant for "nonscientific reasons," and claimed that the Secretary's action "raises the specter of political veto of scientific and public advisory council decisions, and undermines vital

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research on important public health problems." (For the complete text of the letter, see box on right).

The Council was moved to this action not only by the cancellation of the ATS, but also by the more recent "hold" placed on another study of human sexual behavior that had been approved by NICHD.

This survey, to be conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago, was a two-city survey of adult sexual behavior intended to learn more about the role of social networks in encouraging or inhibiting "risky" behaviors. In expressing his outrage about the "hold," Edward O. Laumann, dean of the social science division at the University of Chicago, and principal investigator on the study, argued that the data generated from the survey could be used to craft appropriate, targeted interventions for such social problems as high rates of teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and AIDS. Yet, Laumann reported, he had been told by NICHD officials that to fund this study now would be "political suicide."

When a council member asked the Director of NICHD, Duane Alexander, about the circumstances surrounding the hold on Laumann's survey, she was told that it was NICHD's decision not to fund the study this year because they were convinced it would also be overturned by the Secretary. Alexander revealed that an informal directive had been issued by the HHS that any grant deemed "sensitive in nature" now would have to be reviewed by the Department, which would mean that the chances of getting approval of Laumann's study were "very small."

One council member pointed out the irony that this situation is occurring in the United States at the very same moment that Eastern Europeans are "throwing off governments that disallowed discussion of sensitive issues."

NIA Advisory Council Joins In

Claiming that the cancellation of the ATS bodes dangerous to all research institutes, the National Advisory Council to the National Institute on Aging also agreed at its September 27 meeting to send a similar letter of concern to Secretary Sullivan.

Members of the council argued that the precedent being set by the NICHD incident is

Text of the NICHD Advisory Council Letter to Dr. Sullivan:

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We, the undersigned members of the National Advisory Child Health and Human Development Council, would like to express our deep concern about your action in suspending Grant HD26934, "The American Teenage Study," which was awarded to the University of North Carolina in May 1991. We are disturbed that this action will set a precedent.

The study was funded through the time-tested grant award system of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which the Administration has supported and of which we are all rightfully proud. It was found by the scientific review panel, by this Advisory Council, and by the leadership of NIH to be of outstanding scientific merit and national priority, and was awarded in a manner consistent with all of NIH's procedures.

This study addresses, in exemplary fashion, one of the Department's research goals identified in Healthy People 2000: That of attaining a deeper understanding of the factors leading to early sexual behavior. The study builds on a solid body of basic scientific research relating to adolescent behavior and funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development over the past 20 years.

It is clear to us that the Department has no legitimate cause for suspending this grant. Suspension of such an important and highly regarded NIH research grant for nonscientific reasons is a dangerous precedent that is extremely harmful to the scientific mission of the NIH. This action compromises the NIH's longstanding reputation for scientific integrity, raises the specter of political veto of scientific and public advisory council decisions, and undermines vital research on important public health problems.

We respectfully request that you reconsider your decision.

dangerous to all federally-funded research, since any subject deemed "politically sensitive" now will be under scrutiny for possible veto, even after peer review and advisory council approval. They therefore voted to send a letter to Sullivan expressing their concern about the wider implications of his actions. The exact wording of the letter had not yet been worked out, but council members agreed to send it as soon as a consensus draft is completed.

EDUCATION REFORM & WASHINGTON: AMERICA'S SCHOOLS TALK OF TOWN *MB*

Our nation's schools -- their current state and proposals for their reform -- dominated the agenda in Washington last week. In the span of a few days

-a bipartisan panel of governors and federal officials released a sobering assessment of progress toward reaching educational goals, the Department of Education released a major report on the skills levels of elementary and secondary students, a House subcommittee approved legislation to aid states in reforming their school systems, another House panel heard a leading education expert lambaste inequalities in the quality of schools, and contentious debate began in Congress on amending the Higher Education Act of 1965.

Education Goals: Little Progress Made

The 1989 summit in Charlottesville between President Bush and the nation's governors produced six education goals for the year 2000; last week's report was the first report on the progress being made in achieving these goals, which range from preparing children to attend school, identifying specific achievement levels, to creating "safe, disciplined and drug-free schools."

The report of the National Education Goals Panel, comprised of six governors and six officials from the Administration, stated that America's public schools are falling far short of attaining these goals. The report marks the first time that a single document has brought together all that is known about state and national educational progress.

While the panel noted gains in high school graduation rates and a decrease in drug use, these gains were more than offset by data showing that less than one in five students can demonstrate competency in mathematics, and by studies showing that in science, American students rank far behind their peers in other advanced countries. The report cited a lack of data available to determine the current state of children's readiness for school and the basic skills of those currently in the work-force.

"We think this inaction is largely due to a misplaced sense of self-satisfaction. American students -- whose mathematics performance ranks among the lowest in the industrialized world -- nevertheless rate themselves as good at math. And their parents, more often than the general public or parents of foreign students, give high marks to their local schools," the panel wrote in the introduction to its 245-page report.

Regarding the role of educational research, the report noted its vital contribution to public policy and cited the need for further research in achieving

the six educational goals. The report outlined the research activities of the Department of Education, National Science Foundation, Department of Health and Human Services/National Institutes of Health, and the Department of Defense.

Basic Skills Data Released

In releasing the report "Trends in Academic Progress," a 20-year review of the results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), Education Secretary Lamar Alexander commented, "Today's children seem to know about as much science and read about as well as their parents did at that age about 20 years ago. That's simply not good enough for the 1990's."

The assessment, administered by the Educational Testing Service under contract with the Education Department, measured actual performance of basic skills of 4th, 8th, and 11th grade students. It found overall trends in math, science, reading, and writing improving slightly in the 1980s after a decline in the 1970s. The board was quick to note that current basic skills levels leave students unprepared to enter the 21st century.

The data revealed a narrowing of the gap of basic skills achievement levels between minorities and whites, though white students were still outperforming minorities at all age and subject levels in the study.

Subcommittee Approves Reform Bill

On September 26 the House Education and Labor committee's Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Dale Kildee (D-MI) approved legislation making formula grants to states to promote reform of their public education systems.

Authored by Kildee, the Comprehensive Neighborhood Schools Revitalization Act (H.R. 3320) would aid states and local school systems in developing new educational standards, curricula, and training programs. The legislation does not outline the specifics of a reform program, leaving that up to the states and localities to determine.

While Kildee's proposal was sent to the full Education and Labor Committee with only one dissenting vote, heated debate is expected at that level on anticipated amendments by Rep. Patsy Mink (D-HI) to increase the 1992 authorization level of the bill from \$700 million to \$5 billion, and

by Rep. William Jefferson (D-LA) to remove school choice proposals from the list of allowable programs and activities that can be considered by participating states and localities.

Kozol Blasts Inequalities

Jonathan Kozol, author of the recent book Savage Inequalities was the sole witness at a September 25 hearing held by the House Education and Labor Select Education subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Major Owens (D-NY). Kozol has written extensively on issues of inequality in America's schools.

Kozol began by describing the inner city schools he has visited, poignantly telling stories of crumbling, decrepit schools with leaky roofs, little heat, too few textbooks, and chemistry labs without running water. He termed U.S. schools, "separate but unequal" and cited school districts such as Princeton, New Jersey which spend over twice as much per pupil as does nearby Camden.

Regarding President Bush's education reform proposal, "America 2000", Kozol said the plan "disappointed and offended me deeply," calling it "nine-tenths pure rhetoric and the rest is partly fatuous." He said that the President's goal of having all students ready to learn would be out of reach so long as the Head Start program was not fully funded. Kozol said that "America 2000" does not address issues of equality in school spending, and that restructuring school systems would be like "moving around the furniture in a house of poverty. It's still poverty."

When asked to comment on the state of educational research, Kozol said, "I wish there were more minorities involved in research in this country," believing that "those who do research should represent a fuller spectrum of the American population." Criticizing "research based upon research," Kozol told the committee he would like to see more federally sponsored research linking education with issues of adult illiteracy, lead poisoning, homelessness, and hunger.

The Higher Education Act

The House Postsecondary Education subcommittee, chaired by Rep. William Ford (D-MI), currently is considering draft legislation to

reauthorize the Higher Education Act of 1965, which funds federal financial aid programs, international education programs, and also grants for dropout prevention, literacy programs, and professional and vocational training.

At press time, debate in the subcommittee is bogged down over student aid programs, with committee Democrats seeking to provide more aid to middle-income families. The proposed reauthorization would make Pell Grants an entitlement and abolish the current system of guaranteed student loans through third parties, replacing it with loans directly from the federal government.

FUTURE DIRECTION OF NIA IS THEME AT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING *JJA*

At its September 27 meeting, the National Advisory Council on Aging invited representatives from the aging research community to comment on the future direction of the National Institute on Aging (NIA). This discussion was in part prompted by the recent publication of an Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, titled Extending Life, Enhancing Life: A National Research Agenda on Aging (1991), which evaluates current research efforts and makes recommendations for the future.

Richard Adelman and Linda George, spoke on behalf of the Gerontological Society of America (GSA). Adelman, chair of the public policy committee of the GSA, focused on two policy problems discussed in the IOM report: the need to rescue the young investigator and the need to diversify the aging research agenda.

Adelman claimed that the increase in the population age of grantees reflects the "demise of young investigators," due, he suggested, to "the deteriorating image of science, the shrinking federal research budget, and increased educational debts among students." He suggested that the NIA needs to work with groups such as the GSA to launch a public information campaign to direct pressure onto Congress to address these problems and to make scientific research a more desirable profession.

With regard to the second problem, Adelman accused the NIA research agenda of being too limited and too dominated by a disease orientation, and argued for further support for research on

social, behavioral, and biological factors that effect aging independent of disease. He suggested that NIA pay more attention to quality of life issues, noting that "seemingly esoteric research has an impact on the practical aspects of diseases."

This perspective was echoed by Linda George, a sociologist at Duke University, who emphasized the need to move beyond disease to "look at the positive, the benefits, the potential, the entire person" when conducting research on aging. She also suggested that the NIA needs to pay more attention to infrastructure by providing more resources and equipment to universities conducting aging research.

Riley Reports on Her New Project

Another agenda item at the NIA Advisory Council meeting was a brief report by Matilda White Riley, former Associate Director of the Behavioral and Social Research Program at NIA, who had just been promoted to Senior Social Scientist at the institute. In this new position, she will be free to pursue a research project which she described to the council.

Riley will be focusing on the structural factors affecting the aging process--an area so far neglected at NIA and elsewhere. She noted that the success of biomedical and behavioral interventions for diseases and disorders affecting older people is dependent on the social structure. Yet, she said, "research hasn't shown what factors of social structure affect what elements of the aging process."

Riley described the need to think about "modifying structures" that have resulted in the concentration of education at youth, work at mid-life, and leisure at aging. Perhaps it is possible, she said, to modify structures to allow more flexibility at all stages of the lifecourse and to enhance the quality of life and the independence of older persons.

HEARING ON COMMISSION TO STUDY ROOT CAUSES OF DRUG ABUSE *JA*

The Legislation and National Security Subcommittee of the House Government Operations Committee, chaired by John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI), held a hearing September 25 on creating a national commission to study the root causes of the demand for drugs in the United States.

In his opening statement, Conyers asserted that "the National Drug Strategy and the 'Drug Czar' have failed to address the causes of the demand for drugs but instead have emphasized drug use as the primary problem, and law enforcement as the primary solution." What is needed to better direct resources, said Conyers, is knowledge about what drives people to use drugs. "By focusing on root causes, both physiological and socio-economic, there is an opportunity to reframe the debate on the war on drugs so that the emphasis is no longer on simplistic band-aid solutions that deal primarily with symptoms."

GAO Report

The hearing centered upon a report by the General Accounting Office (GAO), commissioned by Conyers, on the relative amount of federal resources directed at research on the root causes of drug demand and use. The GAO analysis, presented by Eleanor Chelimsky, Director of the Program Evaluation and Methodology section, examined the two agencies supporting most of this kind of research: the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and components of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (OJP).

One of the major findings of the report is that research accounts for only 3 to 4 percent of the total spending included in the national drug control budget. This includes all research, including that on interdiction techniques and law enforcement, as well as on causality, prevention, and treatment. "With regard to research on the causes of drug abuse," Chelimsky reported, "we found that the federal investment has been even smaller. Causality research at these two agencies received less than 3 percent of drug research spending in 1990, or 0.10 percent of the total drug control budget for that year."

On a positive note, Chelimsky reported that research on basic causes, prevention, and treatment of drug abuse has increased at NIDA, and that "research using social scientific methods is increasingly being funded at NIDA; such grants were half the total by 1990." She noted that the GAO will recommend that Congress review the place of research, including evaluation, in the national drug control program.

Commission's Mandate

Other witnesses at the hearing actively supported the idea of establishing a commission to

examine the root causes of drug demand and use. Richard Bonnie, a law professor at the University of Virginia, said that such a commission could study in a sustained way the interaction of social and environmental factors, but that it ought to address responses to the drug problem, not just causes. Agreeing with Chelimsky, he stated that "what we need is a focused, longitudinal, targeted study on why some end up drug abusers and others in the same social circumstances do not."

Elliot Currie, a sociologist at the Institute for the Study of Social Change at the University of California, Berkeley, said that the most important function of a national commission, besides compiling and interpreting technical evidence, would be "to send a powerful and unambiguous message that we as a nation are going to make a firm and serious commitment not only to examine these festering issues but to do something about them."

Rangel Bill

The proposal for the national commission to examine the root causes of drug demand and use is embodied in a bill (H.R.464), introduced by Charles Rangel (D-NY), chairman of the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control. Testifying at the hearing, Rangel made clear that he is proposing "not just another blue ribbon commission that starts out with a bang, but is never heard from again," but rather "a true working commission that would have regular reports to and contacts with government and the American people." This commission would be required to present a final report on its activity and provide concrete recommendations for addressing the root causes of the drug problem. Rangel's bill must be passed by the Government Operations Committee before being sent to the House floor.

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON ALCOHOL ABUSE AND ALCOHOLISM

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.

Alcohol Research Centers Grant Program

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) provides grant support for Alcohol Research Centers to conduct interdisciplinary research on alcoholism and alcohol abuse. The Center grants program is interrelated with and complementary to all other research support mechanisms and scientific activities that comprise the NIAAA programs of research on the nature, causes, diagnosis, treatment, control, prevention, and consequences of alcohol abuse and alcoholism. The Alcohol Research Centers Grant program provides long-term (typically, for five years) support for interdisciplinary research programs with a distinct focus on a particular theme relating to alcoholism, alcohol abuse, and other alcohol-related problems.

Application Procedure: Applicants must use the grant application PHS 398 (rev. 10/88). The title and number of this Request for Applications, "Alcohol Research Center Grants, AA-91-02" must be typed in item number 2 on the face page of the PHS 398 application form.

Budget: It is estimated that approximately \$13-14 million will be available in FY 1993 to fund approximately eight Centers.

Review Process: Each Center application will be reviewed by a panel of experts to evaluate the scientific and technical merit of the proposal. Recommendations from this review will be presented to the National Advisory Council on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism that will make a final recommendation to the Director, NIAAA.

Deadlines: Applications must be received by December 16, 1991.

Contact: For a copy of RFA and preapplication consultation contact: Dr. Ernestine Vanderveen, Associate Director, Division of Basic Research, NIAAA, 5600 Fishers Lane, Room 16C-06, Rockville, MD 20857, telephone [301] 443-1273.

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