



COSSA

CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

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National Organizations and Universities Oppose NIH Economic Research Ban

The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) released a [letter](#) today, expressing opposition to language in the Fiscal Year 2013 Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Appropriations bill that bans the National Institutes of Health (NIH) from supporting economics research. The letter carried the force of signatures from almost 100 national organizations, including the Association of American Universities, American Heart Association, Association of American Medical Colleges, Research!America, and over 20 respected U.S. universities and colleges.

“This language is an unprecedented attack on an important component of NIH-supported research and an unwarranted attempt to suppress the agency’s freedom to support the most promising, interdisciplinary science,” said COSSA Executive Director, Dr. Howard Silver. “This language is not only an affront to the field of economics, but also to other scientific disciplines that understand how contemporary medical research is conducted—with teams of biomedical, behavioral, and social scientists working side by side.”

The letter states that the NIH “investment [in economics research] has yielded key data, methodologies and substantive insights on some of the most important and pressing issues facing the U.S.” These research findings include:

- the effect of early retirement on health outcomes in the elderly;
- the influence of socioeconomic status on adolescents’ health and academic achievement outcomes; and
- the development of measures to gauge the significance of different socioeconomic and environmental determinants of health.

In addition, the letter states that NIH support of economic research has opened new frontiers of scientific inquiry, such as behavioral economics and neuroeconomics. Other federal agencies, such as the Administration on Aging, Center for Medicaid and Medicare, and Center for Disease Control and Prevention, have relied on NIH to support and disseminate economic research findings in order to inform their own programs and policies.

“The behavioral and social research community is alarmed by how far the bill’s economic research ban goes, but also impressed by the strong, unified opposition it has generated,” said Mary Jo Hoeksema, Director of Government Affairs, Population Association of America. “We hope this outcry will raise awareness about the value of NIH-supported economic research and result in this language being stricken from the final Fiscal Year 2013 funding measure.”

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