

# COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

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## CONGRESS CUTS NSF SPENDING BY \$2 MILLION; SPECIFIC GRANTS SHARPLY REBUKED IN REPORT *HS*

On May 21 the House and Senate each adopted a compromise FY 1992 rescission bill that had been worked out a day earlier by a House-Senate conference committee. The conferees agreed to remove from the legislation the rescission of funding for 31 merit-reviewed National Science Foundation grants. As was mentioned in the May 4 and May 18 issues of *Update*, the previously awarded grants were mainly in the social, behavioral, and economic sciences and were mentioned by title in the Senate version of the bill. The House rescission package did not include these provisions.

In exchange for removing the 31 grant titles from the legislation, the NSF will absorb a \$2 million across-the-board cut from the FY 1992 research budget, an amount equal to about 0.1 percent of that budget. The NSF has yet to announce how this cut will be implemented.

Despite earlier rumors to the contrary, the President is expected to sign the rescissions bill, which cuts FY 1992 spending for programs by \$8.2 billion. More than \$7 billion of the cuts come from the Defense Department budget. In addition to the reduction for NSF, the National Institutes of Health will lose \$3.1 million and the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration \$800,000.

### Report Language Sharply Critical

Despite removing the specific NSF grants from the legislation, the Senate view prevailed in the conference report that accompanied the bill. While report language written by Congress is viewed as advisory and not having the force of law, because the driving force behind the rescission bill was Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WV), chairman of the Senate appropriations committee, federal agency officials are likely to heed such advice. (For Byrd's arguments in support of the rescissions see box on p. 3)

The report notes that the \$2 million rescission represents the "approximately total amount

originally awarded by the Foundation for the 31 research projects contained in the original amendment." The conferees, the report continues, "do not believe that these 31 awards represent a prudent use of taxpayer funds." The conferees therefore "strongly urge the NSF to review the option of eliminating funds which remain unobligated for the 31 research projects contained in the original Senate amendment." The 31 grant titles are then listed in the report.

In addition, the conferees question the whole process that NSF uses to select awards. They cite two reports released by the General Accounting Office, and the Office of Technology Assessment, as critical of the NSF grant selection process, as well as one to be conducted by the National Academy of Sciences.

Finally, the conferees state that they believe "the Foundation should emphasize research that is focused on the fundamental laws and systems of science, that supports the nation's technological base, that supports the nation's economic competitiveness, and that improves the nation's mathematics and science education endeavors." NSF is directed to report to the Congress on "how it intends to ensure that projects which do not meet these criteria go unsupported with taxpayer dollars in the future."

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Speaking on the floor of the Senate, Byrd, after referring to the NSF grants in question, said, "There are probably many more instances of wasteful spending that can be found" and pledged that his staff will work to "ferret out such profligacy and eliminate it."

### Green Refuses to Sign Report

Rep. Bill Green (R-NY), ranking Republican on the House VA, HUD Independent Agencies appropriations Subcommittee, was so angry with the conference report's intrusion into the merit review process that he refused to sign the report. (For Green's statement see box on p.3) Although many worked behind the scenes, Green was the only member of Congress to publicly oppose the NSF rescissions during the debate on the bill.

Reacting to the actions of the Congress, NSF Director Walter Massey, issued a statement that stressed the Foundation's dependence on the "broad-based involvement of individual scientists, engineers and educators in the decision-making process." He noted NSF's flexibility to incorporate outside opinions in spending decisions. "With that flexibility," Massey continued, "comes our obligation to ensure that every aspect of the research we support, including the way it is presented and described, inspires the trust and confidence of the American public."

### Still Many Unanswered Questions

In addition to the question of how NSF will cut \$2 million from its research budget, many questions remain unanswered. Is this rescission battle only a

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President:	Joseph E. Grimes
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skirmish in the escalating war between the White House and the Congress over spending with NSF social, behavioral and economic science grants caught in the middle? Is it part of a broad attack on the use of peer-review to determine grant spending at NSF, NIH, and other agencies such as the National Endowment for the Arts? Is this the beginning of another congressional assault on the research done by the social, behavioral and economic sciences? In each of these scenarios, the removal of specific grant titles from the rescission bill may be clouded by future threats to the merit review process and to federal support for research in these disciplines.

### HOUSE PASSES NIH BILL, BUT NOT BY ENOUGH TO OVERRIDE VETO SR

In a very tense, down-to-the wire vote on May 28, the House of Representatives passed the conferenced version of H.R. 2507 to reauthorize the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Although the vote was 260 to 148 in favor of passage, it was not sufficient to override an expected Presidential veto (it was 12 votes shy of the two-thirds needed). Twenty-seven members were absent from the vote.

In addition to specific reauthorization of the National Cancer Institute, and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, the bill contained more controversial provisions related to lifting the ban on federally funded fetal tissue transplantation research, giving statutory support to women's health research, and allowing federally-funded sexual behavior research (See *Update*, August 5, 1991, April 6, 1992.)

The focus of the highly passionate House debate shifted from the promises of fetal tissue transplantation research for treating serious diseases and disorders, to the ethics of using fetal tissue from induced abortions, to the need for research on women's health, and to the authorization (spending) limits proposed within the bill. (The provisions related to sexual behavior research went unmentioned.)

The future of the bill is uncertain. The Senate is expected to vote on the bill soon and to pass it overwhelmingly. Nevertheless, President Bush has promised to veto the bill, primarily because of the fetal tissue research provisions. At this point, the President has three votes more than necessary to sustain his veto. The less than-victorious vote in the House makes questionable the possibility of



## TWO VIEWS OF THE NSF RESCISSION SITUATION

The following are remarks made by Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WV) and Rep. Bill Green (R-NY) on May 21 during the debate on H.R. 4990 to rescind funding for various agencies, including the NSF.

### Representative Green:

"I did not sign the conference report. I take this occasion to explain my reasoning. The Senate bill contained a provision--statutory language--rescinding funds for 31 peer reviewed grants at the NSF. This research, conducted at some of the most prestigious universities in our nation, was singled-out because the work largely in the area of social and behavioral sciences, was considered by the other body to be spurious or frivolous. Now reasonable individuals may disagree about whether or not research into status attainment in Chinese urban areas, exemplar based processing social judgment or applying space technology to global change is how we should be spending our research dollars. But this is not, in my view, what is at issue. Rather, it is whether we should overrule the peer-reviewed based decisions of a scientific body. I would argue that we should not.

The conference report now under consideration, while removing the statutory provision that identifies and rescinds the funds for these 31 grants, instead includes a rescission of \$2 million and report language. It is the report language that I find most objectionable. In addition, to identifying the 31 grants, it calls into question the NSF's selection process and urges the agency to take the \$2 million rescission from these grants. Mr. Speaker, while not forcing the agency to remove these funds from these grants, we are proposing to insert our judgment into the peer-review process, an idea with which I cannot agree."

### Senator Byrd:

"Yet an examination of a host of grants in the National Science Foundation led me to conclude that while there may be some theoretical value for these items, the American taxpayer may wonder why their hard-earned money is being spent on them. ... Grants were made for such specious purposes as: A study of the sexual aggression in fish in Nicaragua; the importance of lawyers to the middle class; the personal identity of law school professors; the mating behavior of swordfish and so on. I should not fail to mention a comparison of the role of intra- and inter-sexual selection in the evolution of sex-limited mimicry of two swallowtail butterflies, to name just a few of the executive branch wasteful pork items.

Those in our research community might wonder why these particular projects received funding. Last year, the NSF received 52,880 proposals, totaling \$11.9 billion. Of those, only 34 percent receiving funding, since the NSF budget is around \$3 billion. Given the importance of the Foundation's work in manufacturing research, supercomputing, and biotechnology, which have direct ties to our future economic competitiveness, it is ludicrous that the NSF is spending limited resources on these unnecessary and wasteful items... I want to reemphasize that these items were not congressional earmarks; they are not congressional pork. Rather, they are grants made by the NSF and NIH--by the Executive Branch--under the general authority that is provided to these agencies in appropriations acts. There are probably many more instances of wasteful spending that can be found as the committee continues to review executive branch spending policies and practices in the coming months.... we do have a very dedicated and hardworking professional staff who will do their best to ferret out such profligacy and eliminate it."

overriding the veto. If an override vote is taken and is unsuccessful, the bill undoubtedly will be reintroduced in the next session of Congress. Another possible scenario is to remove the controversial fetal tissue provisions from the bill before Congress reconsiders the bill.

## HOUSE PANEL ADOPTS JUVENILE JUSTICE REAUTHORIZATION BILL *MB*

On May 20, the House Education and Labor committee, chaired by Rep. William Ford (D-MI), approved legislation (HR 5194) to reauthorize the Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). The bill was sponsored by Rep. Matthew Martinez (D-CA),

chairman of the Human Resources Subcommittee, which had approved the bill the day before.

OJJDP was created under the 1974 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act and is responsible for efforts to prevent juvenile crime and to find alternatives for youths already incarcerated. OJJDP's agenda, which primarily focuses on training and technical assistance programs, does contain a research component.

There is concern on the part of some in the social science research community that the research agenda and priorities of the OJJDP have become adversely affected by political influence. An August 1991 ruling by the Comptroller General found that Congress' intent to have policy control over the



OJJDP and the other component agencies of the Office of Justice Programs vested in the individual agency heads was violated by a February 1991 decision by the Attorney General delegating authority over contract and grant programs to the Assistant Attorney General for Justice Programs.

The Martinez bill takes several steps, supported by COSSA, toward addressing these issues. The bill allows the administrator of OJJDP to report directly to the Attorney General, instead of through an assistant attorney general, in an attempt to give the office more autonomy. It also reverses the delegation of powers cited in the Comptroller General's ruling. Martinez's bill requires a competitive process for the awarding of discretionary grants, and requires the OJJDP to formulate a long-term plan for the office, including "specific goals and criteria for making grants and contracts and for conducting research."

The legislation would authorize \$150 million in funding for the office for FY 1993. Current appropriations for FY 1992 are \$78 million; the Bush Administration has requested \$7.5 million for FY 1993.

On the Senate side, the Juvenile Justice Subcommittee, chaired by Sen. Herb Kohl (D-WI) is currently drafting a OJJDP reauthorization bill. While no legislation has been formally introduced in the Senate, there has been discussion of creating a bi-partisan, 21 member panel to administer OJJDP. This would be similar to the Education Policy and Priorities Board for OERI discussed in the following article.

## HOUSE COMMITTEE APPROVES OERI REAUTHORIZATION BILL MB

On May 20 the House Education and Labor Committee, chaired by Rep. William Ford (D-MI), approved by voice vote HR 4014, legislation authored by Rep. Major Owens (D-NY) to reauthorize the Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI).

Owens's bill would create a 20-member Educational Research Policy and Priorities Board consisting of both educational researchers and representatives of other related fields to guide OERI's activities. Specifically, this board would develop a long-term set of research priorities, establish standards to govern OERI-sponsored

research, and review all grant and contract applications. The bill would also structure OERI research according to an institute framework shaped by perceived research and dissemination needs. The five institutes under HR 4014 would be Education of At-Risk Students; Innovation in Educational Governance, Finance, and Management; Early Childhood Development and Education; Student Achievement; Postsecondary Education, Libraries, and Lifelong Education. Advisory boards would be created for each institute. The bill requires that 15 percent of all funding for the institutes be given to field-initiated research. Depending on the appropriations process, the institutes could be appropriated between \$80 and \$100 million, which would allow for \$15 million for field-initiated studies compared with the current \$1 million annual appropriation.

The full committee made only one major change to the version of the bill which was reported out of the Subcommittee on Select Education, chaired by Owens. The panel adopted, on a voice vote, an amendment by Rep. Pat Williams (D-MT) to add an additional \$30 million to create a teacher training program administered through the regional educational laboratories. It also calls upon the Assistant Secretary for OERI to conduct research on teaching practices and teacher training.

The bill is expected to be taken up by the full House sometime this summer. Education Secretary Lamar Alexander has voiced strong opposition to the House bill, saying that the bill "remains seriously flawed... and would usurp my executive authority" through the creation of the policy board.

## SOCIAL SCIENTISTS TESTIFY AT CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION HEARING ON RACIAL-ETHNIC TENSIONS JA

Coincidentally following the Los Angeles riots, on May 21-22, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights held a hearing in Washington, D.C. on "Racial and Ethnic Tensions in American Communities: Poverty, Inequality, and Discrimination -- A National Perspective." Over the course of the two-day hearing, the Commission heard testimony from a number of social scientists, journalists, and community representatives, who discussed such issues as the nature of racism, hate incidents, demographic changes, socioeconomic factors, employment, and multiculturalism.



The Commission, established by Congress in 1957, is an independent, bipartisan, federal agency of the U.S. government charged with collecting and disseminating information about discrimination or denials of equal protection under the law. Although it doesn't adjudicate, the Commission is required to submit reports to the President and the Congress containing its findings and recommendations related to legislative or executive action. The purpose of this particular hearing, according to Commission Chairman, Arthur Fletcher, was to contribute to an on-going project, begun before the L.A. riots, to "study the causes and cures for what the Commission had already identified as a growing problem of increasing tensions among various elements of American society."

The first panel, which included three social scientists, addressed generally the nature of contemporary racial and ethnic tensions among Americans. Joe Feagin, Professor of Sociology at the University of Florida, stated frankly that the biggest problem remained "white racism"-- the "most fundamental, but least discussed" among all racisms. Specifically, he said, in academic and policy debates as well as in the press, there has been tremendous focus on the black "underclass" and "the black middle class," but virtually none on white racism. Data presented by Feagin from his own interviews with members of the black middle class and business communities suggested that widespread discrimination in housing, employment, and schooling still exists, but is influenced much more by the white middle class than white "hard-hats."

The intense and enduring nature of racial tension was underscored by Andrew Hacker, Professor of Political Science, Queens College of the City University of New York. Hacker stated that there is a profound difference between race and ethnicity, and that race is deeper and more enduring. With regard to black-white tensions, he said, the thing that probably most contributes to the persistence of racism is "the memory among whites that blacks were once thought of as suitable for slavery." Hacker asserted that the Civil Rights Commission should focus on whites as a racial group, not as a collection of separate ethnicities, saying that whites "shouldn't hide behind their Irishness," but should "get whiteness to the surface." As a corollary, he pointed out that most studies treat all blacks as one racial group, regardless of ethnicity.

The third social scientist on the panel, Manning Marable, of the Center for Studies of Ethnicity and

Race in America, and Professor of Political Science, History and Sociology at the University of Colorado at Boulder, focused on violence and its relationship to race. He suggested that racial violence has become less overt than in the past, and now is experienced more in such "daily life" forms of "institutionalized violence" as homelessness, joblessness, and discrimination. Marable expressed concern that the events of L.A. might trigger subsequent violence, representative of the rage among black men, and he predicted that "the next stage of racial violence could easily become much more significant." To end this racial violence, he asserted, "we must deconstruct the very concept of race."

On the second day of the hearing, the subject of multiculturalism in education was addressed by a panel including Joan Scott, Professor of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton, and Roger Wilkins, Professor of History at George Mason University. Scott identified four different perspectives present in the multiculturalism debate: belief in a common American cultural heritage that overrides any particular ethnic identity; pluralist notions of tolerance for different cultural identities; ethnocentrism that renders impossible the incorporation of separate cultural identities into a dominant culture; and a "Madisonian" vision that acknowledges conflict and contradiction as part of a healthy democratic culture.

Wilkins observed, from his own experience teaching history in a university with an overwhelmingly white population, that the education most students are receiving "makes them totally unfit for citizenship in a diverse society." Mirroring data presented from a survey conducted by People for the American Way, he reported on the perception among white students that they were victims of special treatment for minorities, whom they still perceived to be somehow inferior.

For more information on the Commission's hearings, contact the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1121 Vermont Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20425; telephone (202) 376-8312.

## U.S. POPULATION OLDER AND MORE RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE <sup>HS</sup>

After months of concern about the conduct and undercount of the 1990 Census, the House Population and Census Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Tom Sawyer (D-OH), turned its attention to



the portrait of America being painted by results of the count. Two days of hearings on May 26 and 27 focused on what Sawyer called "America's Changing Profile: Who We Are."

Testimony was delivered by: Paula Schneider, U.S. Census Bureau; Martha Farnsworth Riche, Population Reference Bureau; Peter A. Morrison, The RAND Corporation; William O'Hare, University of Louisville; John Kasarda, University of North Carolina; Carol J. DeVita; Population Reference Bureau; and Robert Binstock, Case Western Reserve University.

According to Schneider, two major conclusions emerged from the numbers: the United States is becoming a more racially and ethnically diverse country; and the age structure of the nation's population is changing with a rapidly growing elderly population. Both of these trends have enormous implications for policy, she said.

#### Growing Minority Population

O'Hare noted the minority population grew from 46 million to 61 million from 1980 to 1990 accounting for 64 percent of the population growth in the past decade and increasing at a much faster rate (31.9 percent) than that for non-Hispanic Whites (4.2 percent). Although African Americans remained the largest minority group in absolute numbers (over 29.2 million), Asian-Americans were the fastest growing minority group during the 1980s, up 96 percent.

Concerning the growing diversity, Morrison stated that "the traditional notion of the melting pot no longer holds; its ingredients have separated into a complex racial and ethnic mosaic in which groups of people celebrate their separate identities. The mosaic comprises not just Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics, but a multitude of other nationalities and ethnic subgroups." The race self-identification question on the Census revealed 250,000 unique entries. Also important was that the mosaic varied from city to city, with different groups settling in different places. O'Hare noted that within the category of Asian-Americans there are six groups of one-half million or more people.

Although recent changes have resulted in a minority population that is more economically diverse, "large segments of the minority population remain impoverished and powerless," O'Hare declared. Kasarda focused on the demographic changes affecting America's inner cities. One factor

during the 1980s was that employment growth occurred in white collar services, while manufacturing employment in most cities continued to decline. Yet, as millions of blue collar jobs disappeared, minority residents remained in those cities and lacked the education for employment in the new white collar jobs. Thus "these conflicting residential and employment based changes placed the demographics and economies of our central cities on a collision course," according to Kasarda.

However, Kasarda reported, Asian Americans seemed to thrive in the inner cities during the 1980s. The explanation, he claimed, lies in self-employment fostered by ethnic solidarity and strong kinship networks among Asians. He cited figures that showed that in Washington, DC only 3 percent of blacks are self-employed, compared to 20 percent of Asians; in St. Louis the comparable figures are 2 percent for Blacks and 25 percent for Asians. Furthermore, in San Francisco's Chinese community a dollar was found to turn over five or six times before it leaves the community. In many black inner-city communities, dollars leave before they turn over once.

#### Changing Age Structure

Riche pointed out that "the American age structure no longer resembles a pyramid but rather a pillar: there are more older people, and more middle-aged people (baby boomers) relative to young people than ever before." The current age distribution, productive middle age people at the highest concentration, means that public policies must be put in place now that will prepare the nation for the retirement years of these baby-boomers.

According to the 1990 Census there are 31.2 million Americans over the age of 65, a 22 percent increase over 1980. As might be expected, most of the growth in the elderly population occurred in the South and West. Yet, DeVita noted, "only 5 percent of the older population change their residence in any given year." Most older people "age in place." Thus, Pennsylvania, Iowa and Rhode Island rank 2, 3 and 4 (behind Florida) in the percentage of their population over 65. The top 7 states in percent of population over 85 are in the Midwest (Nebraska is first).

Both DeVita and Binstock argued that the elderly are a diverse population as well. DeVita noted that "the rates of poverty for minority elderly are two to three times higher than for the white



population." Binstock argued that it was time to "reform our policies on aging so that older persons share in the benefits and burden of policies in a fashion that reflects their diversity, particularly their economic diversity." He supported redistribution of burdens and benefits based on need, suggesting that "old age is no longer an accurate categorical marker for a need for governmental subsidization."

As for the expected political backlash against attempts to change support programs for the elderly,

Binstock suggested that older persons are not very different politically from their fellow Americans and that their representatives, like the AARP, do not always mirror their attitudes. He cited the repeal of catastrophic health insurance as an example. Therefore, Binstock claimed that "means-testing" of benefits will not be resisted as forcefully as those "inside-the-beltway" believe.

Sawyer intends to resume hearings on the results of the 1990 Census in June.

### SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES KC

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.

#### Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR)

AHCPR invites research applications that address important research questions in the delivery, organization, and financing of rural health services

**Application Procedure:** Applications will be accepted at the deadlines indicated below. Application kits are available at most institutional business offices and may be obtained from the Office of Grants Inquiries, Division of Research Grants, Westwood Building, Room 449, National Institute of Health, Bethesda, MD 20892, phone (301)496-7441.

**Eligibility:** Applications may be submitted by domestic and foreign non-profit organizations, public and private, including universities, clinics, units of State and local governments, non-profit firms, and non-profit foundations.

**Mechanism of Support:** This announcement is intended for the traditional research grant program (RO1). Projects can vary from one to five years in length.

**Review Process:** The review criteria for these applications are: significance and originality from a scientific and technical viewpoint; adequacy of the method to carry out the project; availability of data or the proposed plan to collect data required for the project; qualifications and experience of the Principal Investigator and proposed staff; adequacy of the plan for organizing and carrying out the project; reasonableness of the proposed budget; and adequacy of the facilities and resources available to the applicant.

**Deadlines:** Due dates are October 1, 1992, February 1, June 1 and October 1, 1993.

**Contact:** Paul Nutting, M.D., M.S.P.H., Director, Division of Primary Care, Center for General Health Services Extramural Research, Agency for Health Care Policy and Research, Executive Office Center, Suite 502, 2101 East Jefferson Street, Rockville, MD 20852-4908, phone (301)227-8357, fax (301)227-8155.

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CONTRIBUTORS

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American Council of Learned Societies  
American University  
Arizona State University  
Brookings Institution  
University of California, Berkeley  
University of California, Los Angeles  
University of California, San Diego  
University of California, Santa Barbara  
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1522 K Street, NW, Suite 836, Washington, DC 20005

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