



CONSORTIUM of SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

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COSSA ANALYSIS OF THE FY 2016 SENATE COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE and RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT

June 12, 2015

On June 10, the Senate Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) Appropriations Subcommittee marked up its version of the fiscal year (FY) 2016 Senate CJS bill. The full Senate Appropriations Committee followed suit on June 11, advancing the bill to the Senate floor. The CJS bill provides annual funding to the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), and the Census Bureau and other federal statistical agencies. The [House](#) passed its version of the FY 2016 CJS bill on June 4.

Like the House, the Senate CJS bill keeps within discretionary spending caps, translating to very small (if any) increases for agencies and programs of interest to the COSSA community. Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Ranking Democrat on both the Appropriations Committee and the CJS Subcommittee, offered an amendment at full committee that would have provided an additional \$349 million to NSF and \$360 million to the Census Bureau; the amendment was defeated. President Obama maintains his veto threat of any appropriations bill that adheres to these caps.

Under the Senate proposal, federal science and statistical agencies would be held roughly flat with the FY 2015 enacted level. While these levels are disappointing, the Senate bill is free from directives and other language seeking to harm social and behavioral science research, a welcomed departure from the House bill passed earlier this month.

While typically the next step in the process would be for the bill to be debated on the Senate floor, the fate of the annual appropriations bills in the Senate remain tenuous at best, as Senate Democrats are vowing to block all FY 2016 spending bills until agreement can be found for addressing the spending caps established in the *Budget Control Act of 2011*. This is an effort to lure Senate Republicans into negotiations that would raise the discretionary spending caps and address sequestration, which are the draconian government-wide cuts that are scheduled to return in FY 2016 if Congress does not act.

Read on for full details of the Senate's FY 2016 CJS Appropriations Bill.

The Senate CJS report language can be viewed here: [Part 1](#) (Census), [Part 2](#) (Justice, NSF)

National Science Foundation

The discretionary budget caps would have a deep impact on the National Science Foundation (NSF) in the Senate bill. The proposal would provide NSF with a total budget of \$7.34 billion in FY 2016, which is slightly below the FY 2015 enacted level and about \$50 million below the House bill. The mark is also \$379.8 million below the amount requested by the President.

The Senate proposes flat funding for NSF's Research and Related Activities account at \$5.93 billion, which is \$50 million less than the House bill and \$252.7 million below the President's request.

The bill does not include any language limiting funding for NSF's Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE), or any other directorate. Recall that the House bill included language directing NSF to allocate 70 percent of its budget to non-social science, non-geoscience research activities, which, if enacted, would translate to deep cuts to SBE. However, because the Senate bill stays silent on the House directive, action will still need to be taken in a conference between the House and Senate in order to keep the House language from taking effect.

Finally, the Senate bill proposes flat funding for the Education and Human Resources Directorate (EHR), the same as the House.

<i>(in millions)</i>	Enacted FY 2015	Proposed FY 2016	FY 2016 House	FY 2016 Senate	Senate vs. FY 2015	Senate vs. Request	House vs. Senate
National Science Foundation	7344.2	7723.6	7394.2	7343.7	0.0%	-4.9%	0.7%
Research and Related Activities	5933.6	6186.3	5983.6	5933.6	0.0%	-4.1%	0.8%
Education and Human Resources	866.0	962.6	866.0	866.0	0.0%	-10.0%	0.0%
Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction	200.8	200.3	200.0	200.3	-0.2%	0.0%	-0.2%
Agency Operations and Award Management	325.0	354.8	325.0	325.0	0.0%	-8.4%	0.0%
National Science Board	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
Office of the Inspector General	14.4	15.2	15.16	14.5	0.1%	-4.7%	4.9%

Department of Justice

The Senate bill would provide \$41 million for the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) and \$36 million for the National Institute of Justice (NIJ). The House bill, in contrast, proposed to eliminate base funding for BJS and NIJ, instead allowing the Department of Justice to “set-aside” funds for the agencies. COSSA objected to this move in the House bill. The Senate levels are the same as the FY 2015 enacted level and more than 30 percent below the President’s request.

In addition, the Senate bill would transfer \$4 million from the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) to NIJ for “research and evaluation on violence against women and Indian women.”

<i>(in millions)</i>	Enacted FY 2015	Proposed FY 2016	FY 2016 House	FY 2016 Senate	Senate vs. FY 2015	Senate vs. Request
Bureau of Justice Statistics	41.0	61.4	n/a	41.0	0.0%	-33.2%
National Institute of Justice	36.0	52.5	n/a	36.0	0.0%	-31.4%

Census Bureau and Other Statistical Programs

The Senate proposal for the Census Bureau is more generous than the House bill, though still far below the amounts requested by the President. The Senate bill includes \$1.13 billion for Census, which is \$40 million above the FY 2015 enacted level, \$372 million below the President’s request, but \$136.3 million above the House mark.

Current Surveys and Programs would receive \$266 million in the Senate bill, \$18 million above the FY 2015 amount but \$11.9 million below the request. Periodic Censuses and Programs would receive \$862 million, which is \$22 million above FY 2015 but still \$360.1 million below the amount requested for the continued ramp up to the 2020 Decennial Census.

In contrast to the House bill, which raised concerns about the usefulness and obtrusiveness of the American Community Survey (ACS), the Senate bill reinforces the Senate’s support for the ACS, stating:

“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 Census cycle.”

The language goes on to discuss the value of ACS data, including to small towns and rural areas, and directs the Bureau to continue to update the Committee on efforts to reduce the number of ACS questions and “ensure that the ACS is conducted as efficiently and unobtrusively as possible.”

During the full committee mark up, Senator James Lankford (R-OK) proposed an amendment to make the ACS voluntary. He withdrew the amendment while noting his hope to address the issue in conference. The House-passed CJS bill included an amendment to make the ACS voluntary. Advocates will be working to preserve the survey’s mandatory status as we head into conference.

<i>(in millions)</i>	Enacted FY 2015	Proposed FY 2016	FY 2016 House*	FY 2016 Senate	Senate vs. FY 2015	Senate vs. Request	House vs. Senate
Economics and Statistical Analysis	100.0	113.8	100.0	100.0	0.0%	-12.1%	0.0%
Bureau of the Census	1088.0	1500.0	991.7	1128.0	3.7%	-24.8%	-25.9%
Current Surveys and Programs	248.0	277.9	261.0	266.0	7.3%	-4.3%	-1.9%
Periodic Censuses and Programs	840.0	1222.1	730.7	862.0	2.6%	-29.5%	-15.2%

**Totals include reductions via amendments on the House floor.*