

**HOUSE SCIENCE COMMITTEE
REAUTHORIZES NSF; ALLOWS
FOR 7.2 PERCENT INCREASE**

On April 16 the House Science Committee approved a reauthorization bill for the National Science Foundation (NSF) that would allow for a budget increase of 7.2 percent for FY 1998. The panel, chaired by Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-WI), authorized \$3.506 billion for FY 1998, and \$3.614 billion in FY 1999. The first-year chairman noted that unlike the President's proposed 3 percent increase, the committee was providing NSF "real growth."

Although authorizations are only guidelines for the appropriations committees, who recommend the actual spending numbers for agencies, these authorization numbers indicate growing support for NSF and basic research. It also corresponds with requests from the science community, including groups such as the Coalition for National Science Funding, who have advocated for this level of increase.

For the Research and Related Activities account, the Science Committee provided \$2.563 billion in FY 1998 and \$2.740 billion in FY 1999, a 5.4 percent increase from the current level of \$2.432 billion, and a 7 percent increase from FY 1998 to 1999. The Committee broke down the account by directorate only for FY 1998 and the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) Directorate was authorized \$130.7 million for that year. Its FY 1997 appropriation was \$121.8 million. Specifically included by the panel was an extra \$1 million for the United States-Mexico Foundation for Science, supported by the international division of the directorate.

The only discord during the markup was an amendment offered by Rep. Tom Coburn (R-OK) to freeze spending for the Education and Human Resources Directorate (EHR) at its FY 1997 level of \$619 million. The Committee had accepted the administration's request to increase EHR's funding to \$626 million in FY 1998. In FY 1999 the science panel recommended a significant increase to \$644

million. Coburn, citing reports from the Congressional Research Service and NSF's own Inspector General, claimed the directorate was full of waste and inefficiency. He also questioned whether its role "oversteps the jurisdiction of the federal government" in education. At the same time, he accused EHR of duplicating programs at the Department of Education. Rep. Gil Gutknecht (R-MN) seconded Coburn and said "it is not entirely clear that this function ought to be part of the National Science Foundation." This attack on EHR is reminiscent of the Reagan administration's successful efforts to zero out the education function at NSF in the early 1980s.

Education Directorate Defended

Defending the EHR were Rep. Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY), a long time proponent of science education and NSF's important role in this area. Reps. James Barcia (D-MI) and Rep. Alcee Hastings (D-FL) also made strong statements on the directorate's behalf. Chairman Sensenbrenner announced that he would "reluctantly" oppose Coburn because Basic Research Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Steve Schiff (R-NM) would hold oversight hearings later this year to scrutinize EHR and its operation. In the end, Coburn's amendment lost 26-11, as several Republicans joined a solid mass of Democrats in opposition.

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The authorization bill now goes to the House floor, and proponents hope to adopt it before the appropriations mark-up in the House VA, HUD, Independent Agencies Subcommittee (*see following story*). In the past two years, the House has passed an NSF reauthorization bill, only to have the Senate ignore it. With new Chairs in place on the key Senate committees and subcommittees, in particular Sen. Bill Frist (R-TN) as head of the Science Subcommittee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, the Senate may move a bill this year. Under the Senate's dual jurisdiction over NSF, the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, chaired by Sen. James Jeffords (R-VT), needs to act first. Although it is not imperative that NSF have an authorization to receive an appropriation, (it has not had one since 1993), agency administrators and advocates prefer to have one.

There was no mention of the SBE directorate during the Science Committee's markup. What a difference a year and a new Chairman makes!

NSF FACES HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

The National Science Foundation made its annual appearance before the House VA, HUD, Independent Agencies appropriations subcommittee on April 10. NSF Director Neal Lane and National Science Board Chairman Richard Zare, a Stanford University

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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 Washington in representing the full range of social and behavioral sciences. *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.

Chemistry Professor, presented the case for NSF's budget request of \$3.367 billion. Their testimony focused on NSF's new initiatives such as Knowledge and Distributed Intelligence, Life in Extreme Environments, and the Integrative Graduate Education Research and Training program.

The Subcommittee appeared more interested in other topics. Chaired by Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-CA), it seemed quite satisfied with NSF's performance and indicated an interest in possibly enhancing the President's proposed 3 percent increase for its FY 1998 budget. Calling this increase "minimal," the Chairman pressed Director Lane to admit that the President's budget allows NSF to "barely keep up with inflation." Lane agreed the Foundation had lost funding to inflation in the past few years. Zare told the Subcommittee that the small amount of the requested increase for FY 1998 meant "we are missing opportunities."

NSF Sought Seven Percent Increase from OMB

Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ) pushed Lane on how much the Foundation had originally requested from the Office of Management and Budget. Lane responded that NSF had asked for \$3.5 billion, an amount similar to the 7 percent increase supported by many in the science community. OMB reduced that original request in preparing the February release of President's budget proposal.

Rep. David Hobson (R-OH) and Rep. Joe Knollenberg (R-MI) used the hearing to question how universities function. The former called them mismanaged and in the business of "buying kids." The latter wondered whether the accusations that universities cared more about research than teaching were still true. Addressing Knollenberg's question, Lane spoke about NSF's programs that integrate research and education, including grants awarded to institutions of higher education who have succeeded in combining these functions.

Rep. David Price (D-NC) discussed how NSF has implemented the Advanced Technology Education program, which focuses on enhancing scientific and technological opportunities for community and junior college students. Price, a political scientist, had sponsored this program during his previous tenure on the House Science Committee.

Rep. Louis Stokes of Ohio, the panel's Ranking Democrat, and Rep. Carrie Meek (D-FL) focused on how to improve the numbers of minorities who become scientists and engineers. Stokes was particularly interested in the Urban Systemic Initiative in the Education and Human Resources Directorate. Meek expressed her support for more involvement of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities in NSF programs.

Large parts of the hearing were spent discussing NSF's recent decision choosing the University of California, San Diego and the University of Illinois as the lead universities in its new program to support advanced supercomputing. Rep. James Walsh (D-NY) pressed NSF to explain the process that excluded Cornell University and the University of Pittsburgh, the two other recipients in the old program.

Unlike hearings under earlier chairmen, the House Subcommittee no longer examines each directorate's budget in detail. Thus, there were no questions concerning the social and behavioral sciences in the open hearing. There might be some questions submitted by the Subcommittee to which NSF will respond in writing. Frelinghuysen did ask how the growing cooperation in international science affected U.S. national security interests. It was unclear where he was going with this line of inquiry, but Frelinghuysen said he would explore the issue further in the written questions.

The Subcommittee expects to finish its hearings in early May. The panel, along with the other Subcommittees, lacks a budget resolution providing its allocation of the budgetary pie, making the achievement of the previously stated goal of the House passing its 13 appropriations bills by July 4th look dim.

CONGRESS EXAMINES AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

In its 1996 reauthorization of the Farm Bill, Congress postponed making decisions about federal support for agricultural research. Legislators wanted to pursue a thorough review of the system that has relied on a combination of intramural research, formula grants, competitive grants, and special or earmarked grants to fund studies, including those in agricultural economics and rural sociology.

Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Richard Lugar (R-IN) held three days of hearings on revamping the system in early March. During those sessions the current system was defended by some witnesses, others called for an increase in competitive grants and an end to the special "pork" grants, and still others called for an end to formula grants dominated by the national land-grant colleges designated under the Morrill Act in 1862.

Chairman Lugar asked a series of questions. His basic concern focused on what the American people are getting for the \$1.8 million investment in agricultural research and how do you establish criteria to judge the worthiness of these investments? Given the pending implementation of the Government Performance and Results Act, these questions take on added importance. He also evinced interest in the balance among the different funding mechanisms and whether the National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program (NRI) could and should reach its originally recommended funding target of \$500 million?

COSSA, in conjunction with the Council on Food, Agricultural, and Resource Economics (CFARE), submitted testimony for the record to respond to Lugar's inquiries. Peter Barry, former President of the American Agricultural Economics Association, and a Professor at the University of Illinois, provided the testimony. In response to the accountability concern, Barry cited the substantial refinement in estimating research payoffs over time. The studies now indicate a consistently high social rate of return (generally ranging from 40 to 60 percent per year) to producers and consumers from the public investments in agriculture research.

Barry noted that social scientists in recent years have received about five to six percent of the competitive grant funds allocated under the NRI, about eight percent of the formula (Hatch Act) funds, and about 12 percent of special research grants earmarked by Congress. He called for increases in the NRI, but also extolled the virtues of the mixed system. "Targeting support through special grants has been a quicker way to meet emerging research goals and priorities than trying to reallocate NRI and formula funds," he said, particularly for research on social and economic issues. This has been especially true as the Markets, Trade and Policy component of the NRI has stagnated in terms of its funding in recent years.

The Committee and its counterpart in the House continue to explore options for the long term federal support for research. A bill may not emerge until midsummer at the earliest.

FY 1998 Appropriations Testimony

In the meantime, Jerry Skees, Professor of Agricultural Economics at the University of Kentucky, represented COSSA in its annual appearance before the House Agriculture and Rural Development Appropriations Subcommittee on March 18. The panel, chaired by Rep. Joe Skeen (R-NM), drafts the legislation setting the annual funding for Agriculture Department programs.

Skees presented the role of the social sciences in the agricultural research system and recommended increased funding for the Economic Research Service and for the Markets, Trade and Rural Development [Policy] program of the National Competitive Research Grant program. He also asked the Subcommittee to continue funding the four regional centers for rural development and to inaugurate funding for the Managing Changes in Agriculture initiative.

Skees provided the Subcommittee numerous examples of how social science research had enhanced private and public decision making in rural America. He spoke about research on: international markets; the revival of widespread population growth in rural America; the significant restructuring of agriculture and rural society; producer service job growth in rural areas; the economic returns to agricultural research; and the improved confidence among consumers,

markets, and farmers. Chairman Skeen expressed interest in these examples as ways of improving the situation for the people of rural America.

APPROPRIATORS HEAR FROM JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, COSSA ON CRIME RESEARCH

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and State recently heard both Justice Department officials and COSSA laud the contributions of federally sponsored crime research and data collection.

Appearing before the panel on April 15, Assistant Attorney General for Justice Programs Laurie Robinson presented the Clinton Administration's proposed FY 1998 budgets for the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), National Institute of Justice (NIJ), and several other Justice agencies.

Robinson's testimony represented the formal release of a congressionally mandated study, *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising*, conducted by a team of leading researchers at the University of Maryland. The report, first discussed by coauthor Denise Gottfredson at a COSSA Capitol Hill seminar (see *Update*, April 7), has recently been the subject of lengthy articles in the *New York Times* and *U.S. News and World Report*.

The Maryland study examines federal crime prevention strategies, and questions the effectiveness of several politically popular programs. Subcommittee chair Rep. Harold Rogers (R-KY) said it "surprises me" to hear the efficacy of the D.A.R.E. anti-drug abuse campaign challenged, and asked Robinson if the report will affect the Justice Department's spending priorities. Robinson said that the report will be used as part of the agency's ongoing efforts to work with states and localities to modify the specifics of programs to maximize their success. She added that the "wonderfully comprehensive summary" shows that the Department is "on top of the research," in that Maryland's findings were similar to that of other NIJ studies.

COSSA Testimony

Two days later, Felice J. Levine, Executive Officer of the American Sociological Association and chair of the COSSA Executive Committee, testified on behalf of the Consortium in support of NIJ and BJS. She told Rogers that a strong research and development effort is needed to help state and local governments develop strategies to combat crime.

Noting the Maryland study, she said it can serve as a valuable guide to policy makers, but reminded the committee that the report cautions that the effectiveness of crime prevention programs cannot be truly known because of insufficient funding for quality, independent research and evaluation. Levine noted that while NIJ's funding levels have increased in recent years, most of the funding has gone to support its DNA and less-than-lethal technology programs. Levine expressed regret that NIJ support for social science research has not shared in this growth, and urged the Subcommittee to invest in **all** aspects of criminal justice research and development. New technologies are important, yet cannot be successful unless paired with a deeper understanding of the social dimensions of crime, she said

Levine said that COSSA supports two pieces of legislation, HR 10 and S 15, that provide NIJ and BJS the capability to conduct research and collect data on juveniles as well as adults. Saying it does not make sense to fragment the research enterprise, she said that in revamping the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Congress should keep in mind that research and statistics on crime should not be divisible by age and that program evaluations should not be encumbered by attachment to programs in the same agency.

Two proposed FY 1998 NIJ initiatives Levine praised were the Arrestee Drug Use Monitoring System (ADAM), a new drug use forecasting effort, and expansion of NIJ's research in understanding violence against women.

Turning to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the statistical arm of the Justice Department, Levine noted several of the agency's important programs, but lamented that its funding has been stagnant for many years. Without increased funding for BJS, we will continue to fail to provide the comprehensive data

policy makers and practitioners need to meet their many challenges, she said. She urged the Subcommittee to provide adequate resources for BJS to ensure a high-quality crime information system at the federal, state, and local levels.

Levine concluded her remarks by telling the Subcommittee, "If we are committed to providing policy makers and law enforcement officials with the tools needed to make our streets safe and to allocate our tax dollars wisely, we must devote more resources to a strong and balanced research and statistics arm of the Department of Justice . . . the cost of inaction is far too high to forsake investing in criminal justice research and statistics."

CENSUS LONG FORM QUESTIONED BY KEY LAWMAKER

The chair of the House panel overseeing Census Bureau funding told Commerce Department officials at a recent hearing that they should give "serious consideration" to "decoupling" the census long and short forms, saying the long form drives down response rates and that the Constitution requires only a more basic count of the population. Under such a plan, the long form would be used later in 2000. Data users worry that separating it from the constitutionally-mandated survey runs the risk of no long form data, particularly if Congress does not allocate sufficient funding.

In 2000 the Census Bureau seeks to mail the short form to every household and ask seven questions. The long form will be received by one in six and will include 34 questions. Acknowledging the calls to reduce the size of the form, the Bureau is asking only questions that are required by law or court decisions for which census data is the sole source of information.

Census Bureau Director Martha Farnsworth Riche's contention that the long form's response rate is only one percent less was disputed by Chairman Rogers, who said it is worse in rural areas, which are more likely to receive the long form because of oversampling sparsely populated areas. He said the long form diverts efforts to count the population and is not constitutionally mandated. "[Worry] about getting

the answer to the question of how many bathrooms you have six months later," he said.

On the question of the Bureau's proposed use of statistical sampling for non-response follow-up and quality control, Rogers was equally concerned. He said it is inaccurate, unconstitutional, lacking in congressional support, and not certain to save money.

Sampling Defended

At an April 16 hearing held by the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, two distinguished researchers defended the use of sampling in the decennial census.

Former COSSA President Charles Schultze, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, said "Pouring on budgetary resources in huge amounts to try to count everyone physically has reached a dead end." Schultze, an economist who chaired a National Academy of Sciences panel on the topic, repeatedly said concerns over sampling in the census must be put in the context of "compared to what?"

University of Pennsylvania statistics professor Lawrence Brown said that, if properly used, sampling can be effective. However, he warned that if the public views the Census as not counting everyone, it "will be a real problem."

Committee chair Sen. Fred Thompson (R-TN) said that using sampling in a process that apportions congressional seats is unprecedented. He said that the members of his panel need to be convinced that the constitutional needs of equal representation through a fair and accurate count can be met through such a methodology.

On May 2 COSSA will sponsor a congressional breakfast, *Using the Census: What It Tells Us About America's People, Workforce, and Small Communities*, to illustrate that the Census is more than simply a count; it offers significant information about who we are, how we got here and where we are going. Three distinguished social scientists will discuss the findings of their research using census data.

WHITE HOUSE SEEKS TO CONSOLIDATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS AGENCIES

The White House announced on April 17 its support for stripping the U.S. Information Agency and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency of their autonomy and merging them into the State Department. The Agency for International Development would remain a separate agency, but report directly to the Secretary of State.

Such a reorganization has been staunchly advocated by Senate Foreign Relations Committee chair Jesse Helms (R-NC). Helms has held up consideration of several major foreign policy bills and nominations, but both sides deny that there is a quid pro quo.

The consolidation, which will require the approval of both the House and the Senate, was vigorously opposed by the leaders of the three agencies in question. Advocates for USIA educational and cultural exchanges fear the perceived loss of political independence of these programs. Advocates for such a move say it will produce greater policy coordination and efficiency.

SENATE PANEL HOLDS HEARING ON FEDERAL RESEARCH

Sen. Bill Frist (R-TN), a renowned heart surgeon and the new Chair of the Senate Subcommittee on Science, Technology and Space, used an April 16th hearing on research and development to present his views and ponder the challenges facing these issues.

Frist declared: "Our ability to develop strong science and advanced technology directly impacts our success in the global market, our standard of living and our national defense" and is "profound justification" for confronting the issue of what is the proper role of the federal government in research and development and economic development. "We have some ideas here in the Congress. But I do not believe that this body as a whole is prepared to answer all of the questions surrounding this issue," he said.

"Congress needs to make a clear case to the taxpayer as to the value of the dollar we spend on research and development," he continued, noting that the health-related research sector of the R&D budget "is easily understandable and [is] politically popular." Other sectors of the R&D budget are more difficult to define and an argument regarding "the inherent value of the programs . . . may not fare well against those programs which produce an immediate benefit," he maintained.

To address this issue, Frist suggested following three "simple truths" -- (1) Research and development, science and education bring advancements and innovation. (2) Innovation has been the basis of our competitive edge--peaceful and defensive-- and of our extraordinary lifestyle. (3) Funding research and creating an environment that encourages private research and innovation are the bedrock upon which much of our national economy is built.

Ranking Democrat Sen. John "Jay" Rockefeller, IV (D-WV) praised the Clinton Administration for its emphasis on R&D. He emphasized that all states should participate in the country's research efforts, and that not all research funding should go to large institutions.

Administration Extols Investment in R&D

John Gibbons, Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, reminded the Subcommittee that the support for S&T [science and technology] investments have traditionally had bipartisan support. He emphasized that "funding for S&T, like funding for education, is a high-leverage investment" in this nation's continued stability and prosperity.

The federal government is only "one partner in the national innovation system, which involves also the states, universities, nonprofit organizations and private industry," maintained Gibbons. Challenges to strengthening this partnership, he continued, include more effectively leveraging our national investments by: "creating a pro-growth business and economic climate that promotes private sector investment in innovation; strengthening university-government partnerships; strengthening the role of states in the national innovation system; and seeking international cooperation where appropriate."

Addressing those calling for additional R&D funding, Gibbons said "such talk makes me very happy. But, to turn a phrase, happiness can't buy money!...The bottom line is that our S&T investments over the next five years must be made withing the context of our drive to balance the budget."

Downward Slide for R&D Funding

"Despite the President's proposed increases for FY 1998, Federal R&D funding would continue its downward slide of the past several years," said Albert Teich of American Association for the Advancement of Science. Teich noted that every "Federal agency except for NIH and NSF has less to spend on R&D in FY 1997 than it did three years ago." The budget-balancing path, said Teich, "on which the nation has embarked -- as a means, ironically, of protecting future generations against the burden of a growing national debt --may well have the unintended effect of weakening U.S. science and technology."

Claude Barfield of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), echoed Teich by highlighting remarks made recently by Congressional Budget Officer Director June O'Neill at a recent AEI-Brookings Institution conference where she emphasized "that there will be no let up in the relentless pressure on public R&D budgets over the next five years -- and that priorities must be set." (See *Update*, March 24) Paraphrasing O'Neill, Barfield emphasized that "despite some euphoria within the science community because of the belief that the perceived 'crisis' for R&D spending has lessened recently, the reality is that the move to balance the budget by 2002 will result in a substantial reduction in real spending for federal R&D."

There is a "lack of consensus behind an enduring national policy for keeping the nation innovative and technologically strong," said Lewis M. Branscomb of Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Branscomb testified "for the acceptance of the idea that support for *basic technology research* should be at least as strong as public support for *basic scientific research*."

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