



CONSORTIUM *of* SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

Analysis of the House FY 2018 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill | July 14, 2017

On July 13, the House Appropriations Committee approved the fiscal year (FY) 2018 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) Appropriations Bill; the bill was [marked up in subcommittee](#) on June 29. The CJS bill serves as the vehicle for annual appropriations for the National Science Foundation (NSF), Census Bureau, National Institute of Justice (NIJ), Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), and many other federal departments and agencies. The Senate has not yet released the details of its CJS bill.

At a Glance...

- The House bill would provide NSF with a total budget of \$7.3 billion in FY 2018, which is 1.8 percent below the FY 2017 enacted level but 10.3 percent above the President's request. The bill does not include language targeting social science accounts for cuts, as we saw in recent years.
- The House bill would provide NIJ with \$38.5 million, which is 2.5 percent below the FY 2017 enacted level, and BJS with \$44.5 million, which is 2.2 percent below the FY 2017 enacted level.
- The House bill includes \$1.51 billion in discretionary funding for the Census Bureau for FY 2018, an increase of 2.5 percent over the FY 2017 level and 0.7 percent above the amount requested by the President.
- The bill includes \$96 million for the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), a cut of 10.5 percent, and adopts the Administration's proposals to consolidate most of the activities of the Economics and Statistics Administration within BEA.

The next step for the bill is consideration by the full House of Representatives. However, there has been no indication that any of the annual appropriations bills will see floor action before the August recess (which is still scheduled in the House; the Senate recently decided to delay the August recess to continue work on health care and other pressing issues).

Summarized below are the House Appropriations Committee's proposals for the National Science Foundation, National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, and Census Bureau.

The bill, Committee's full report, and webcast of the markup can be found [here](#).

National Science Foundation

The House CJS bill includes \$7.3 billion for NSF in FY 2018, which is 1.8 percent below the FY 2017 enacted level but 10.3 percent above the President's request. While the House bill includes a small cut to NSF compared to FY 2017, as stated during the subcommittee mark up and in [earlier hearings](#), the Committee enthusiastically rejected the Trump Administration's proposed reductions to the agency.

The House bill proposes flat funding for the Research and Related Activities account, which funds NSF's six research directorates, at \$6.03 billion, as well as flat funding for the Education and Human Resources Directorate (EHR) at \$880 million. The only area slated for decrease in the bill is the Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC) account, which would be cut by more than half by eliminating funding for the development of new ocean research vessels.

Missing from the House bill is any language targeting the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE) for cuts, which we saw in recent years, thereby preserving NSF's flexibility to fund the very best science across all scientific domains. The absence of such language is a significant win for the social science research community and NSF more broadly.

Still, the report accompanying the bill includes a few passages of note. For example, the report states that "The Committee believes that strategic investments in the physical science areas are vitally important for the United States to remain the global leader in innovation, productivity, economic growth, and good-paying jobs for the future." However, as noted, it stops short of directing NSF to prioritize funding to the physical sciences at the expense of other sciences.

In addition, the report includes language citing the [American Innovation and Competitiveness Act](#) (AICA), which was one of the last bills signed into law by President Obama. Specifically, it cites the broader impacts review criterion stated in the AICA; language to this effect was also included in last year's House bill:

"Abstracts and the national interest. —[AICA] directs NSF to apply a broader impacts review criterion to identify and demonstrate project support of the following goals: increasing the economic competitiveness of the United States; advancing of the health and welfare of the American public; supporting the national defense of the United States; enhancing partnerships between academia and industry in the United States; developing an American STEM workforce that is globally competitive through improved pre-kindergarten through grade 12 STEM education and teacher development, and improved undergraduate STEM education and instruction; improving public scientific literacy and engagement with science and technology in the United States; or expanding participation of women and individuals from underrepresented groups in STEM."

In addition, the report includes new language calling on NSF to examine its current portfolio of "fire research," noting that "Improving scientific understanding of fire will support key industries as well as improve our ability to safeguard property and lives."

The report includes language addressing indirect costs, also known as facilities and administration (F&A) costs. It calls on NSF to address the findings in a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report and provide a report to the Congress detailing the reasons for increases in F&A costs since 2010 and "the variation in budgeted indirect costs across different types of NSF research and education awards."

Finally, in the EHR section of the report it states, "the Committee encourages NSF to work within its existing programs to promote opportunities for collaboration between universities or non-profit research institutions and STEM-focused schools serving K-12 students," citing recommendations included in National Research Council and National Science Board reports.

<i>(in millions)</i>	Enacted FY 2017	Proposed FY 2018	FY 2018 House	House vs. FY 2017	House vs. Request
National Science Foundation	7472.2	6652.9	7339.5	-1.8%	10.3%
Research and Related Activities	6033.6	5361.7	6033.6	0.0%	12.5%
Education and Human Resources	880.0	760.6	880.0	0.0%	15.7%
Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction	209.0	182.8	77.8	-62.8%	-57.4%
Agency Operations and Award Management	330.0	328.5	328.5	-0.5%	0.0%
National Science Board	4.4	4.4	4.4	0.7%	0.7%
Office of the Inspector General	15.2	15.0	15.2	0.0%	1.3%

National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics

The House bill would provide NIJ and BJS with \$38.5 million and \$44.5 million, respectively. This would represent a roughly 2 percent decrease for both NIJ and BJS from the FY 2017 levels.

The report accompanying the bill includes some notable language. First, NIJ is encouraged to increase funding for research on human trafficking. It further encourages the Department to continue development of campus climate surveys related to sexual assaults on college campuses.

<i>(in millions)</i>	Enacted FY 2017	Proposed FY 2018	FY 2018 House	House vs. FY 2017	House vs. Request
Bureau of Justice Statistics	45.5	38.0	44.5	-2.2%	17.1%
National Institute of Justice	34.0	33.0	38.5	-2.5%	16.7%

Census Bureau

The House's proposal for the Census Bureau would provide it with \$1.507 billion in FY 2018 in discretionary funding, an increase of \$37 million over the amount enacted in FY 2017 and \$10 million above the Administration's requested level. Within that amount, \$1.251 billion is provided for Periodic Censuses and Programs, which includes the 2020 Census, an increase of \$51 million compared to FY 2017. This amount includes a transfer for \$2.6 million to the Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General. The bill would also provide the Bureau's Current Surveys and Programs with \$256 million, a \$14 million cut compared to the FY 2017 enacted level.

Several clauses in the committee report express concern about the cost and execution of the 2020 Decennial Census and direct the Bureau to update the Committee on several aspects of its progress, including its implementation of the recommendations of the Government Accountability Office (GAO), expenditure plans for the Census Enterprise Data Collection and Processing (CEDCaP) system, and updated 2020 Census lifecycle cost estimates.

As it has in previous years, the Committee’s report includes language criticizing the “burdensome nature” of the American Community Survey (ACS), but does not include any language that would make the survey voluntary. The report states:

“American Community Survey (ACS).—The Committee is very concerned about the burdensome nature of the ACS and directs Census to focus on its core, constitutionally mandated decennial Census activities. The Bureau shall continue to provide quarterly briefings to the Committee on efforts to ensure the necessity of all the questions on the ACS; on efforts to ensure that non-response follow-up is conducted in the least intrusive manner; and on congressional outreach conducted by the [Respondent Advocate](#).”

The report also includes language encouraging the Bureau to continue its efforts to better link its data with other sources and make it available to researchers:

“Data-linkage infrastructure.—The Committee strongly supports the Census Bureau’s commitment to strengthening its data-linkage infrastructure to support high quality program evaluation on issues of importance to Federal, State, and local governments. The Committee encourages the Census Bureau to forge partnerships with research institutions and philanthropic organizations that can help develop and institutionalize more efficient processes for researchers to access and analyze linked data while protecting individual privacy.”

<i>(in millions)</i>	Enacted FY 2017	Proposed FY 2018	FY 2018 House	House vs. FY 2017	House vs. Request
Bureau of the Census	1470.0	1497.0	1507.0	2.5%	0.7%
Current Surveys and Programs	270.0	246.0	256.0	-5.2%	4.1%
Periodic Censuses and Programs	1200.0	1251.0	1251.0	4.3%	0.0%

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