
CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

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FY 1989 BUDGET RESOLUTION PASSES: COMPLICATES APPROPRIATIONS

On June 6, the Senate gave final approval to the FY 1989 budget resolution, which establishes guidelines for spending by government function. After a smooth start in which each House of Congress passed its resolution relatively early, the conference committee to resolve the differences between House and Senate versions bogged down for eight weeks. Instead of waiting for the budget resolution to pass (which, under the much-maligned budget process, Congress is supposed to do--see related story, this issue) the appropriations subcommittees began marking up their bills.

Now that the resolution has passed, those appropriations subcommittees that have already marked up are being forced to re-examine their spending decisions. This has happened to the House HUD-Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Edward Boland (D-MA). It is being asked to reduce its bill by \$450 million. Whether this will affect the already accepted levels for the National Science Foundation (NSF) is unclear (see Update, May 13, 1988; some have suggested the reductions can be achieved simply by cutting funds for the space station.) The subcommittee is expected to make this decision soon.

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The Consortium represents more than 185,000 American scientists across the full range of the social and behavioral sciences, functioning as a bridge between the research world and the Washington community.

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It is also clear that the appropriations decisions made so far have ignored the spending priorities established in the budget resolution. For example, the conference report on the budget resolution assumes "full funding for the National Science Foundation's proposed research and education programs." Both the decisions made by the House HUD-Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee and the allocation decisions made by the Senate Appropriations Committee to its subcommittees (see Update, May 27, 1988) will clearly preclude full funding of the NSF request.

The conference report also includes language asking the National Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine to "provide advice on developing an appropriate framework and information base for conducting cross-program development and review of the Nation's research and development programs." This will be used to review "program contents and strategies and in determining funding and organizational priorities for science and technology." <<

NATIONAL ECONOMIC COMMISSION EXAMINES BUDGET PROCESS

On May 31, the National Economic Commission (NEC) held the second in what promises to be a long series of hearings to examine solutions to the deficit problem. The NEC, a bi-partisan panel co-chaired by Robert Strauss (former trade representative in the Carter administration and "Democratic adviser") and Drew Lewis (former Transportation Secretary in the Reagan administration and "Republican adviser"), was established to provide the next administration with advice on how to deal with the structural budget deficit. Its members were appointed by the White House and the Democratic and Republican leadership in both Houses of Congress. The new President will appoint two members.

The Commission heard from three former players in the budget process: Alice Rivlin, former Director of the Congressional Budget Office and now a Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution; William Niskanen, former member of the Council of Economic Advisers and now Chairman of the Cato Institute; and Steven Bell, former Staff Director of the Senate Budget Committee and now employed by Salomon Brothers investment firm. Rivlin admonished the commissioners not to pay too much attention to process. She noted: "The primary job of this Commission is to help the next President and the next Congress find a politically acceptable set of substantive policies--some combination of spending cuts and revenue increases--that will reduce the deficit.... Process changes will not make that hard job any easier." Niskanen echoed these views.

All three, however, made suggestions for improving the budget process. They all agreed that a two-year budget and appropriation cycle would be a first small step toward simplifying what Rivlin called an "excessively layered, complex, and hard to understand" process. Other suggestions ranged from creating a single Department of Economic Policy out of Treasury,

the Office of Management and Budget, and the Council of Economic Advisers (Rivlin) and a "pay-as-you-go" scheme of automatic tax surcharges (Niskanen), to continuing resolutions automatically set at the previous year's funding levels if Congress fails to enact individual appropriations bills (Bell). Line-item veto authority for the President was supported by Niskanen and Bell.

Reforming the budget process has been a recurring theme almost since the passage of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, which gave us most of the present procedures. On June 7, the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, chaired by Sen. John Glenn (D-OH), heard from Members of Congress eager to suggest their own sets of reforms. It is the Commission, however, that could provide the bipartisan cover and prestige to offer solutions to the deficit problem and may also be able to override the jurisdictional disputes that discourage procedural reforms within Congress.<<

COSSA TESTIFIES ON HEALTH AND BEHAVIOR RESEARCH AT NIH

On June 8, John C. Linton, Professor of Behavioral Medicine at the West Virginia University School of Medicine, presented testimony of behalf of COSSA and the American Psychological Association to the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, chaired by Sen. Lawton Chiles (D-FL). Linton asked the subcommittee to urge the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to increase the proportion of its spending for research on health and behavior.

NIH reported to Congress that it spent \$179 million (2.8%) of its FY 1987 budget of \$6.2 billion on health and behavior research and research training. The proportion of the overall NIH budget devoted to health and behavior research has remained relatively constant in recent years at 3%. Linton recommended increasing this proportion to at least 10% of the NIH budget. He suggested NIH heed the Institute of Medicine's report Health and Behavior, which identified lifestyle and behavior as key contributors to mortality in this country.

Commenting on the need for greater resources for the National Institute on Aging's behavioral and social research programs, Linton asked the subcommittee to support improving data sets on the economics of aging, including a new longitudinal survey on retirement and health. He also urged greater support for the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, especially its research on current sexual behavior practices of the general population. Finally, Linton advocated more funding on health and behavior research at the National Cancer Institute and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

Sen. Pete Domenici (R-NM), chairing the hearing, explained the difficult situation the Labor Subcommittee is in. As noted in the last Update, this subcommittee did not fare very well in the allocation process and thus, Domenici noted, the competition for funds among many worthy programs will be fierce.<<

AIDS REPORTS CALL FOR SOCIAL, BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

The first week of June witnessed the release of two reports critiquing the federal government's role in the battle against AIDS and urging greater support for AIDS-related social and behavioral science research.

The Institute of Medicine/National Academy of Sciences (IOM/NAS) report, issued on June 1, claims that at the federal level there is an "absence of a coherent policy" on AIDS, and that the federal response to date has been "too uneven." The IOM/NAS report, a follow-up to an earlier study entitled "Confronting AIDS: Directions for Public Health, Health Care, and Research," strongly urges the continuation and expansion of research activities, particularly epidemiological research. It adds, however, that any long-term disproportionate growth in the AIDS budget should not occur at the expense of other federal research programs.

The day after release of the IOM/NAS report, Admiral James D. Watkins (retired), Chairman of the Presidential Commission on the Human Immunodeficiency Virus Epidemic, issued a draft report that in many ways echoes the conclusions of the IOM/NAS report, including strong support for AIDS-related social and behavioral science research. Watkins's report will be reviewed by commission members before a final report is submitted to President Reagan later this month. Since commission members offered little resistance to earlier recommendations made by Watkins, it is widely believed that most of this report will survive their scrutiny intact.

Watkins states that "it is essential that the social and behavioral sciences be given priority in the funding portfolios of the appropriate Public Health Service agencies," such as the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Watkins's report outlines several obstacles to progress on the social and behavioral science research front, including the chronic problem that "social and behavioral research has been underfunded and undervalued as a tool for developing effective prevention programs."

Watkins's report offers several recommendations regarding AIDS-related social and behavioral science research. Among them:

- agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) should increase funding for social and behavioral science research on adults and adolescents, including research that identifies the determinants of risk behavior, models of behavior-change interventions, and social factors and strategies affecting behavior change;

- CDC and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) should be furnished with funds to sponsor training programs for graduate and post-graduate HIV researchers in the area of behavioral research;

- social and behavioral research efforts must be long-term and collaborative, such as those made possible by the NIMH Centers Program, and the Centers should continue to play a significant role in behavioral and social research;

- DHHS agencies should continue to fund national baseline data-collection activities, on a longitudinal basis, that would lead to a better understanding of sexual practices, attitudes, and risk behaviors of adults and adolescents of different ages and different cultural backgrounds;

- the NIMH grant review panels should maintain a sufficient balance and level of experience in the area of behavior-change research;

- DHHS agencies should fund a cohort study to determine the natural history of HIV infection in women and special social factors related to women at risk for HIV infection; and

- NIMH should continue to conduct research with the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism to better understand the impact of affective states, social isolation, and disinhibitors such as drugs and alcohol on risk behaviors.

Echoing Watkins's statements, the IOM/NAS report highlights the need for strong federal support of AIDS-related social and behavioral science research, but stops short of outlining what those studies should be. Like Watkins's report, it notes the need for better knowledge of human sexual and intravenous drug abuse behavior patterns, and claims that social science research has been inadequate in these areas in the past. Rather than elaborating, the IOM/NAS report refers instead to the work of the National Research Council's Committee on AIDS Research and the Behavioral, Social, and Statistical Sciences, which has been charged to identify ways in which social science expertise can help curb the spread of the AIDS virus. (That committee's first report is scheduled for release this fall.)

The IOM/NAS report urges government at all levels to fund AIDS education programs, even if it means supporting education efforts that contain explicit or graphic advice targeted at specific audiences. This has been an issue of considerable controversy on Capitol Hill, where many legislators worry that such funding might be seen as a means of promoting homosexual activity (see Update, May 13, 1988). In his draft report, Watkins, too, pushes for clear and explicit education programs and materials, arguing that it is possible to implement such programs "without promoting high-risk behaviors."

The IOM/NAS report concludes by recommending the creation of a 9-member national commission on AIDS, operating under a 5-year renewable term. It further recommends that each member, excluding the chair, should head a panel of experts on a given topic, including a panel on social sciences, law, and ethics. Such panels--and the commission itself--should serve in an advisory capacity, according to the report.<<

COMMITTEE TOLD MORE RESEARCH ON CHILD CARE NEEDED

There are by some estimates as many as 150 bills currently before Congress dealing with or relating to child care. That this is an issue of the moment goes without saying, although, according to testimony provided to one House committee, more research is needed to understand the care needs of children and families and to identify the varieties of child care available to assist businesses and parents in making informed decisions.

The House Exports, Tourism, and Special Problems Subcommittee of the Small Business Committee, chaired by Rep. Norman Sisisky (D-VA), heard on June 8 from a variety of groups on the importance of child care to small business, including the need for more research on child care. Frank Swain of the Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy characterized child care as "an emerging area for small business investigation" in which further research into the number of businesses providing care and the types of care available is needed.

One segment of the working population particularly concerned with child care is professional women. Their concerns were addressed by Linda Dorian, executive director of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW). Ms. Dorian urged Congress to support calls for a "broader view [of child care] backed up by research." In particular, research is needed to examine the connections between productivity and child care; BPW is alerting businesses to the need to adapt to a rapidly changing workplace by taking family relations into account in personnel policies, for which more research is vital.

The need for businesses to examine the child-care question gained national support in the business community when, at its February 1988 meeting, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors adopted a resolution calling for employer sensitivity to the needs of employees who are also parents. That resolution also pointed to the need for increased research into existing programs and demonstration projects. The Chamber was represented before the subcommittee by science entrepreneur Earl Hess, who related his own positive experience as a child-care provider and supported the Chamber's call for a national survey to assess the child-care needs of employees and employers.

The hearing demonstrated that, for small businesses, child care can only become a reality if it is cost effective. Rep. Nancy Johnson (R-CT), co-sponsor with Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) of one of the major child-care bills, argued energetically for keeping government out of the business of legislating child care. She called for the government to limit itself to "empowering" workers with the right to make their own choices about child care and encouraging employers to dismantle the "nine-to-five straitjacket," which would enable parents to spend more time with their children. Rep. Ron Wyden (D-OR) suggested that the federal government should avoid becoming "the national nanny." The issue of cost also crossed party lines: both Democrats and Republicans called for limiting government to a "catalytic" role.<<

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

COSSA provides this information as a service, and encourages readers to contact the agency for further information or application materials.

Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) is responsible for policy development, conducting policy-oriented research, and evaluating departmental policies and programs for the Department of Health and Human Services. ASPE issues requests for applications (RFA) on specific topics to fill policy needs as they arise.

ASPE is currently seeking applications for research grants in the area of long-term care, including developing and conducting a program of research and analysis pertaining to the long-term care of functionally impaired elderly, mentally retarded, and developmentally disabled persons. This research should both use and promote the use of departmental data bases.

Proposed projects should address one or more of the following issue areas: long-term care financing; catastrophic burdens on long-term care clients; long-term care supply and demand; patterns of service use and client outcomes; nursing homes; home and community-based services; informal caregiving; and characteristics of persons with long-term care needs. Applicants should demonstrate knowledge of existing research, the policy-relevance of the proposed research, and familiarity with departmental and other data bases.

Application Procedure: Applications can be obtained from Mr. Albert Cutino at the address given below.

Eligibility: Public, non-profit, and for-profit organizations and state agencies are eligible for funding under this RFA.

Restrictions on Awards: Neither new data bases nor exclusively theoretical projects will be supported.

Budget: A total of \$300,000 is available in FY 1988; additional funding may be available in FY 1989.

Review Process: Government review panel with possible outside expert review.

Deadlines: July 29, 1988; awards will be announced by September 30, 1988.

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