



# COSSA Washington Update

Consortium of Social  
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## DHS SEEKS APPLICANTS FOR CENTER ON SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL ASPECTS OF TERRORISM

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has issued a Broad Agency Announcement calling for proposals for a university-based Center of Excellence in Behavioral and Social Aspects of Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism. **Letters of Intent are due July 30, but are not required. The deadline for the full proposal is September 30, 2004.** There will be one award of \$4 million per year for three years.

The new Center should focus on both the behavioral and social aspects of the terrorists themselves as well as the behavioral and social effects of terrorist threats and their attacks on populations. In the announcement, Charles McQueary, DHS Undersecretary for Science and Technology, noted: "This Center of Excellence will be a critical step in expanding our understanding of the psychological and sociological factors leading up to and resulting from terrorist activity."

The proposal should involve multidisciplinary, collaborative research and education. The outcomes derived from the center's efforts should emphasize applications related to domestic security while reflecting on the international context of terrorism. Another aspect that any proposal should address is "developing the future intellectual capital and workforce necessary to respond to the challenges" raised by DHS in the announcement.

The proposal should include the following Research and Education topics::

1. **Individual and social factors in persuading and recruiting participants for terrorist activities and development of intervention strategies involving:**

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## HOUSE MOVES APPROPRIATIONS BILLS; SENATE STALLS

The House of Representatives continued its march through the FY 2005 appropriations process these past two weeks. On July 8, it passed the Commerce, Justice, State (CJS) funding bill, after rejecting an amendment by Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX) to eliminate funding for the American Community Survey (ACS). Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA), chairman of the CJS Appropriations Subcommittee, and Rep. Tom Davis (R-VA), chairman of the Government Reform Committee, which has jurisdiction over the Census Bureau, spoke out strongly in defense of the ACS (for details on the CJS bill see UPDATE, June 28, 2004). In another development on the CJS bill, the House restored the \$9.2 million that the Commerce Department cut from its FY2005 request for the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of Global Change. This should restore

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## **DHS, (Continued from Page 1)**

Nationalist, fundamentalist, millennial, criminal and revivalism movements; charismatic leaders and followers; individual and social identity; the impact of globalization, education, economic and political factors; and the impact of the media (including the Internet).

### **2. Individual and Group Dynamics including:**

Characterization and analysis of the sociological and behavioral functions affecting the group and its members; communication within and across terrorist networks; analyses of collective behaviors; analysis of gate-keeping dynamics and multi-network membership roles; sensitivities to and dependencies of networks on contextual and historical variables; understanding interaction with supporters, constituencies, target groups and general populations; and analysis of network resilience, vulnerabilities, and the development of disruptive strategies.

### **3. Preparation and Resilience of individuals and groups, including:**

Impacts of terrorism on psychological and social functioning; the impacts of counter and anti-terrorism activities on psychological and social functioning; communication strategies for the lay public regarding risk, threat, risk communications, the role of media, as well as informational needs and means of shaping perception; analyses of likely responses to 'weapons of mass destruction, disruption and effect'; attitudes and behavior toward strategies designed to protect public access to specific venues, national events, and travel; and the development of effective warning and communication strategies.

**4. Cognition of Information, including:** Data presentation to analysts allowing efficient correlation and assessment of disparate information as well as efficient and effective presentation of information to practitioners.

Inquiries may be sent to [universityprograms@dhs.gov](mailto:universityprograms@dhs.gov). The full proposal is available at: [http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/S\\_T\\_BAA06July2004.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/interweb/assetlibrary/S_T_BAA06July2004.pdf).

## **SPENDING BILLS, (Continued from Page 1)**

funding to the Office's social science activities threatened with elimination (see UPDATE, May 3, 2004).

The House has now passed five of the 13 funding bills. Four others have moved through the full Appropriations Committee and are awaiting floor action, including the Agriculture bill. On July 8, the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education spending bill,

the largest and often most controversial of the thirteen, began its journey when the Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Ralph Regula (R-OH), marked up the bill (for details see below). The VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. James Walsh (R-NY), has scheduled the markup of its bill, which includes FY 2005 appropriations for the National Science Foundation, for July 20.

All of this activity in the House, where the Republican leadership maintains heavy control to the point of holding roll-call votes open until getting their desired result, suggests that the appropriations process may actually get done more rapidly than expected.

Unfortunately for this process, the United States has a bicameral legislature. The situation in the Senate is anything but smooth and quick. The GOP leadership in that body confronts a Democratic minority with more weapons and leverage at its disposal than its colleagues in the House. Without a FY 2005 budget resolution, Senate Democrats have been able to force the postponement of a number of markups, as well as floor action on the Department of Homeland Security funding legislation, by rejecting Republican proposals to limit debate on the bills. Sen. Ted Stevens (R-AS), chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, had to postpone subcommittee sessions that would have marked up nine of the spending bills.

As it has through most of this congressional session, it is clear that there will be Omnibus Appropriations legislation that would include almost all of the spending bills. The Republicans keep floating notions of doing this in September, while many observers think that a more likely scenario is a lame-duck session after the November elections.

## **HOUSE PANEL PROVIDES FY 2005 FUNDING FOR LABOR, HHS, AND EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

As noted above, the House Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS), and Education Appropriations Subcommittee allocated funding for agencies under its jurisdiction on July 8. For most of the programs, the Subcommittee provided last year's funding or the President's requested funding level. In addition, the Subcommittee did not include many earmarks for specific projects. This may occur later in the process, during the negotiations with the Senate over a final bill. The numbers for various agencies important to social and behavioral scientists are described below.

The panel appropriated \$28.527 billion for the **National Institutes of Health**, a \$726.8 million increase from the FY 2004 appropriation and the same as the President's request. This 2.6 percent boost is another clear indication that the halcyon days for NIH are over. The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** received total program funding of \$4.478 billion. This includes almost \$37 million from the 1 percent evaluation set-aside fund. It leaves CDC over \$100 million below the FY 2004 level.

The **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality** will receive all of its funding from the evaluation fund – a total of \$303.7 million, which is the same as last year, and the same as the request. **Policy Research** at HHS is funded at \$20.8 million, all from the evaluation fund – same as FY 2004, but \$8 million below the request.

An exception to the level funding decisions occurred with the recommended FY 2005 appropriation for **International Education and Foreign Language** programs. The House panel provided \$107.7 million, an increase of \$4 million over FY 2004 and the Administration's request. It restores the cuts to the domestic programs, such as the Title VI centers, in last year's funding bill. The **Javits Fellowships**, which provide support for graduate students in the social sciences, arts, and humanities, received \$9.9 million for FY 2005. This is the same level as last year and the same as the request. The subcommittee allocated no funding for the **Thurgood Marshall Fellowship** program for preparing law school students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Subcommittee recommended \$526.8 million for the **Institute for Education Sciences**. It eliminated the Administration's request for a \$20 million boost for research, development, and dissemination, providing \$165.5 million; the same as last year. A total of \$91.7 million was allocated for statistics – the same as last year – and \$94.8 million for assessment, a very slight increase over FY 2004. The panel, however, did appropriate \$30 million for statewide data systems.

The House eliminated the \$119.3 million allocated in FY 2004 for the **“teaching of traditional American history.”** Since this is a program championed by Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WV), Ranking Democrat on the Senate Appropriations Committee, the funding will likely be restored. The **Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FISPE)** received \$32 million, which appears to be a significant reduction from its FY 2004 funding of \$157.7 million. Since

most of that funding was for special projects that Congress deemed worthy and the House panel did not earmark any FY 2005 money yet, FIPSE's budget seems to have suffered a huge cut. This may change after Senate and Conference Committee action.

The Subcommittee funded the **Bureau of Labor Statistics** for FY 2005 at \$533.5 million, a \$15 million increase from FY 2004, and the same as the Administration's request. Of that total, \$455 million is an appropriation and \$78.5 million is from unemployment trust funds.

The bill is expected to go to the full House Appropriations Committee next week and the goal is to pass it on the House floor before the summer recess begins on July 23. The next issue of UPDATE will provide the report language from the Committee, where Congress will give directions to the agencies on how to spend the appropriated funds.

## SOCIAL SCIENTISTS DISCUSS DEATH PENALTY AT NAS

With the upcoming election bringing the most salient policy issues to the forefront of national discussion, the National Academy of Sciences' (NAS) Committee on Law and Justice conducted a seminar to discuss new developments and literature on the study of the death penalty. The seminar brought together social scientists and experts on capital punishment from a range of universities around the nation. Daniel Nagin, the Teresa and H. John Heinz III professor of Public Policy at Carnegie Mellon's School of Public Policy and Management, aptly pointed out in his opening remarks that the death penalty has become a largely salient policy issue not because of its efficacy or its possible deterrent effects, but rather more for its symbolic value as a representation of the “most heinous crimes” and the epitome of retributive justice. He added that there were many characteristics of capital punishment worthy of social science research, such as deterrence, racial discrimination, and the conviction or exoneration of innocent people.

The discussion centered around the published literature of three seminar attendees: Joanna Shepherd, an Assistant Professor at the John E. Walker Department of Economics at Clemson University; Raymond Paternoster, Director of the Office of Academic Computing Services in the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences at the University of Maryland; and Samuel R. Gross, the Thomas and Mabel Long Professor of Law at the University of Michigan.

## **Econometrics and Deterrence**

Shepherd presented both her research and a thorough literature overview of how econometrics has been used to study the death penalty. Shepherd testified this past April on Capitol Hill in front of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security regarding the possible deterrent effects that capital punishment could have for terrorists. During the NAS seminar, however, she limited her presentation to the scope of the death penalty's deterrent effects on homicides, without extrapolating further implications for terrorism in the U.S.

Shepherd, collaborated with several other economists to analyze detailed, time-sensitive "panel data." In doing so, she estimated that from 1977 (just after the Supreme Court-mandated moratorium on executions was lifted) until 1996, each execution resulted in, on average, 18 fewer murders.

Shepherd also studied the types of murders deterred by the death penalty, finding "that the combination of death row sentences and executions deters all types of murders: murders between intimates, acquaintances, and strangers, crime-of-passion. Furthermore, she found that based upon her data, a reduction in the death-row waiting period before execution resulted in additional deterrent effects for the murder rates. As she states in her working paper, "Murders of Passion, Execution Delays, and the Deterrence of Capital Punishment", "My results confirm that, even in situations of passion, people behave economically, weighing their actions' costs and benefits."

Her arguments, while methodically laid out, met with significant resistance from the criminologists and several law professors attending the seminar. Richard Rosenfeld, Professor and Chair of the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, pointed out that in his studies of violent offenders, he has never encountered even the most marginal violent offender whose sensitivities to the judicial environment were enough to deter them from the violent crime. He argued that the difference between the deterrent effects of prison time and the death penalty were not normally distinct in the cases of these offenders, and that Shepherd's use of the rational choice model in which criminals economically weigh their probability of being put to death may be flawed. Moreover, Jeffrey Fagan, Professor of Sociomedical Sciences and the Director of the Center for Violence

Research and Prevention at Columbia University's School of Public Health, agreed with Rosenfeld's assessment of rational choice use by violent offenders. He additionally suggested that Shepherd's model did not account for the three major trends in drug trafficking crime over the past four decades; the emergence of heroin in the 1960's, the emergence of powdered cocaine in the 1970's, and the surge in crack cocaine markets during the 1980's and 1990's.

## **Race and Capital Punishment: A discussion of trends in Maryland**

Raymond Paternoster, Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Maryland, presented his study of the death penalty's implementation in Maryland, concluding that two major factors – the race of the victim and the jurisdiction in which the offender was tried – seemed to have influence on whether a case made it through each successive stage in the death penalty trial process.

As Paternoster explained, he studied the implementation of the death penalty in 5 stages. These stages range from the universe of cases that are death penalty eligible in Maryland (stage 1) to the actual imposition of the death penalty sentence (stage 5). According to Paternoster, while the race distribution among offenders is relatively stable throughout these 5 stages, the distribution becomes drastically skewed when we observe the race of the victim. Within the universe of death penalty eligible cases (stage 1), roughly 56% of the victims were non-white and 44% were Caucasian. However, according to Paternoster's data, this roughly even distribution radically changes in stage 5: of the 76 cases that received a death sentence, only 20% of them had nonwhite victims, while the other 80% involved Caucasian victims. In addition, approximately 50% of the cases receiving death sentences involved African American defendants and white victims, whereas of the 1311 death penalty eligible cases, only 23% were black defendant, white victim crimes.

But Paternoster also found that jurisdiction had a great deal of influence in his study. Baltimore County, for example, has been more diligent than any other studied county in following through with prosecutions – 45% of the cases in which a death sentence was imposed were from this area, while only 12% of the original death penalty eligible cases were within this jurisdiction.

While Paternoster's results did not ignite as much contentious discussion as Shepherd's study, some of the

social scientists in the room suggested further research might find a number of decision reversals that came out of the final 76 capital punishment cases. This was also brought up by Fagan, who contributed to a widely cited study in June of 2000 that found at least 68% of nationwide death sentences or convictions leading to death sentences were reversed upon further review since 1975.

## Exonerations

Samuel Gross, the Thomas and Mabel Long Professor of Law at the University of Michigan and a widely published researcher on race discrimination in the U.S. penal system, presented a series of findings regarding death row exonerations across the nation. He noted that death row cases represent approximately 0.25% of the prison populations, but account for roughly 40% of exonerations. Over 90% of these crimes are rape and murder cases, with rape cases accounting for roughly 40% of the total exonerations.

Gross postulated several reasons for the high rate of exonerations, particularly in rape and murder cases, and emphasized the need to conduct a great deal of further research on this matter. He echoed Daniel Nagin's opening remarks in saying that these crimes are the most salient and visible because of their "heinous" nature. Therefore, according to Gross, prosecutors and investigation teams may spend a great deal more time on them due to their high visibility. Thus, in many cases, the prosecution may be under pressure to go to trial with bad evidence, largely circumstantial evidence, or false evidence, for that matter. In fact, his studies show that it is during the second stage of review when most innocent defendants come to light. Gross noted with a hint of irony that if the other 99.75% of the prison population's cases received the same amount of attention, there would be over 28,500 exonerations by the same rate.

In the discussion that followed, Gross continued to emphasize that many of the implications he was drawing from the exoneration statistics were educated guesswork, and that the exonerations were not a sample or an example of those who were wrongly convicted, but rather of those who were actually exonerated by some lawful process. However, he cited the 5% exoneration rate as a fairly large "margin of error" for capital punishment, given its permanent nature. In addition, Gross pointed out that most death row inmates "are not exonerated and are not executed," but rather spend most of their lives on

death row. The true number of innocent people on death row was impossible to extrapolate from the statistics, he argued. But through discussion, he offered that racial bias was clear in these exonerations: Gross found that interracial rape cases accounted for over 50% of the rape case exonerations.

In terms of issue salience, Gross's research and the issue of wrongful convictions, in general, seem to have the most potential for impact on public opinion. Edwin Meese III, former Attorney General during the Reagan Administration and a seminar attendee who made opening remarks, noted that "everyone in the system" is concerned now with ensuring that "we have the right people," and that there is a definitive need to "achieve greater certainty." He called the issue of deterrence "secondary" and noted that further social science research should focus upon those who were eligible for the death penalty but did not receive it – in order to gauge whether they were able to return to society in a law-abiding capacity.

In sum, the seminar was an important dialogue that brought together statisticians, economists, and criminologists to discuss an issue that may become more salient as November nears. As Sam Gross and collaborator Phoebe Ellsworth found in their working paper, "Second Thoughts: Americans' Views on the Death Penalty at the Turn of the Century," public opinion for the death penalty has been steadily eroding since the 1990's, and continues to decline at a gradual rate. What was once an "old favorite" is being called into question; its status as a "cultural truism" has begun to diminish in the face of state moratoria and a "conspicuous realignment of positions by conservative leaders" joining what was once a small, vocal contingent of those opposing capital punishment.

## SERP PROGRAM FACES FUNDING CHALLENGES

On July 6, the American Educational Research Association and the Institute for Educational Leadership featured the National Research Council's (NRC) Strategic Education Research Partnership (SERP) at their monthly education policy forum luncheon. Suzanne Donovan, Director of SERP, spoke to education professionals about the major features of the initiative along with the financial and political impediments that must be overcome to make SERP a reality in our nation's schools.

SERP was conceived by an NRC-established committee in 1996. The goal of SERP is to find a way to make significant research findings part of the working vocabulary of teachers, school administrators, and

education policy makers.

The infrastructure for SERP is comprised of three basic components, which Donovan describes as “sites where research and practice come together.” There is a central organization or headquarters responsible for program design and coherence, communications, financial oversight, and long-term planning; distributed research and development teams; and a set of field sites – school districts where practitioners and researchers work together to define and pursue key lines of research.

### **Critical Resources**

When evaluating successful models for translating research into practice, program coordination, stable funding, and administrator support are always necessary. “All three need to be present,” said Donovan.

The SERP committee members maintain that there are valuable recommendations for improving educational practice that haven’t yet been evaluated in the classroom setting or received adequate funding and support. Donovan explained that there are critical untapped resources that could improve student learning in a host of fields.

Additionally, technology that could be used to support teachers is being underutilized, and there has been a failure to systematically study why students perform better at some schools than others.

SERP would create a venue to bring “toolmakers” together with researchers and practitioners to develop computer programs that would make research available for everyday use, integrate research naturally in classroom activities, develop quick assessments to simultaneously advance research to facilitate practice/research, and create a coordinating capacity to steer the programs onto a similar course.

### **Financial and Political Impediments**

According to Donovan, one of the biggest difficulties in garnering support for SERP comes from knowing that teachers in classrooms and researchers are often two mutually exclusive groups. Since the initiative is dependent on creating and maintaining field sites located throughout the country on a long-term basis, finding support and funding for the initiative is absolutely critical. Donovan readily admitted that SERP is “struggling, and needs funding to start up.”

Bearing those concerns in mind, those involved with launching SERP have fashioned a unique public/private partnership, called the “compact of states,” (modeled

after the Education Commission of the States) which is meant to bring new funding partners to the table and stimulate popular support within the public and private sector.

The compact asks all states to commit 0.5% of their K-12 budgets (roughly 1.5 billion per state) to maintain SERP core funding. “The idea is to have the core funding paid for by the states with funding for projects coming from targeted foundations and businesses within the field site,” said Donovan. She was quick to qualify, however, that SERP is more likely to get money from independent processes than from the state governments. Initial funding will come from the private sector and the states would embrace financial commitment further down the road.

In order to launch all aspects of the SERP enterprise, the committee intends to have the compact signed by all 50 states and ratified by U.S. Congress. Currently, Governors Mark Warner of Virginia and Mike Huckabee of Arkansas have signed the compact (a critical victory, since both chaired the National Governors Association) and 18 other states have requested the compact.

Some criticism was voiced during the question and answer session about SERP not building upon established resources, such as those supported by the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences; instead wanting to create the infrastructure from scratch.

Information about SERP is located on the National Academies of Science web site; an independent web site, <http://www.serp-institute.org>, will be launched next month.

## **SCIENCE GROUP HOLDS 10th ANNUAL EXHIBITION**

On June 22, The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF) held its tenth annual exhibition on Capitol Hill highlighting research supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF). The Coalition is an alliance of over 100 organizations united by a concern for the future vitality of the national science, mathematics, and engineering enterprise. It supports the goal of increasing national investment in the NSF’s research and education programs. COSSA was a co-sponsor of the exhibition and its Executive Director, Howard Silver, chaired the CNSF from 1994-2000. Among the 33 exhibits on display were three from COSSA members. The American Psychological Association employed the services of COSSA *Detecting Deception* Seminar Speaker Mark Frank from Rutgers University to

demonstrate his research on analyzing facial expressions (see *Update*, April 19, 2004). The American Sociological Association presented Bruce Western and Devah Pager of Princeton University, who explained their research on "Criminal Record and Race Discrimination." Nora Newcombe of Temple University represented the Society for Research in Child Development, illustrating her research on "How Children Learn to Measure, Add, and Find Their Way Around."

Attendees at the exhibition included Presidential Science Adviser John Marburger, NSF Director Arden Bement, NSF Deputy Director Joseph Bordogna, several Members of Congress, congressional staffers from both the Senate VA- HUD Appropriations Subcommittee and the House Science Committee, as well as numerous other Capitol Hill and Science Community denizens.

## UNDERSTANDING AND PROMOTING HEALTH LITERACY

Low health literacy is a widespread problem, affecting more than 90 million adults in the U.S. It is a complex phenomenon that involves individuals, families, communities, and systems. Low health literacy often results in patients' inadequate engagement in, and benefit from, health care advances. Research has linked it with such adverse outcomes as poorer self-management of chronic diseases, less healthy behaviors, higher rates of hospitalizations, and overall poorer health (see *Update*, May 27, 2004).

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) invite proposals (R01 and R03) designed to increase scientific understanding of the nature of health literacy and its relationship to healthy behaviors, illness prevention and treatment, chronic disease management, health disparities,

risk assessment of environmental factors, and health outcomes including mental and oral health.

A wide variety of research approaches are encouraged: basic research that investigates or describes the nature of health literacy and the magnitude of health literacy problems, and applied research addressing issues pertinent to health literacy practices and research-in-practice.

Research on health literacy should assist NIH in its mission of communicating scientifically based health information to the public, health care providers, and related professionals who serve the public. Participating Institutes include: Cancer; Heart, Lung, and Blood; Aging; Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering; Child Health and Human Development; Deafness and other Communication Disorders; Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases; Drug Abuse; Environmental Health Sciences; Mental Health; Library of Medicine; and the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research.

**Letters of intent are due:** September 13, 2004, October 13, 2005, and September 13, 2006.

**Applications:** October 13, 2004 – 2006. For more information see <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-04-116.html>.

## COSSA STAFF CHANGE

Please join us in welcoming the newest member of our Washington staff, Tracey Lesetar, our Associate Director of Public Affairs. Prior to joining COSSA, Tracey worked on the legislative staff of Rep. Elijah E. Cummings (D-MD), Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, as well as several political campaigns in the DC Metro area. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Duke University in Political Science and Public Policy Studies. She replaces John Wertman, who moved to the Association of American Geographers to become its Director of Public Policy.

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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.

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