

**CONGRESS COOL TOWARD  
CENSUS SAMPLING** *MB*

The announcement that the Census Bureau seeks to use sampling methods in the 2000 decennial survey has met a chilly reception on Capitol Hill.

On February 28 Commerce Department officials held an elaborate "roll-out" of proposed methods to improve the decennial survey, plans that include address list improvements, an aggressive marketing of easier- to-complete surveys, and use of statistical sampling to tally non-respondents. The revised methodology comes in the wake of the 1990 census, which while counting 98 percent of the population, produced record high costs and differential undercounts, still-ongoing litigation, and calls among key Members of Congress for a cheaper, simpler decennial survey.

For 2000, the Bureau will consult with Postal Service officials in developing address lists, improve and slightly shorten the questionnaire to make it easier to complete, offer a better explanation of why the government requests information and the confidentiality laws surrounding it, launch a multi-faceted campaign to increase awareness and response, particularly among traditionally undercounted populations, place forms in public places such as malls, post offices, and convenience stores in addition to mailing them to all addresses, and use new technologies to improve speed and accuracy and reduce the labor intensity of enumeration. The questionnaire content has not been finalized.

But the most significant departure from the past involves what happens after the forms go out. After achieving a 90 percent response rate for a particular county through returned forms and traditional follow-up methods, the Bureau will then begin sampling non-respondents. The Bureau has said it is too difficult and too expensive to count every last person in a population that is expected to reach 276 million by 2000. (the 1970 survey, the first conducted by mail, had an 85 percent mail-back; in 1990 only 63 percent sent the form back). The government will select a

statistical sample of 10 percent of the remaining addresses, and repeatedly send enumerators to count them. The results will then be used to estimate those not counted. A National Academy of Sciences panel chaired by Brookings Institution Senior Fellow and COSSA President Charles Schultze unanimously endorsed sampling for non-response.

**A Skeptical Congress**

At a hearing held by the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee the following day, the question of sampling loomed large. The panel, chaired by Rep. William Clinger (R-PA) spent most of its time discussing the census with Reps. Tom Sawyer (D-OH) and Tom Petri (R-WI), chairman and ranking member, respectively, of the now-defunct Subcommittee on the Census, which was merged into the jurisdiction of Clinger's panel in the current Congress. Clinger referred to the two as "gurus" on the matter.

Before turning to Sawyer and Petri, Clinger recognized Sen. Herb Kohl (D-WI) who made a brief statement in which he questioned sampling. "There appears to be no scientific method for determining who is included and who is not. We are asked to believe that this sample will be more accurate than the census, but we are given little reason to believe that." He said he fears that 2000 will produce a higher

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undercount than 1990. Kohl noted the "cruel twist of fate" that while Wisconsin was honored by the federal government for having the highest response rate in 1990, a proposed statistical adjustment would have cost the state a congressional seat and millions in federal dollars.

Sawyer, while acknowledging that statistical methods can invite criticism, said that sampling "can and perhaps must" be at the core of efforts to reduce costs and undercounts. He repeatedly placed public confidence at the forefront of any plan, commenting that the decennial survey would be a failure without it, even if it were scientifically and fiscally sound. Reserving final judgment on the Bureau's plans, Sawyer appeared generally supportive.

Sawyer said "there is a place for statistical methods" and hoped that they could guide the Bureau in its efforts. In such an enormous undertaking, there will always be inaccuracies, he said. However, the important issue is "making the accuracy even" in the survey and sampling can help, Sawyer testified. He said that the Census Bureau has used estimation techniques in other surveys for years. He cautioned against setting survey methods in a way that produces "winners and losers."

The Ohio Democrat frequently spoke up for the value of demographic data from a survey of a rapidly changing nation. "The most important characteristic to measure is change itself," he said. He praised the

long form, sent to 17 percent of those surveyed, for the important data it generates. He was skeptical about the use of sampling as it applied to the long form, saying the sample size was already about as small as it could get.

When Rep. Bill Zeliff (R-NH), chair of a Government Reform subcommittee overseeing the Census Bureau, floated the idea of completing the census on the back of a postcard, Sawyer bristled. He mentioned the "enormous vacuum" of data that would be lost and urged Zeliff to "be very careful in this area." Government statistics, Sawyer said, was one of the major casualties of the recent government shutdowns. Rep. Harold Rogers (R-KY), an outspoken critic of the Census Bureau and chair of a House panel that sets Bureau funding, has long advocated reducing the census to a postcard.

### Election Analogy

Petri opposed the use of sampling and called for a census based on "a real headcount." He decried a "quick, easy, and cheap method of throwing up our hands and relying on scientific guesswork." He approved of sampling for guiding efforts, but not for achieving a final count. He said that while all politicians use sampling techniques in their campaigns, the actual election is a head-count and not a sample. He was concerned about the impact of sampling on smaller geographic areas, saying that even if one could estimate the size of a city's population, it could not be done for areas within that city. Dismissing the Census Bureau's claim that the new methodology would prevent a repeat of the 1990 count's torrent of litigation, he said it would create a "floating undercount" that would increase litigation and the public's lack of confidence.

Petri urged the Bureau to count non-Defense Department U.S. citizens living abroad at the time of the survey, saying that their rights to be counted are violated. He advocated the inclusion of a "multi-racial" category on the form, and cited testimony his former subcommittee received from those who criticized the current race and ethnicity categories as outdated. (The Office of Management and Budget is currently reviewing this issue, see *Update*, December 18).

#### CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

Executive Director:	Howard J. Silver
Public Affairs:	Michael Buckley
Government Affairs:	Angela L. Sharpe
Administrative Officer:	Karen Carrion

President:	Charles Schultze
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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), an advocacy organization for federal support for the social and behavioral sciences, was founded in 1981 and stands alone in representing the full range of social and behavioral scientists in Washington, D.C. *Update* is published 22 times per year. 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.

The Wisconsin Republican spoke of the civic importance of completing the form, and the benefits being counted brings in terms of congressional apportionment and federal funding. While urging a solid effort to reach non-respondents, he said "at the end of the day, they lose. You can bring a horse to water..."

Committee Chair Clinger said sampling was "crude" and said there is a need to be more precise. Commenting that "there are benefits as well as drawbacks to any methodology chosen," he said his Committee would make the census a high priority.

Rep. Steve Horn (R-CA), a political scientist, discussed the difficulties of achieving quality data from small areas. He cited neighborhoods in his district that are unsafe for enumerators to traverse, and also mentioned pockets of his Long Beach district that have a traditional antipathy to government intrusion, such as Cambodians who fled the Pol Pot regime.

Rep. Thomas Barrett (D-WI) echoed Sen. Kohl from his state in saying that Wisconsin has been harmed by statistical methods, and that it penalizes Midwestern states with high response rates.

## **SENATE HEARS FROM RESEARCHERS ON YOUTH VIOLENCE** AS

A Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Youth Violence hearing brought several leading researchers to Capitol Hill to present their research findings on this topic. The Subcommittee, chaired by Sen. Fred Thompson (R-TN), may reauthorize the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 later this year.

At the February 28 hearing, Thompson said that if nothing is done about youth violence, other issues before the Congress may not "make a whole lot of difference, because we are going to be involved in social problems that we are not going to be able to handle." Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI), a former chair of the panel in an earlier Congress, noted an eightfold increase in juvenile murder arrests in his state in the past five years. Kohl said that crime prevention must be a top priority in reauthorizing the Juvenile Justice Act.

Carnegie Mellon University Professor Alfred Blumstein, a former COSSA Board Member, said that the drug epidemic has been "the major cataclysmic event" in the increase in juvenile crime in the past decade. With the development of the crack market, he said, children were recruited into the drug market. This heavily armed trade has led to a diffusion of guns from the sellers to kids who hang out with them to other kids in schools -- a propagation of guns through the juvenile community as a direct result of this involvement in the illegal drug market.

Blumstein made four policy recommendations: keep guns away from minors; disrupt the illegal gun market; formulate more effective policies to shrink the drug market; and address the socialization of "more kids growing up in conditions that are more likely to be criminogenic."

### **Research as a Public Good**

"It is clear that this is one of the major national problems and the U.S. is investing a trivial amount of money in finding out how to do things better," Blumstein said. He termed research as an "inherently public good" that needs more federal investment. States and localities, Blumstein declared, lack resources and economies of scale to undertake the needed mixture of research, data collection, and dissemination.

Blumstein, insisting that he was not against punitive measures, emphasized that incarceration is not a very meaningful approach for young people. Teens come into violence faster than incarceration can solve it, he said. Investments are needed at earlier stages in the developmental process, he argued, from infant health, parenting skills, and schools. In previous times, stable families and communities with strong support systems such as extended families and churches served prevention roles.

### **Divergent Crime Trends**

James Alan Fox, Dean of Northeastern University's College of Criminal Justice, told the panel "there are actually two crime stories, and they are going in the opposite directions." He said that since 1985 the crime rate for those 25 and older has dropped 25 percent, while the rate for the young has skyrocketed. According to Fox, murder is being

committed by a much younger age group, by children as young as 14. The rate of killings by youth ages 14 - 17 has soared by 172 percent since 1985.

Citing the changes in demographics, Fox said that there will be a 14 percent increase in teenagers over the next 10 years. While saying the crime rate will rise from demographics alone, Fox said a worsening environment in the neighborhoods that are home to many in this new cohort will exacerbate the problem.

Fox underscored, however, that the surge goes beyond demographics and that there has been a tremendous change in crime. This generation of criminals are much more violent and have seemingly much more casual attitudes about violence, said Fox. "The positive forces," he continued, "the families, schools and neighborhoods have grown weak and ineffective... Increasingly children are being raised in homes disrupted by divorce and economic stress."

John J. DiIulio, Jr, of Brookings Institution and Princeton University, told Thompson's panel that "today's kids are more violent, are more impulsively violent and some ways more remorseless than ever." DiIulio said that in a vacuum, drug dealers serve as role models. Many of these kids are growing up in "abject moral poverty," he continued. A poverty that he said is surrounded by "deviant, delinquent, criminal adults in chaotic dysfunctional settings, in places where there are no jobs and drug abuse and child abuse are often twins. ... Where self respecting young men literally aspire to get away with murder." Scholars are now waking up to this reality that there is an explosion of interesting research that needs to be consulted, DiIulio asserted. He emphasized that there is a need to build and resurrect a civil society. Discussing the role of religious organizations, he said there is a body of empirical research that supports church-centered programs to combat social problems.

### **SCIENCE COMMITTEE EXAMINES NAS REPORT ON SCIENCE FUNDING**

HS

A February 28 House Science Committee examined a recent National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report that called for greater coordination of federal science and technology budgets. The study, *Allocating Federal Funds for Science and*

*Technology*, is the product of a NAS panel chaired by Former Carter Science Adviser Frank Press (see *Update*, December 4).

Press, a former NAS President, and Science Committee Chair Robert Walker (R-PA) had discussed the report last month at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (see *Update*, February 19). The hearing provided an opportunity for more than two dozen committee members to join the discussion. While Members lauded general praise on the report, many said its recommendations would be difficult to implement. The call for presenting a coordinated federal science and technology (FS&T) budget to Congress received support. Members, however, questioned the idea of reducing the scope of this budget by removing technological development, particularly at the Department of Defense, from within its purview. Press claimed this would produce a real FS&T budget of around \$35-40 billion, rather than the \$70 billion as the budget for science and technology is currently defined. Rep. Vern Ehlers (R-MI) evinced concern that an FS&T budget, as envisioned by the report, would become a "tempting target" for anti-science budget cutters. He cited former Bush Presidential Science Adviser Allan Bromley's opposition to the report's concept of a FS&T budget.

A number of Democrats, such as Committee Ranking Democrat Rep. George Brown (D-CA,) Rep. John Olver (D-MA), and Rep. Tim Roemer (D-IN), pushed Press to cite the level of spending necessary to meet the report's recommendation to "allow the U.S. to achieve preeminence in a select number of fields [of science] and to perform at a world-class level in the other major fields." Press refused to take the bait.

Members also criticized Press and his report for seeming to favor university-based research over that conducted in the federal laboratories. Chairman Walker said: "I would suggest to both the academic and laboratory cultures that this report opens a door through which more aggressive communication and research partnerships should be pursued to build on the strengths of each."

Press was accompanied by two members of the National Academy of Sciences committee that produced the report, Marianne Fox, Vice President for Research at the University of Texas, Austin and

Richard Mahoney, retired Chairman and CEO of Monsanto.

## **COSSA URGES HOUSE TO FUND EDUCATION RESEARCH AND STATISTICS** HS

On February 27, the House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education appropriations subcommittee opened its hearings on the FY 1997 federal budget. However, as Subcommittee Chairman Rep. John Porter (R-IL), pointed out these hearings were unusual, as the final FY 1996 budgets for these departments remain in limbo. In addition, Congress usually waits for the President to submit his proposals, which this year will not occur until March 18.

Despite these conditions, the Subcommittee heard testimony from a variety of groups, including COSSA. They all argued for enhanced funding for agencies within the subcommittee's jurisdiction. COSSA was the only group to make a case for the education research, statistics, and assessment programs at the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI).

COSSA Executive Director Howard J. Silver spoke to the Subcommittee. His testimony also represented the views of the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Society, the Council on Educational Development and Research, the National School Boards Association, and the Educational Testing Service.

Citing historical precedent going back to 1867, Silver argued for a continued federal role in education research and development. His testimony also described the results of a poll conducted in 1995, in which 90 percent of the nationwide sample said they considered investment in education r&d either a very important or an extremely important priority for the federal government. Yet, the financial commitment of the federal government remains less than 1 percent of total federal education spending and considerably less than is spent on health or defense r&d.

Silver also discussed OERI's new structure created by the 1994 reauthorization. He told the Subcommittee that the new OERI had brought significant improvements: "From a short term

fragmented research strategy, OERI now coordinates research through an NIH-model institute structure with five permanent missions. The Policy and Priorities Board is producing a coherent and long-term r&d strategy and conducting non-partisan oversight. Almost 95 percent of institute budgets are expended for research by outside sources, with a great increase in unsolicited field initiated studies. Research dissemination has expanded greatly through the use of the laboratories and electronic networks." He urged the Subcommittee to allow the new structure to continue and to enhance its funds.

Discussing the National Center for Education Statistics, Silver called it "a woefully underfunded and understaffed national treasure of data about teaching and learning and our nation's schools and students." Lauding NCES' longitudinal studies, he told the Subcommittee that only the federal government can sustain the long-term funding necessary for these data collections.

Finally, Silver provided examples of the results of education research and possible areas for future research. These included evaluating the effects of current education reform efforts and assessing technologically based pedagogy. He called for further studies in cognitive research to answer, what MIT President Charles Vest called, "the remaining mysteries to how we learn, remember, think and communicate."

For a copy of Silver's testimony, please contact COSSA at (202) 842-3525.

## **NSF LOOKS AT ROLE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION** HS

In 1986, the National Science Foundation (NSF) produced a report on undergraduate education that became known as the Neal report, after the chairman of the committee, then University of Michigan physics professor Homer Neal. The report served as the cornerstone for NSF's investment in undergraduate education reform during the past ten years. Now NSF is once again undertaking an assessment of the postsecondary years, with former St. Olaf College President Mel George leading the effort.

In the fall, NSF Education and Human Resources (EHR) Directorate's Undergraduate Division held a workshop that examined curricula and other developments in the sciences supported by the Foundation. Omitted from these deliberations were the social, behavioral, and economic sciences (SBE). After protests by COSSA and others, on February 22 the EHR held a session that examined "the social sciences contribution to the EHR Undergraduate Review." NSF invited a dozen SBE scientists to discuss how research in these sciences has contributed to understanding how students learn. In addition, the session explored the unanswered questions about student learning that research needs to address.

Assistant Director for EHR Luther Williams greeted the participants and assured them that his directorate was now committed to the SBE sciences, not only for their contributions to research on teaching and learning, but also as full partners in EHR programs. Cora Marrett, Assistant Director for SBE, noted that this workshop was part of a larger effort of cooperation between the two directorates.

With respect to teaching and learning in the classroom, Jill Larkin of Carnegie Mellon University and Rochel Gelman of UCLA stressed the research results from the cognitive sciences. Larkin focused on innovative teaching techniques that would move students from a passive to an active style of learning. Gelman spoke on how the research makes clear that students interpret what they encounter with reference to what they already know. This makes teaching undergraduates from increasingly diverse backgrounds difficult, Gelman noted, since their reference points vary considerably.

Maureen Hallinan of Notre Dame and the current president of the American Sociological Association stressed research results on learning in a social context. Thus, for Hallinan, peer influence, the social organization of students for instruction, and cooperative vs. competitive environments, are important research areas that have yielded important conclusions. She agreed with Gelman that cultural factors influence the way students interact with faculty, how they adapt to college life, the manner in which they relate to the curriculum, and the kinds of educational decisions they make during their college careers. Andrew Abbott of the University of Chicago noted his research in student trajectories. Abbott and

his colleagues have begun a massive study to discover how students use their college education, particularly their choice of major, in later life.

The discussion also focused on the role of technology in the future of undergraduate education. Ken Foote of the University of Texas, Austin has received NSF support to create a virtual department of geography. Over the next three years geographers from all over the country will gather in Austin to plan and develop materials to support an entire undergraduate geography curriculum on-line in the Worldwide Web. Ronald Ehrenberg reported on Cornell University's economics department's experiment to revamp the undergraduate microeconomics course utilizing Worldwide Web technology. Participants wondered whether universities would make the initially large investments in technology that would alter the way undergraduates are taught in the future.

At the meeting of the National Science Board held the same day, it was reported that a draft of George's report is imminent. Incorporating the contributions of the SBE sciences discussed in the workshop could involve some last minute additions.

### **CDC APPOINTS BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES COORDINATOR**

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Marjorie Speers was recently named the new Behavioral and Social Sciences Coordinator at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Speers is the first behavioral scientist to hold the newly created position. In a recent meeting with COSSA staff, Speers said her responsibilities will include raising the visibility of behavior and social science research at the CDC, looking at recruitment and promotion issues, and educating biomedical scientists at the CDC about the virtues of the behavioral and social sciences.

Speers holds doctoral degrees in psychology and epidemiology from Yale University and a bachelor of arts degree from Dickinson College. She previously served as the Director of the Division of Chronic Disease Control and Community in the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. In this position Speers directed public

health programs in cardiovascular health, aging, physical activity promotion, and health education.

Prior to joining CDC, Speers was an assistant professor in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Community Health at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas and an instructor

in the Department of Psychology at the University of Connecticut. She has published widely in a number of areas, and is a consulting editor for the American Journal of Public Health and the Journal of Behavioral Medicine, and regional editor for Health Promotion International.

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## **SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH** *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.

### **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism**

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) seeks research proposals which are aimed at increasing the knowledge base on the impact of managed care on the delivery of alcohol treatment services. This Request for Applications (RFA) invites research proposals that evaluate the impact of the full spectrum of managed care approaches on the availability, accessibility, quality, effectiveness, outcomes, and costs of alcohol treatment services. For the purpose of this RFA, managed care is broadly defined as the use of one or more of the following mechanisms to manage the delivery of alcohol treatment services:

- utilization review, including the use of clinical guidelines, protocols and case management techniques;
- selective contracting with a network of providers who provide services in accordance within an agreed-upon system of management controls; and
- provider payment mechanisms which encourage cost containment and may involve some degree of financial risk sharing (e.g., capitation arrangements, discounted payment schedules).

**Letter of Intent:** Prospective applicants are asked to submit by **March 15, 1996**, a Letter of Intent that includes a descriptive title of the proposed research, the name, address, and telephone number of the Principal Investigator, the identities of other key personnel and participating institutions, and the number and title of the RFA in response to which the application may be submitted. The letter of intent is to be sent to: RFA AA-96-001, Office of Scientific Affairs, NIAAA, Willco Building, Rm. 409, 6000 Executive Boulevard, MSC 7003, Bethesda, MD 20892-7003, fax: (301) 443-6077.

**Application Procedure:** The research grant application form PHS 398 is to be used in applying for these grants. These forms are available at most institutional offices of sponsored research and from: Office of Grants Information, Division of Research Grants, NIH, 6701 Rockledge Drive, MSC 7762, Bethesda, MD 20892-7762, (301) 435-3963, fax: (301) 480-0525, Internet: [girg@drppo.drg.nih.gov](mailto:girg@drppo.drg.nih.gov).

**Funding Mechanism:** Applications recommended for approval by the National Advisory Council on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism will be considered for funding on the basis of the overall scientific and technical merit of the proposal as determined by peer review, NIAAA programmatic needs and balance, and the availability of funds.

**Deadlines:** Applications must be received by **April 11, 1996**.

**Contact:** Frances Cotter, (301) 443-0786

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Association of American Law Schools  
Law and Society Association  
Linguistic Society of America

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Socio-Economics  
Society for the Scientific Study of Religion  
Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality  
Sociologists for Women in Society  
Southern Sociological Society  
Southwestern Social Science Association  
Speech Communication Association

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#### CONTRIBUTORS

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American Council of Learned Societies  
American Institutes for Research  
University of Arizona  
Bowling Green State University  
Brookings Institution  
University of California, Berkeley  
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University of California, San Diego  
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## Consortium of Social Science Associations

1522 K Street, N.W., Suite 836, Washington, D.C. 20005

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