



Preliminary Details of the FY 2015 Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Bill

June 12, 2014

On June 10, the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (Labor-HHS) approved via voice vote the fiscal year (FY) 2015 spending bill for the programs under its jurisdiction. However, it is unclear at this time when or if the measure will be considered by the full Appropriations Committee. Subcommittee Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) has reportedly indicated that there are no plans for a markup by the full Appropriations Committee despite original plans for a markup on June 12. Bill text has not yet been released.

According to the [summary of the subcommittee mark](#), the Senate measure provides \$156.8 billion in base discretionary authority, the same as the FY 2014 funding level. Chairman Harkin emphasized that the bill “invests in America” despite a difficult budget. The Labor-HHS bill is the second largest spending measure after that for the Department of Defense.

To address the emerging and evolving humanitarian crisis surrounding the issue of unaccompanied immigrant children, the bill includes \$1.9 billion for the Unaccompanied Alien Children (UAC) program. In addition, the bill provides the Administration expanded transfer authority for the Department of Health and Human Services to respond if the number of children crossing the border continues to rise.

For the **National Institutes of Health** (NIH), the Subcommittee bill provides \$30.5 billion, an increase of \$605.7 million. The Subcommittee summary stresses that the “level is sufficient, when combined with the \$1 billion increase appropriated in FY 2014, to fully replace the 2013 sequester cut to NIH.” It also would provide \$100 million for the second year of the Brain Research through Application of Innovative Neurotechnologies (BRAIN) Initiative, \$60 million above the FY 2014 funding level. Lastly, the bill includes an additional \$100 million in funding for Alzheimer's disease research. Appropriation Committee Chairwoman Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) noted that “by replacing the NIH sequester cuts, this bill gets us back on track” and pledged that she will continue to fight for increases to NIH in the coming years.

The Subcommittee’s summary does not address the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s** (CDC) budget, although Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) noted during the markup that the bill would provide the agency with a 2.5 percent increase. According to information from the CDC Coalition, of which COSSA is a member, the FY 2015 funding bill provides \$5.9 billion in discretionary budget authority, \$112 million in transfers via the Public Health Service (PHS), and \$887.3 million for the Prevention and Public Health Fund (PPHF).

The seven page summary does not address the funding level for the **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality** (AHRQ), which, along with several other HHS agencies and offices, is funded via the Public Health Service (PHS) evaluation tap, a mechanism that transfers funding from other parts of the Department to evaluate the effectiveness of public health programs. But the Committee does address the PHS evaluation transfer, stating:

"The Committee has heard growing concern over the impact of the NIH transfer required by Section 241 of the PHS Act and implemented in the annual Labor HHS bill. This bill reforms the transfer to ensure that in FY 2015 no funds will leave NIH via this transfer. In fact, with this reform, NIH will gain over \$100,000,000 more than it contributes to the transfer in FY 2015."

Regarding the **Department of Education**, the summary highlights \$845.7 million for the TRIO program, which provides assistance to first-generation and low income college students. This is an increase of \$8.4 million above the FY 2014 funding level.

Ranking Member Richard Shelby (R-AL) noted his appreciation of Harkin's hard work on the Subcommittee's bill but stated that he would not support the measure because of the \$1.8 billion it provides for the *Affordable Care Act* (ACA) exchanges. Responding to Shelby, Harkin pointed out that there is no line-item in the bill funding the ACA and that it has been interwoven into the federal budget, even in the funding provided for NIH.

