

CONGRESS ADOPTS BUDGET RESOLUTION: LIMITS ON SPENDING REMAIN *145*

The House and Senate agreed on the Budget Resolution for FY 2000 on April 15, thus meeting the statutory deadline for only the second time since enactment of the 1974 budget act. The Republican leadership did not want a repeat of last year when House-Senate differences prevented any resolution from adoption. Budget resolutions set parameters and guidelines for the appropriations and tax committees to do their work later in the year. The President does not sign or veto the resolution and thus, it does not have the impact of law.

The adopted resolution assumes that Congress will stick to the spending caps or limitations from the 1997 balanced budget agreement. This could severely limit the appropriators from meeting all the demands for new spending on defense, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), education, and other activities of the federal government. The resolution provides \$536.3 billion in discretionary budget authority for FY 2000 and \$570.9 billion in outlays, compared to FY 1999 totals of \$566.3 billion in budget authority and \$572.9 billion in outlays. Budget authority (BA) is the commitment of funds in one year that may be spent over a period of years. Outlays are the funds actually spent by federal agencies during a fiscal year.

The outlays for domestic spending programs including research and education could be hit, because of a demand for increased defense spending, although not on defense research. The resolution set non-defense discretionary spending at \$246.3 billion, or \$43.7 billion less than the appropriated level for FY 1999 including the "emergency spending," that provided a way out of the caps dilemma last year. Non-defense outlays are set at \$293.2 billion or \$6.1 billion below last year. A possible solution and a way around the budget caps, thus relieving the pressure on domestic programs would be to include

the proposed defense increases in the supplemental appropriations bill now under discussion to pay for the operations in Kosovo.

Another opportunity to circumvent the caps could come in July. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) is expected to announce its mid-year forecast for FY 2000. CBO's earlier forecast projected a \$130 billion surplus. This figure relies on the excess in the Social Security Trust Fund, leaving a non-Social Security deficit of \$5 billion. Republicans want to keep the Social Security surplus off-limits from increased spending. If the CBO forecast provides a "real" surplus, one without relying on the Social Security Trust Fund, then appropriators may be given some leeway.

Complicating this further is the budget resolution's direction that the Senate Finance and House Ways and Means committees will report by mid-July legislation that would cut taxes by \$143.5 billion in the next five years and by \$777.9 billion in the next ten years. Although there is no assumed net tax cut in FY 2000, Republicans are hoping to squeeze about \$15 billion in reductions, also using the new CBO forecasts as justification.

The Science function (#250), which includes National Science Foundation (NSF), National

Inside *UPDATE*...

- House Approves Contentious Census Bill; Now to Senate
- Senate Committee Examines Education Research
- Diabetes Research Identifies Importance of Behavioral Factors
- Maternal and Child Health Research Program Evaluated
- AAAS Holds Annual S&T Forum; Gibbons Notes Challenges Facing Science Community
- BLS Releases Data From National Longitudinal Survey
- Sources of Research Support

Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Department of Energy science programs, received \$18.2 billion in budget authority and \$18.0 billion in outlays in the resolution. This is about a \$900 million decrease in BA from 1999 and a freeze in outlays. The budget resolution includes "sense of the Senate" language that "a continuation of the pattern of budgetary increases for biomedical research" will occur.

With the budget resolution passed, attention now turns to the appropriations subcommittees, who will begin their markups sometime next month. Before those decisions are made the division of the allocation to the appropriations subcommittees, known as the 302(b) process will take place. This will provide how much, for example, the House Veteran's Affairs (VA), Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Independent Agencies panel will have to allocate funds to NSF, NASA, HUD, VA, Environmental Protection Agency, and the other agencies under its jurisdiction. The House hopes to complete action on the 13 appropriations bills before June 30. Although most observers believe "before the August recess" is more realistic" The Senate will move somewhat more slowly, as usual, with the huge Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education bill likely to move the slowest of all. Of course, by then the President will also become an important player in the process. Stay tuned!

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HOUSE APPROVES CONTENTIOUS CENSUS BILL; NOW TO SENATE DH

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill that would alter the Census Bureau's operational plan for the upcoming decennial census. On April 14 the House passed 223-206, largely along party lines, H.R. 472, to reinstate the Post Census Local Review (PCLR) program in Census 2000. The bill is part of Census Subcommittee Chairman Dan Miller's (R-FL) America Counts Today (ACT) Initiative.

The bill, vociferously opposed by the administration and Census Bureau officials, would require a 45-working day period in which local and tribal government officials would be allowed to review preliminary housing unit counts and jurisdictional boundary information before they are finalized. State officials would be allowed to dispute this preliminary information and require the Bureau to investigate any challenge. The Bureau would have until November 1, 2000 to complete its investigation and notify local and tribal officials.

Bureau officials support the use of a pre-census review, called the Local Update of Census Address (LUCA) program. They believe LUCA is the best program to get local officials involved in the census. LUCA would allow local and tribal officials to review address lists before the Bureau undertakes the headcount on April 1, 2000. Officials of the Bureau believe LUCA is much more effective and cost-efficient than PCLR. According to Census Bureau officials, the 1990 PCLR was a failure and it would not address the most significant problem facing the Bureau — the undercount of minority and hard-to-count groups.

Census Subcommittee Ranking Member Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) offered an amendment to H.R. 472 which would have essentially gutted the provisions of the bill. The amendment would have given Census Bureau officials the authority to determine how best to interact with local officials. The amendment, however, was defeated 202 to 226. The bill now goes to the Senate. If it passes the Senate, which some Democrats believe is dubious, it will head to the President who, upon the advice of Census Bureau officials, has promised to use his veto power to kill the bill.

Census Monitoring Board Releases Second Report

The bipartisan board established to monitor the Census Bureau's implementation of the Census 2000 recently released its second report to Congress. The Census Monitoring Board's joint report "explores some of the critical operational issues the Census Bureau faces as it prepares and conducts the 2000 decennial census." The report was endorsed unanimously by the Board's four presidential members (Board Co-Chair Tony Coehlo, Gilbert Casellas, Everett Ehrlich, and Lorraine Green) and the four congressional members (Board Co-Chair J. Kenneth Blackwell, David Murray, A. Mark Neumann, and Joe D. Whitley). The full report is now available on the webpages of the presidential members (www.cmbp.gov) and the congressional members (www.cmbc.gov).

SENATE COMMITTEE EXAMINES EDUCATION RESEARCH DH

On April 14, Senator James Jeffords (R-VT), chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, convened a hearing to consider the Nation's education research system. The Committee heard from C. Kent McGuire, Assistant Secretary for Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), Pat Forgione, Commissioner of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Diane Ravitch, former OERI Assistant Secretary and currently a professor at New York University (NYU) and senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, and Michael Ward, Commissioner of Schools for the state of North Carolina.

Lately, Senator Jeffords has been a vocal critic of the federal government's education research system. He has been especially critical of OERI and the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) for their inability to disseminate education data in a more timely manner. The NCES collects, analyzes, and disseminates statistics on the Nation's education system. In several recent hearings Jeffords has mentioned his desire to closely scrutinize the OERI and the federal role in education research. This topic is of particular interest to the Committee since OERI

and NCES will likely be reauthorized by Congress this year.

Jeffords opened the hearing by reiterating his frustration with OERI. Furthermore, he said that there is no research and evaluation to determine if "education programs work and which programs don't work." Kent McGuire told Jeffords he believes there are several areas in which the OERI does have a good research base and thus good knowledge, including teaching and organization and management of school systems. He noted, however, that there is a lot that the OERI does not know. But, McGuire emphasized that education research can and does make a difference.

According to McGuire, over the last several years, the consumers of education research, particularly the states, have zeroed in on a small range of topics of concern, for example teacher education. This focus, according to McGuire, has made it easier for OERI to perform research and disseminate the results. He also noted a marked increase in demand for education research. "The demand for research is stronger than ever," explained McGuire.

McGuire told Jeffords that there in fact may be a need for "rather profound changes" in OERI in order to move the agency forward. McGuire explained, though, that there needs to be an increased and sustained investment in OERI in order to realize improvements in education. McGuire told the Subcommittee that he will be asking for more flexibility when Congress begins debate on OERI reauthorization. He also told the Chairman that OERI will be trying to improve the process for reviewing research and increasing the confidence in OERI's research products, as well as sharpening the research focus of OERI's research labs and centers.

Forgione, head of NCES, struck a defensive tone in response to Jeffords criticism of outdated data and the need for more timely products to better inform policy makers. Forgione noted that since he took the reins of the NCES, he has "cut in half" the time required to collect and disseminate data on the nation's education system. He stressed throughout the hearing that it was his mission to continuously work to produce valid, timely, and relevant data.

Criticizing the Hand that Once Fed You

Diane Ravitch was highly critical of the agency she used to head, particularly the role of OERI's education research laboratories. She said the federal education research program has several deficits, including a lack of trust on Capitol Hill, the press, and the public. This mistrust, she said, is troubling because it makes it extremely difficult to hire quality staff and creates the false impression that the work performed by OERI is partisan.

OERI, she said, has a "severe lack of qualified research staff." Ravitch noted that the OERI staff are decent, hard-working individuals who know how to manage grants, but do not know how to conduct good research. The "grandiose research centers are incapable of launching large-scale research studies," she said. Furthermore, the agency, according to Ravitch, lacks a focused research agenda. The OERI's research agenda, formulated by the National Education Research Policies and Priorities Board, defines research priorities too broadly, she said.

Ravitch reserved her harshest criticism, though, for the OERI's research laboratories. She questioned the role of the laboratories and said they should "get off the federal dole and compete for federal research dollars." She said the federal government should take away funding from the labs and funnel the funds directly to the state's departments of education who would spend the research dollars wisely. This too, she concluded, would ensure that the work done by the labs is not partisan, or perceived as partisan.

She concluded that the federal government should abolish the current education research system and create an independent education research office (to be named the Office of Education Audits). This office, she said, would conduct long-term research and thorough and effective evaluation of federal education programs. An independent, bi-partisan board of state and local education officials, practitioners, researchers, and teachers would oversee the new independent education research office. The head of the new, independent education should be nominated for a set term by the president to ensure an insulation from politicization, explained Ravitch.

Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) questioned Ravitch's idea that funneling education research funds to the states would remove the partisan perception. He noted that state governments are just as partisan, if not more partisan, than the federal government. Also, he noted that this type of system may prompt a governor to provide healthy portions of funds to state universities to further his or her popularity among the voters. Also, Reed noted that state governments currently spend very little money on education research. This idea was supported by Michael Ward, who noted that state governments indeed spend little of their own money for education research.

DIABETES RESEARCH IDENTIFIES IMPORTANCE OF BEHAVIORAL FACTORS AS

"Behavioral factors play a major role in the current management of diabetes and its complications," concludes a recently-released report of the Congressionally-established Diabetes Research Working Group (DRWG). The DRWG was charged with developing a comprehensive research plan for diabetes research. That research plan is divided into three areas: 1) extraordinary opportunities (rapidly expanding, crosscutting areas); 2) special needs for special problems (focused research areas targeted to specific populations, complications, and methodological approaches); and 3) resource and infrastructural needs. Behavioral and health services research is assigned to the special needs for special problems category.

The recently-released report notes that the DRWG recognizes that success in managing diabetes often depend on "changing the behaviors of patients, physicians, and persons at risk for developing diabetes." In fact, the report states that the increasing number of individuals who are diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes derives from changes in lifestyle behaviors, particularly those associated with obesity. Type 2 diabetes, formerly known as adult-onset diabetes, is now increasingly common in childhood, especially in minority populations. The disease, according to the report, is "closely linked to obesity and atherosclerosis and is creating a major challenge to global public health."

DRWG cites the "development of behavioral interventions" that produce sustained changes in lifestyle behaviors and the maintenance of weight loss as possible cost-effective ways to prevent obesity and Type 2 diabetes on a broader scale. The Group also acknowledges a role for behavioral research related to the complications of diabetes; addressing such behavioral issues as diet, lack of exercise, stress, depression, and eating disorders.

While only two pages of the DRWG report are dedicated to behavioral and health services research, the group recommends funding this type of research. The Working Group recommends \$8 million in FY 2000 funding to address behavioral and social science research; the recommended amount would continually increase over the next four years — \$13.5 million in FY 2001, \$20 million in FY 2002, \$27 million in FY 2003, and \$40 million in FY 2004.

The DRWG notes that for the past three years Congress has emphasized diabetes research through funding increases to NIH and other initiatives. Thus, DRWG calls for an incremental expansion for NIH's diabetes research portfolio — an increase of \$384.5 million for FY 2000 rising to \$1.166 billion for FY 2004.

Other recommendations include:

- Support clinical behavioral research to develop interventions to improve patients' adherence to diabetes treatment and their quality of life and to promote sustained improvements in lifestyle behaviors, particularly diet and exercise, which will effectively prevent and reduce the risk for diabetes.
- Support research on and development of valid methodologies to measure psychosocial and behavioral factors in diabetes.
- Develop interdisciplinary research teams and training programs to bring together individuals who have training in behavioral sciences with those who have training in diabetes, nutrition, and exercise physiology.
- Support research to address lifestyle risk factors — including obesity, unhealthful dietary preferences, and smoking cessation — and behavioral modification/counseling programs.

Sanford Garfield, Senior Advisor of Biometrics and Behavioral Research at the National Institute of

Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), cites the Working Group's report as a "major breakthrough" for behavioral research in the field of diabetes research. He notes that the Institute will be releasing soon two Program Announcements (with funding attached) to address the issues of Type 2 diabetes and racial disparities. Additionally, NIDDK, along with the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, is developing a diabetes conference in behavioral science research which will review where the field is and identify any successes. The conference, to be held this fall, will bring together researchers from diverse areas to review and determine cases where behavioral interventions have resulted in treatment advances.

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH RESEARCH PROGRAM EVALUATED *AS*

A little known research program at the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) known as the MCHB Research Program has been evaluated by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Claude Fox, HRSA Administrator, initiated a review of the Special Projects of Regional and National Significance Program (SPRANS) administered by MCHB to gain an understanding of how MCHB determines SPRANS priorities.

In FY 1998, the Research Program budget was approximately \$9 million, which supported 51 research grants, with 10-14 new grants awarded per year. Historically, the MCHB has funded these grants for periods of up to four years. In FY 1999, however, new grants are limited to a one year duration. According to the agency, this is to allow it to "review and revised its research priorities."

Currently the research agenda is developed by a consensus of national experts every ten years. The most recent conference was held in 1994. From that conference, a broad series of 265 research issues and questions were selected. For FY 1997-1999, three program-directed priorities were selected: 1) the development of instruments to measure racism and/or study its consequences; 2) the role of fathers in nurturing the health, growth, and development of children; and 3) the impact of health reform and

managed care on access to and use of health services by mothers and children.

According to the evaluation, 45 percent of the active projects are intervention studies while 55 percent are non-intervention projects. Grants are either investigator-initiated or program-directed. The Research Program "receives very high praise for the rigor and scientific integrity of its review process, and the quality of the research it funds."

A sample of the report's recommendations:

1. The Bureau should reaffirm that the mission of its MCH Research Program should reflect its original legislative mandate to focus on service related research and not attempt to cover all areas of MCH;
2. Starting with the upcoming research cycle for FY2000-2002, the Bureau should revise its MCH Research Program-directed priority research topics to be more consistent with the strategic goals of the Bureau and of the SPRANS program as a whole. MCHB should consider organizationally linking the Research Program to other evaluation and analysis of the Bureau, possibly in the same administrative unit.
3. The Research Program should establish a mechanism to obtain research policy advice on a regular basis; this could be done either through a separate research policy advisory committee or through a change in responsibilities listed in the Charter of the MCHB Research Review Committee.

Fox believes the report "suggests a blueprint to better integrate the SPRANS program into the strategic mission of HRSA and MCHB." He has not yet announced if the recommendations will be implemented.

The MCHB Research Program is administered in the Division of Science, Education and Analysis. The Program has an eleven member Maternal and Child Health Research Review Committee which serves as a permanent grant review board.

COSSA, along with the American Psychological Association, the Society for the Research on Child Development, the Federation of Behavioral, Psychological and Cognitive Sciences, and the Center for the Advancement of Health requested a meeting in March with Fox and Peter van Dyck, the Administrator of MCHB, to discuss the funding

limitation. Fox responded to our inquiry but did not grant a meeting. We are still awaiting a reply from van Dyck.

AAAS HOLDS ANNUAL S&T FORUM; GIBBONS NOTES CHALLENGES FACING SCIENCE COMMUNITY

DH

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) held its 24th annual colloquium on science and technology policy April 14 - 16. The theme of this year's colloquium was "Science, Technology and the Knowledge Economy." The three-day event featured several interesting and provocative discussions centered around the nation's science and technology (S&T) industry and the overarching federal role.

Among the highlights of the event was the William D. Carey Lecture. This year's lecture was given by former White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) Director Jack Gibbons. Gibbons, now a lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, focused his remarks on several challenges facing the U.S. science and technology community.

The first challenge facing the S&T community, noted Gibbons, is the federal budget. He observed that there are increasing pressures and demands on the federal budget because of the rising costs of entitlement programs — Social Security and Medicare — and the overriding budget constraints — the budget caps established by the 1997 Balanced Budget Act. This pressure, according to Gibbons, could prove costly for the U.S. investment in science and technology. The current budget climate, said Gibbons, has produced a situation in which there is a pressure to cut programs' budgets. He admonished the government to closely examine what it proposes to cut. Gibbons was worried about Congress' overall misunderstanding of science and said that it needs more S&T expertise.

Second, and related to the first, Gibbons observed that with the current budget system, science is competing for money against other important social programs. In the end, therefore, science and

technology often lose in the money game, concluded Gibbons. Instead, he suggested that there should be a unified science and technology budget which would ensure that science competes against itself and does not lose out on its share of the federal funds. A unified budget, according to Gibbons, would also allow science and technology to have coherent policies, "to make the whole greater than the sum of its parts." He further emphasized that the U.S. must invest in all areas of research and development, not simply biomedical research undertaken by the National Institutes of Health.

A third challenge facing the community, according to Gibbons, is the on-going debate about the proper federal role in S&T. He said the notion that the federal government has no role in S&T is "nonsense." Gibbons noted a fourth challenge is the current emphasis on outcomes of research rather than on inputs. He noted that the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) has placed too much emphasis on outcomes despite the difficulty to measure the rate of return of research and development.

Finally, Gibbons noted that the science and technology community and Congress have two different cultures. The S&T community looks at things in a long-term reference, while Congress is mostly concerned with short-term results. These two cultures are extremely difficult to reconcile, concluded Gibbons.

BLS RELEASES DATA FROM NATIONAL LONGITUDINAL SURVEY *DH*

The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently announced the release of the first round of the NLSY97 [National Longitudinal Survey] main and geocode data files for distribution to researchers. The information gathered will assist researchers in assessing the impact of schooling and other environmental factors on these newest labor market entrants. The data, representative of the U.S. population born between 1980 and 1984, will allow the BLS to identify characteristics that define today's youths' transition from school to the labor market into adulthood. The BLS collected extensive

information on youths' labor market behavior, educational experiences, and family and community backgrounds from both the youth respondent and one of the youth's parents.

Interested users can now obtain NLSY97 data on CD-ROM. Each main file CD-ROM contains the data record of each youth. The geocode CD-ROMs contain all the information present on the main file disc as well as detailed county-level geographic information about youth residence. To protect respondent confidentiality, the geocode file is only available to those who complete a non-disclosure file. To obtain the NLSY97 CD-ROMs, contact the NLS User Services: Center for Human Resource Research, The Ohio State University, 921 Chatham Lane, Suite 200, Columbus, Ohio, 43221-2418; Email: usersvc@pewter.chrr.ohio-state.edu; Telephone: 614/442-7300; FAX: 614/442-7329.

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT *DH*

COSSA provides this information as a service and encourages readers to contact the agency for further information of application materials. Additional application guidelines and restrictions may apply.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE: The Department of Agriculture's Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS) has announced the availability of approximately \$1.75 million in competing Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) funds for fiscal year 1999. The primary function of the RCDG program is to improve the economic condition of rural areas through cooperative development. The funds, therefore, will be used to establish and operate center for rural cooperative development. The grants will be awarded on a competitive basis to nonprofit corporations and institutions of higher education based on a set of specific selection criteria. For further information on the selection criteria or on the grant, contact James Haskell, Assistant Deputy Administrator, Cooperative Services, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Stop 3250, Room 4016, South Agriculture Building, 1400 Independence Ave, S.W., Washington, DC, 20250-3250; Telephone: 202/720-8460.

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