



CONSORTIUM *of* SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

Analysis of the Senate FY 2018 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill | July 28, 2017

On July 27, the Senate 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 July 25. In addition, the House Appropriations Committee advanced its version of the CJS bill on July 13 (check out [COSSA's coverage](#)). The CJS bill serves as the vehicle for annual appropriations for the National Science Foundation (NSF), Census Bureau, Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), National Institute of Justice (NIJ), Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), and many other federal departments and agencies.

At a Glance...

- **The Senate CJS bill includes \$7.31 billion for NSF in FY 2018, which is 2.2 percent below the FY 2017 enacted level but 9.9 percent above the President's request.** The House bill includes \$7.34 billion for NSF, which is less than one percent over the Senate mark.
- **The Senate bill would provide NIJ with \$39.5 million and BJS with \$45.5 million, which are both the same as the FY 2017 enacted level.**
- **The Senate bill would provide the Census Bureau with \$1.521 billion in discretionary funding for FY 2018, \$14 million more than the amount proposed in the House bill.** That amount is an increase of \$51 million compared to FY 2017 and \$24 million more than the amount requested by the Administration.
- **The Senate bill includes \$99 million for BEA, which is \$8.3 million below the FY 2017 enacted level.** Unlike the House bill, the Senate bill would not enact the Administration's proposal to consolidate the activities of the Economics and Statistics Administration within BEA.

The next step for the bill is consideration by the full Senate. However, with the August recess quickly approaching, floor action is not expected until after Labor Day at the earliest.

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

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

COSSA's analysis of the President's FY 2018 budget request is available [here](#).

National Science Foundation

The Senate CJS bill includes \$7.31 billion for NSF in FY 2018, which is 2.2 percent below the FY 2017 enacted level but 9.9 percent above the President's request. The House bill includes \$7.34 billion, or less than one percent over the Senate mark. While a cut is disappointing, CJS Subcommittee Ranking Member Jeanne

Shaheen (D-NH) expressed during the markup that support for the agency and scientific research is strong and that the proposal reflects difficult decisions forced by current spending caps. She added that it remains the hope of many that a bipartisan budget deal will be struck in the coming months that will raise the caps and allow additional funds for science. Similar to the House bill, the Senate mark rejects the deep cuts to NSF proposed by the Trump Administration.

While the House bill seeks to maintain flat funding for the Research and Related Activities account, which funds NSF’s six research directorates including the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences directorate (SBE), and flat funding for the Education and Human Resources Directorate (EHR), the Senate bill proposes small cuts of 1.9 percent and 2 percent, respectively. Similar to the House bill, though, the bulk of the rescission from FY 2017 would come from the Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction account, which would be funded at the level requested by the Administration, a 12.5 percent cut from FY 2017.

The report accompanying the bill includes some notable report language of interest to the COSSA community; however, it is important to note that the report *does not* single out the SBE directorate (or other directorates) for cuts.

Similar to last year’s Senate CJS bill, this year’s report includes language stating, “The Committee continues to believe that NSF should include criteria that evaluates how a proposal will advance our Nation’s national security and economic interests, as well as promote the progress of science and innovation in the United States.” This language is a nod to [past efforts](#) by some to prioritize certain directorates or fields of research over others, without actually picking winners and losers. The language last year made no practical changes to NSF research or funding decisions.

The Senate report includes identical language to the House report 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.”

Also notable, the report expresses the Committee’s support for the Advancement of Women in Academic Science and Engineering Careers (ADVANCE) program, which would be cut dramatically in the President’s budget request. Instead, the Senate bill would provide flat funding for ADVANCE at \$18 million.

<i>(in millions)</i>	FY 2017 Enacted	FY 2018 Request	FY 2018 House	FY 2018 Senate	Senate vs. FY 2017	Senate vs. Request	House vs. Senate
National Science Foundation	7472.2	6652.9	7339.5	7311.0	-2.2%	9.9%	0.4%
Research and Related Activities	6033.6	5361.7	6033.6	5917.8	-1.9%	10.4%	2.0%
Education and Human Resources	880.0	760.6	880.0	862.6	-2.0%	13.4%	2.0%
Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction	209.0	182.8	77.8	182.8	-12.5%	0.0%	-57.4%
Agency Operations and Award Management	330.0	328.5	328.5	328.5	-0.5%	0.0%	0.0%
National Science Board	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Office of the Inspector General	15.2	15.0	15.2	15.2	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%

National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics

The Senate bill would provide NIJ and BJS with \$39.5 million and \$45.5 million, respectively. This would represent flat funding for both agencies compared to the FY 2017 levels. In addition to the \$39.5 million the committee recommends for NIJ, the Institute would receive a \$4 million transfer from the Office of Violence Against Women to be dedicated to research and evaluation on violence against women. The committee also recommends that two percent of funds appropriated to the DOJ Office of Justice Programs be transferred to NIJ and BJS for research, evaluation and statistics activities, the same amount as the last three years

The report accompanying the bill includes some notable language. First, the committee directs \$4 million of the NIJ budget to research on domestic radicalization. It further encourages the Institute to partner with higher education institutions to help educate and train justice leaders. The report also includes \$5 million from BJS to be directed to the National Crime Statistics Exchange (NCS-X). Both the dedicated funds for domestic radicalization research and NCS-X were included in the FY 2017 omnibus spending bill.

In addition to directing funds to these specific initiatives, the committee directs NIJ and other offices within the Department of Justice to provide grants for cold case DNA investigations to support the goals of the *Emmett Till Unsolved Civil Rights Crime Reauthorization Act of 2016*.

<i>(in millions)</i>	FY 2017 Enacted	FY 2018 Request	FY 2018 House	FY 2018 Senate	Senate vs. FY 2017	Senate vs. Request	House vs. Senate
Bureau of Justice Statistics	45.5	38.0	44.5	45.5	0.0%	19.7%	-2.2%
National Institute of Justice	39.5	33.0	38.5	39.5	0.0%	19.7%	-2.5%

Census Bureau and Bureau of Economic Analysis

The Senate bill would provide the Census Bureau with \$1.521 billion in discretionary funding for FY 2018, \$14 million more than the amount proposed in the House bill. That amount is an increase of \$51 million compared to FY 2017 and \$24 million more than the amount requested by the Administration. The Senate mark includes a total of \$1.251 billion for Periodic Censuses and Programs (which includes the 2020 Census), which is the amount proposed by both the Administration and the House bill. This total includes a \$2.6 million transfer to the Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General for oversight and auditing of Census operations. The bill provides flat funding of \$270 million for Current Surveys and Programs.

While the bill provides the Administration’s requested funding level for the Periodic Censuses and Programs, according to the Committee report, “the Committee is seriously concerned that the request may not be adequate to meet the Bureau’s planning, testing, and development needs for the 2020 Decennial Census.” The report notes that the Department and the Office of Management and Budget are “in the process of reexamining the budget request,” particularly as the Bureau is updating its 2020 lifecycle cost estimates, and pledges to consider any proposed changes. The report notes that “controlling costs for the 2020 Decennial Census remains a top oversight concern” and instructs the Bureau to “prioritize spending for activities that have the greatest potential to reduce cost and risk.”

The Committee report asks the Bureau to provide more detailed information on a number of elements related to the 2020 Census, including its IT systems, plans to address undercounting, and progress on accessing and incorporating administrative records.

The Senate report includes language supportive of the American Community Survey (ACS), although it encourages the Bureau to continue to seek ways to make the survey shorter and reduce respondent burden:

“American Community Survey [ACS].—The Committee supports the ACS and directs the Bureau to continue using the ACS as a testbed for innovative survey and data processing techniques that will help to save money and reduce risk during the 2020 Decennial Census cycle. The Committee also notes that ACS is often the primary or only source of data available to State, local, and Federal agencies that need adequate information on a wide range of topics, including the needs of veterans, retirees, and families with school-age children, in order to reliably serve those communities. The ACS is especially important to Americans who live in small towns and rural areas, as this survey often provides the only reliable and consistent source of information about these communities, and the Bureau should ensure that rural areas are covered with the same accuracy as urban areas to the maximum extent practicable. The Committee further expects the Bureau to continue providing updates to the Committee on efforts to evaluate and, where possible, to reduce the number of questions included in the ACS, and the steps being taken to ensure that the ACS is conducted as efficiently and unobtrusively as possible.”

The report also directs the Bureau to work with local service organizations to maximize survey responses, particularly for rural homeless and displaced populations and to provide more detailed information on homeownership rates for the Asian American and Pacific Islander populations.

The Senate bill includes \$99 million for the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), which is \$8.3 million below the FY 2017 enacted level, but \$2 million and \$3 million more than the amounts proposed by the Administration and Senate, respectively. Unlike the House bill, the Senate bill would not enact the Administration’s proposal to consolidate the activities of the Economics and Statistics Administration within BEA. According to the Committee report, the Committee would be willing to consider such a reorganization, but would need more detailed information on how ESA’s current functions would be distributed before proceeding:

“The Committee does not object to the Department’s proposed consolidation of the Economics and Statistics Administration and the Bureau of Economic Analysis [BEA]; however, the proposed consolidation will not be approved until a reprogramming package detailing the planned consolidation is approved by the Committee. The reprogramming should include additional information about the impacts of the consolidation, including whether Gross Domestic Product [GDP] estimates and other critical economic reports will be released by BEA or by the Office of the Secretary; an accounting of which positions will be moved to BEA or to the Office of the Secretary, or will be eliminated entirely; and how the Under Secretary of Commerce for Economic Affairs will oversee BEA, the Bureau of the Census, and activities conducted within the Office of the Secretary.”

The Senate report also directs BEA to continue its development of the Regional Economic Dashboard, to strengthen coordination with regional authorities and commissions, and to continue to work with federal agencies to quantify the economic contributions of the outdoor recreation sector.

<i>(in millions)</i>	FY 2017 Enacted	FY 2018 Request	FY 2018 House	FY 2018 Senate	Senate vs. FY 2017	Senate vs. Request	House vs. Senate
Bureau of the Census	1470.0	1497.0	1507.0	1521.0	3.5%	1.6%	-0.9%
Current Surveys and Programs	270.0	246.0	256.0	270.0	0.0%	9.8%	-5.2%
Periodic Censuses and Programs	1200.0	1251.0	1251.0	1251.0	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Bureau of Economic Analysis	107.3	97.0	96.0	99.0	-7.7%	2.1%	-3.0%

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