# COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

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# HEALTH, EDUCATION SPENDING APPROVED BY HOUSE

Shortly before adjourning for it August recess, the House of Representatives approved Fiscal Year 1996 funding for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and several smaller agencies. The appropriations bill was approved by a vote of 219-208 following several days of contentious debate over the legislation's sweeping reshaping of budgetary priorities and its numerous policy edicts. Prior to its break, the House approved 11 of the 13 spending bills needed to keep the government running after October 1. The Senate, before adjourning until after Labor Day, completed work on 7 bills. With President Clinton threatening to veto many of the House-passed bills, a late September impasse looms.

In writing the Labor, HHS bill, the Republican leadership in the House attached non-funding related provisions to the legislation. This controversial practice was done with several other House-passed appropriations bills this year. There are provisions to reverse Clinton administration policy on publicly funded abortions and embryo research, an attempt to derail the direct loan program and Title IX protections for women athletes in colleges and universities, and restrictions on the lobbying activities of non-profit organizations receiving federal grants. If the latter item, sponsored by Rep. Ernest Istook (R-OK), becomes law, it would hamper the ability of organizations to defend the important contributions of the social and behavioral sciences against future attacks similar to the threats earlier this year against programs in these disciplines at the National Science Foundation. Rep. David Skaggs (D-CO) sought to delete this section of the Labor, HHS bill, but was defeated 232 to 187.

The debate on the House floor and the release of the Appropriations Committee's report for the bill provided greater detail and clarification for the programs included in the legislation. A description of these clarifications follows.

# **Education Research and Development**

The appropriations committee provided an increase of \$20 million to the education research account of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI). Initially, OERI supporters were jubilant. A subsequent floor amendment, sponsored by Rep. William Goodling (R-PA), to restore nearly \$5 million to the National Institute on Literacy reduced the increase to \$15 million. Reading the report also makes clear the enthusiasm was quite premature.

The report notes that "throughout the bill the Committee has provided no funding for a broad array of research, demonstration and technical assistance activities supported by individual line item appropriations. In doing so, the Committee has also indicated that funding for high priority activities could be funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement... The Committee expects OERI to review, and reduce or eliminate low priority or ineffective activities, and to fund higher priority research, demonstration, dissemination and technical assistance activities currently funded elsewhere in the bill."

The Intersociety Group on Education Research, of which COSSA is a member, has identified these programs, such as Goals 2000, School-to-Work, special education studies, vocational education research and demonstrations, the Eisenhower professional development program, the Javits Gifted and Talented Program, the National Diffusion Network, all of which the Committee suggests could be funded under OERI auspices. In order to fund these programs at their previous rates, OERI would need an extra \$207 million, not \$15 million.

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The Committee also instructs the Secretary "to designate a senior official of the Department to coordinate all Departmental research, demonstration, and dissemination and evaluation activities" and to develop and submit a comprehensive plan that indicates "Departmental programmatic goals to be achieved through these activities and how each separate program or activity supports these overall goals."

All of these instructions and shifting of programs ignore the comprehensive restructuring of OERI envisioned in the 1994 reauthorization bill passed with overwhelming bipartisan support by the House and Senate. Given the House's latest decisions, the structure provided by the reauthorization, designed to strengthen the independence of education research from the political interference that had produced harsh criticism of the efforts of OERI and its predecessor, the National Institute of Education, will not have a chance to flourish. The authority of the OERI Assistant Secretary and the Policy and Priorities Board established by the reauthorization also appear in danger.

## **Graduate Education**

As noted earlier (see *Update*, July 17), the Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GANN) program became the only Education Department grants for graduate education to survive the House appropriations process. The bill provided GANN \$27.3 million for awards to institutions that

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations represents more than 185,000 American scientists across the full range of the social and behavioral sciences, functioning as a bridge between the research world and the Washington community. Update is published fortnightly. Individual subscriptions are available from COSSA for \$65; institutional subscriptions, \$130, overseas mail, \$130. ISSN 0749-4394. Address all inquiries to COSSA, 1522 K Street, NW, Suite 836, Washington, D.C. 20005. Phone: (202) 842-3525, Fax: (202) 842-2788 support fellowships for economically disadvantaged students pursuing graduate education in designated areas of national need. In 1995, the Secretary specified chemistry, engineering, mathematics, physics, biology, and computer and information science as those areas.

Following the President's recommendation, the House eliminated the Javits Fellowship program, which provided awards to doctoral students in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. The report noted: "The decision to terminate this program was one of the most difficult faced by the Committee." This language suggests the possibility that if the Senate revived the program, the House would go along in the conference committee.

# **International Education**

The House retained most of the funding for these programs. However, it eliminated the Institute for International Public Policy, a \$1 million grant to the United Negro College Fund to support the training of minorities for Foreign Service and international relations careers. The Fulbright-Hays program supporting overseas programs saw its budget reduced by \$1.8 million to \$4 million. According to the report, despite the fact that the "Committee considers international education and foreign language training studies to be a high priority for the country," since the Secretary has not identified these areas as ones of national need under the GANN program and has not indicated that they are national priorities and federal responsibilities, it cannot merit the allocation of limited national funds. Although the domestic programs in this category received \$52.3 million, the same as last year, the Committee warned the Department that next year "the Assistant Secretary be prepared to testify as to the impact of these relatively small categorical programs on national needs."

# **Bureau of Labor Statistics**

Although the Bureau of Labor Statistics received FY 1996 base funding at 3 percent below its FY 1995 level, the House provided full funding for revising the Consumer Price Index. The Committee report calls this revision "critical to the Nation's economy and to the Federal budget." Members of Congress have criticized the current CPI for overestimating inflation and leading to larger than needed cost-of-living increases in many federal programs (see *Update*, July

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3). On the House floor, Rep. Gerald Kleczka (D-WI) sponsored a successful amendment to the bill that would prevent BLS from implementing any changes in the CPI without Congressional authorization. Kleczka expressed concern that "faceless bureaucrats" would make decisions impacting increases in Social Security payments to senior citizens.

## Job Training Research

The Federally administered programs of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) include funds for research and evaluation. Funded in the FY 1995 appropriation at \$12.2 million, this account lost \$3 million in the FY 1995 rescission bill. The House has reduced this amount to \$6.2 million for FY 1996. The Committee provided full funding for the multiyear evaluation of the Job Corps, which has been budgeted at \$4 million a year, leaving very little left for anything else.

# **HHS Policy Research**

The House provided \$9 million for FY 1996 for Policy Research supported by the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE). This office took a \$4 million reduction in the FY 1995 rescission bill, and the appropriated amount for FY 1996 is \$417.00 below that reduced amount, and \$3.3 million below the President's request. In addition, the House has eliminated funding for research accounts at the Administration for Children and Families and the Administration on Aging, and has suggested that "research and demonstration activities can be centralized" in ASPE, since "there is no need to replicate research accounts throughout the Department." The funding for the eliminated research programs in FY 1995 was approximately \$47 million. Like OERI (see earlier story), ASPE has been asked to absorb other research programs without the resources to pay for them.

# **Peace Institute**

The House provided \$6.5 million for the United States Institute of Peace, \$5 million less than its FY 1995 appropriation level. Again, the Committee report noted that this was "one of the most difficult decisions taken by the Committee in this bill." The Senate, which in previous years, has been more supportive of the Institute, is given another opening to restore the cut.

## **HEALTH RESEARCH PROGRAMS**

National Institutes of Health

The full House accepted the Appropriations Committee recommendation to fund the National Institutes of Health at \$11.9 billion, a 5.7 percent or \$642 million increase above FY 1995 and \$175 million more than the Administration's request. (See Update, July 31)

An amendment offered by Rep. Jim Moran (D-VA) during the debate on the House floor earmarking an additional \$1.9 million to the Office of Alternative Medicine was agreed to by voice vote. The amendment provides that of the \$261 million appropriated to the Office of the NIH Director, \$7.5 million be made available to the Office of Alternative Medicine. Moran, in a passionate speech on the House floor, described his personal family experience with alternative medicine. "We need some professional analysis . . . some random trials that are done in a professional, scrupulous manner, " he said.

## Agency for Health Care Policy and Research

A compromise amendment cutting the funding for the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR) by \$60 million and prohibiting the agency from taking \$5.8 million from the Medicare trust fund passed without objection. During the floor debate, Rep. Sam Johnson (R-TX), the author of an amendment which would have eliminated funding for AHCPR and used the savings for deficit reduction. explained that he chose to support the compromise amendment because "a cut of \$60 million is an important first step toward the total elimination of this Agency. Next year we can fight for total elimination." The funds cut from the program were transferred to the merged Chapter 2-Eisenhower Professional Development Program and the Carl Perkins Grants Program in the Department of Education.

The House Appropriations Committee had included \$125.5 million in total funding for AHCPR. The amount was \$34 million below Fiscal Year 1995's funding level and \$68 million below the President's request. Specifically, the Committee had provided \$85.4 million in general funds for AHCPR, \$50.0 below the FY 1995 funding level and \$57 million below the President's request. In addition, \$5.8 million had been made available in trust funds, the

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amount requested by the President, and included \$34.3 million in one percent set-aside for evaluation funding, \$45.3 million below the President's request.

# **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

As passed by the House, the bill includes \$2.1 billion in funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), \$39.1 million above FY 95 funding level and \$97.7 below the Administration's request.

The measure includes \$7.7 million for prevention centers, the amount of the President's request and last year's funding level. The funds allow academic institutions "to operate centers which conduct applied research and to promote health and disease prevention." While the centers have been funded since 1986, "the Committee intends to review an on-going Federal commitment to these activities."

For activities related to HIV/AIDS, the bill includes \$590.0 million in FY 96 funding for CDC, the same as 1995. The Committee commends CDC "for implementing community planning for HIV prevention programs." At the same time, the Committee encourages CDC, among other things, to "increase efforts to coordinate substance abuse treatment and prevention planing into local HIV prevention plans. Accordingly, the Committee provides funds "to enhance existing HIV prevention programs to provide services in substance abuse treatment settings."

The bill includes \$43.7 million in funding for the injury control program, the same as the 1995 level and \$49.8 million below the President's request. The Committee urges CDC to reexamine the program's portfolio to "target available funding to activities for which CDC can develop and implement specific interventions" that are not being addressed by other federal agencies.

Within CDC, a total of \$81.4 million is included in the bill for the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). This amount includes a regular appropriation of \$53.6 million, last year's funding level and \$11,000 above the Administration's request. It also includes \$27.9 million made available from the Public Health Service one percent evaluation set aside.

# SENATE PASSES INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS: FUNDS HUMANITIES ENDOWMENT

On August 9, the Senate passed the Interior and Related Agencies appropriations bill. The legislation included \$110 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). While this is an improvement over the House passed version that appropriated \$99.5 million for the Humanities Endowment and included a three year phaseout, it represents a \$4 million decrease from the level approved by the Senate appropriations committee. An amendment to increase funding for the National Endowment for the Arts resulted in the decrease for NEH. Including the rescission, NEH received \$172 million in FY 1995.

Appropriations for the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, also included in the bill, amounted to \$6.5 million. This is \$1.4 million more than the House, but \$3.5 million below the President's request, and \$2.3 million below last year. A House-Senate conference committee will reconcile the differences.

# REPORT OFFERS BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE RECOMMENDATIONS TO NIMH

The National Advisory Mental Health Council's new report, *Basic Behavioral Science Research for Mental Health: A National Investment*, makes several recommendations regarding basic behavioral science research programs of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). The Council periodically surveys the needs and opportunities in specific research areas at NIMH.

Below are the report's recommendations to NIMH "to assure the continuing contributions of NIMHfunded basic behavioral science research to the growth of knowledge and its application to improved mental health."

• Increase support for investigator-initiated research. The report indicates that presently only 15 percent of investigator-initiated research applications are being funded at NIMH, a rate the Council determines is inadequate to sustain the field.

- Increase support for research training. The number of full-time predoctoral and postdoctoral training positions supported by NIMH in fiscal year 1994 is generally at the same level it was in 1981 and 20 percent lower than in fiscal years 1976-1980. The report cites two areas in basic behavioral science research that deserve special attention and increased support: "training focused in research methods, statistical approaches, and computer simulation techniques and training in sociocultural perspectives relevant to mental health."
- Preserve expert review of basic behavioral science. The Council recommends that NIMH study the possible impact of merging its peer review system with the review system of the NIH Division of Research Grants, saying the latter is not well specialized in behavioral science. (see Update, July 3, for information regarding NIH's examination of the Division of Research Grants)
- Encourage basic/clinical research collaborations. The report cites several areas where it finds a productive exchange of information and knowledge between basic behavioral science research and clinical research. The Council recommends NIMH establish research centers "at which basic behavioral science researchers collaborate with clinical researchers who focus on defined psychological or medical disorders," providing the Institute with the opportunity to capitalize on these areas.
- Preserve and expand facilities for research on behavioral and social processes in animals. The study recommends establishing several new regional facilities for animal research and exploring strengthening existing centers "in collaboration with other interested Institutes and Agencies," citing the NIH Regional Primate Research Centers and the Yerkes Primate Center in Atlanta as examples.
- Strengthen the methodologies of basic behavioral science research. The Council encourages NIMH to "develop new initiatives and mechanisms of federal support specifically aimed

# EDITOR'S NOTE

With Congress in adjournment until after Labor Day, this will be the final issue of *Update* for the month of August. We will resume publication with the September 11 issue.

at achieving this goal." It urges continued development and refinement of sound scientific methodologies and measures.

- Establish multimedia data base archives for basic behavioral science. The reports notes that advances and combinations of advances in technology allow researchers to "collect and manage more detailed information, on more people, in more varied contexts," however, collection of this "technological sophisticated data" is very costly. The Council recommends that NIMH pursue this initiative with other interested NIH Institutes and Agencies.
- Facilitate the support and conduct of longitudinal research. The Council recommends that "NIMH determine whether longitudinal research is appropriately and adequately supported using current grant mechanisms and current peer-review procedures."

The report includes also offers funding recommendations to accompany each proposal. The authors say that previous reviews "mobilized NIMH's resources to develop promising research initiatives in schizophrenia, in mental disorders of childhood and adolescence, in basic neuroscience, and in research on services for people with severe mental illness, " adding that the report is expected to "provide guidance for the Institutes's basic research programs concerning behavioral and social factors that promote mental health or contribute to mental disorders."

To obtain a copy of the report, contact the Behavioral, Cognitive, and Social Science Research Branch, Division of Neuroscience and Behavioral Sciences, NIMH, Room 11C-16, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857: Email: behavsci@helix.nih.gov.

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# THE HOUSE SCIENCE COMMITTEE ON NSF REORGANIZATION:

From the recently released House Science Committee report on NSF reauthorization... (See Update, July 3).

## Majority Opinion...

The Committee is aware that NSF has been evaluating its management organization as part of the National Performance Review, and should now incorporate the new probable funding profile in its further analysis. With the Salaries and Expenses account at NSF reduced by \$4 million from FY95 and projected to be constant (and therefore further decreased due to inflation) annually thereafter, it is timely that NSF examine its management structure. The management organization necessary to accomplish NSF's mission to support basic scientific and engineering research and education should be re-evaluated not only in light of this probable out year funding profile, but also the changing requirements of NSF's "customer" -- the basic research and education community.

The Committee urges NSF to focus more of its future management resources at the levels closest to the customer and therefore, is limiting the number of Assistant Directors to not more than six (a decrease of one from the current number). The Committee directs the Director, in consultation with the National Science Board, to deliver a report, including reprogramming requests, to the Committee by November 15, 1995 on how it intends to reorganize its management structure to accomplish its mission in the 21st Century.

In evaluating the NSF organization, it is the view of the Committee that the current Social, Behavioral and Economics (SBE) Directorate should be examined to determine its current program level reflects sound priorities for overall science funding. The Committee is concerned that, while the activities and proposals of SBE are merit reviewed, as are other programs of the NSF, they appear to reflect trends toward support of more applied research and research in areas that in tight budget times are of a lower scientific priority. As the newest and smallest Directorate, and one whose research areas are crosscutting, SBE is the prime candidate for integration into other research Directorates. SBE programs should directly compete for research funds with other disciplines to assure that scarce research dollars are allocated in the national interest.

## **Dissenting Opinion...**

The Committee's evident intent to eliminate NSF's Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE) Directorate is a particularly ill-advised step, taken without benefit of hearings or opportunities for comment. For the reasons noted below, we cannot support this aspect of the Committee's action.

As amended by the Committee, the bill itself directs NSF to limit to six the number of assistant directors authorized for the National Science Foundation, presumably by eliminating one directorate. While the legislative report states that this provision is necessary so that NSF can accommodate the reduction in funding for the agency's Salaries and Expenses account, it also goes on to suggest that research supported by the Social, Behavioral and Economics Sciences (SBE) Directorate is of low priority and too applied in nature, and that the programs of the SBE Directorate should be integrated into the other scientific directorates.

NSF should explore ways to streamline its organization and reduce its administrative expenses. But the Committee has held no hearings or conducted other oversight investigations to determine whether the single method mandated in H.R. 1852 -- eliminating one assistant director, and by implication eliminating one NSF directorate -- will provide the necessary cost savings without damaging NSF's ability to function effectively. Pruning blindly may damage an agency that is far from being a bloated bureaucracy. Between fiscal years 1988 and 1993, NSF's full time staff positions remained constant, while its budget nearly tripled and its workload, measured by numbers of proposals processed, more than doubled. In the current fiscal year, the cost of operating NSF is 3.8 percent of the total budget, which is a modest amount of operating overhead.

We proposed an alternative in which NSF would carry out a study and then report back to the Committee on the best ways to achieve the required savings before instructing the agency how to reorganize. This proposal was rejected. However, section 212 of the bill still requires NSF to report to Congress on its reorganization resulting from the requirement to eliminate an assistant director. In developing this report, NSF should provide information to assist Congress in evaluating the impacts of the mandated reorganization. In particular, the report should consider a wide range of administrative changes that could contribute to cost reductions and document the projected cost savings, benefits and potential short-comings of the reorganization option which is selected. If the Director determines that elimination of one directorate will cause a reduction in the effectiveness of NSF's operations, he should document in the report the basis for this conclusion and provide suggestions for alternative administrative changes that will result in cost savings equivalent to savings anticipated from elimination of a directorate.

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We object to the unfavorable characterization in the Committee View of the value and content of the research sponsored by the SBE Directorate because the Committee has no hearing record or other oversight investigation to support these statements. In fact, the most recent testimony received by the Committee concerning the social sciences, which was obtained in hearings before the Basic Research Subcommittee on March 2, 1995, the Science Subcommittee on May 20, 1993 and the Science, Research and Technology Subcommittee on March 14, 1989, all document the important contributions of research in the social, behavioral, and economic sciences. None of these hearings provides a basis for questioning the priority or basic nature of the research sponsored by NSF in these fields.

For example, one accomplishment of basic research in the social sciences described in the March 2, 1995 hearing was the development of game theory, which deals with the study of rational behavior in situations involving interdependence. Recently, this body of knowledge provided the basis for the design of the ground rules for the auction by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) of the radio spectrum for personal communications services. Special rules were needed because, unlike traditional auctions in which goods are sold one at a time in sequence, the licenses had to be sold all at once in a series of rounds since the value of a particular license was dependent on what other licenses a particular bidder could obtain. The benefit to the government of the auction is apparent from the Explanation of the Conference Agreement on the Budget (H. Con. Res. 67), which in the discussion of Function 950, Undistributed Offsetting Receipts, states that, "The conference agreement assumes the FCC is provided sufficient authority to recover value from the spectrum amounting to \$14 billion over seven years."

Moreover, the importance of the social and behavioral sciences have been affirmed broadly by the scientific community. The NSF Director in a May 22,1995 letter to the Committee stated:

I am, however, concerned that we have not been more effective in informing the Congress about the important role played by the social, behavioral, and economic sciences in the Nation's basic research enterprise. These areas of science have been an integral part of the portfolio of research that we have funded since the 1950s, and are important to our mission to maintain the health of the Nation's science and engineering enterprise. These disciplines have contributed significant advances in research.

Dr. Bruce Alberts, the President of the National Academy of Sciences, recently stated that:

The National Academy of Sciences strongly affirms that the social and behavioral sciences are important disciplines in which independent scholarship and basic research have made significant contributions to mankind's store of knowledge and to the ability to meet critical societal challenges... The National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation, through competitively awarded research grants, provide financial support for the generation of basic scientific knowledge needed to devise solutions to...pressing [social] problems. These programs are particularly valuable for the quality of the science they produce.

And finally, in a June 1, 1995 letter to the Committee, Rita Colwell, President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, stated:

`These [social science] disciplines are an integral part of the U.S. research and development enterprise, as important to the Nation's future as physics, chemistry, engineering and biology. They have been part of NSF's research portfolio for over four decades and have contributed in important ways to our growing understanding of the natural and human environment, to the improvement of our health and standard of living, and to the structure of our economy and government.

We believe that there is no basis for singling out the SBE directorate as a target for elimination in meeting the requirement to reduce the number of assistant directors. We urge NSF to give equal scrutiny to all its programs and activities in determining the best reorganization plan for reducing administrative expenses, while maintaining operational effectiveness.

#### <signed>

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American Agricultural Economics Association American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business American Association for Public Opinion Research American Council on Consumer Interests American Educational Research Association Association for Asian Studies Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Association of Research Libraries Eastern Sociological Society

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