



CONSORTIUM of SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

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## SOCIAL *and* BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE RESEARCH FY 2016 TALKING POINTS

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### GENERAL TALKING POINTS

(Use for opening the meeting and explaining its purpose)

- Thank you for meeting with me. [Introduce yourself and briefly describe your work.] In addition to my day job, I am a member of the Consortium of Social Science Associations, which works to advance federal support for social and behavioral science research.
- I would like to talk with you about the importance of social and behavioral science research, particularly in our state.
- Social and behavioral science research is supported across the federal government, including at the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, Department of Justice, Department of Defense, federal statistical agencies, and many other departments and agencies. This support helps us as a nation better address complex, human-centered questions, such as:
  - How to convince a community in the path of a tornado to seek cover; or
  - Ways to slow the HIV/AIDS epidemic; or
  - How to thwart cybercrime and protect Americans' privacy and security in an increasingly connected world.
- [Provide more specifics on your work or research conducted at your institution.]
- [If you are comfortable, use the policy/agency-specific talking points below to discuss current legislation impacting social and behavioral science research.]
- [Ask the Member or staff person if there are any issues for which it would be helpful to receive findings from the social and behavioral sciences.]
- Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me today. I hope you will use me and COSSA as resources in the future.

## POLICY-SPECIFIC TALKING POINTS

### Sequestration and FY 2016 Science Funding

- Please do all you can to reverse damaging sequestration cuts and raise the discretionary spending caps for fiscal year (FY) 2016 and beyond.
- Cuts to scientific research—such as those proposed in FY 2016 appropriations bills—will only exacerbate the nation’s “innovation deficit,” which continues to threaten the U.S.’s standing as the global scientific leader.
- Too many reductions have already been made on the backs of non-defense discretionary spending.
- Until sequestration is addressed, federal science agencies like the NSF and NIH will continue to suffer.

### Specific FY 2016 Concerns

- National Science Foundation
  - The House-passed Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) appropriations bill includes language that seeks to prioritize funding away from crucial research in social science and geoscience, as opposed to trusting NSF experts to determine where to make investments.
  - We ask that any conference agreement for NSF include language reversing the House proposal. Additional details can be found in COSSA’s statement.
- National Institutes of Health
  - We appreciate the increases in investment in NIH in both the House and Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education (Labor-HHS) appropriations bills. However, we are concerned that boosts to NIH are made at the expense of other important accounts within the Labor-HHS bill. It is critical that all science is supported, rather than unnecessarily creating competition between agencies for precious resources. Additionally, we ask that Congress urge NIH to continue its support for all scientific disciplines engaged in the biomedical research enterprise, including the behavioral and social sciences.
- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
  - The House-passed Labor-HHS bill would terminate the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, while the Senate’s version of the bill would deal the agency a 35 percent cut. The choice in both bills to disregard the important role health services research plays in improving health care in America is misguided and short-sighted. We ask that funding for AHRQ be restored in any final FY 2016 funding action.
- Federal Statistical Agencies
  - The House-passed CJS bill provides insufficient funding to the Census Bureau needed for the planning and execution of the 2020 Decennial Census. Further, the bill threatens the future of the American Community Survey (ACS), which is the nation’s only source for high quality, comprehensive demographic and socio-economic data representing all communities in the U.S.
  - Neither the House nor Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education (Labor-HHS) bill provides adequate funding for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The funding levels proposed in the House and Senate Labor-HHS bills could force the Bureau to make cuts to its core surveys and data programs, leaving the many users of its data without the information they need to make decisions that affect America’s global competitiveness.
  - The House’s FY 2016 Agriculture Appropriations bill proposes to steeply decrease the budgets for the USDA’s Economic Research Service (ERS) and National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), which provide invaluable data on the nation’s agricultural economy to farmers, private-sector businesses, and researchers.

- We ask that final FY 2016 funding maintain adequate funding for the principal federal statistical agencies and maintain the mandatory status of the ACS at the Census Bureau.
- Justice Research
  - The House-passed CJS bill would eliminate specific appropriations for the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), leaving those agencies dependent solely on set-aside discretionary funds. We ask that final FY 2016 funding NIJ and BJS keep with existing practice, as proposed in the Senate CJS bill.
- Department of Education
  - The House Labor-HHS bill would reduce the Institute of Education Sciences’ budget by \$164 million, which would have a devastating impact on all components of IES. IES supports studies that not only increase knowledge of the factors that influence teaching and learning, but also apply those findings to improve educational outcomes—helping us incorporate evidence-based practices into our education system.
  - The Senate Labor-HHS bill includes a 35 percent funding reduction for the international education and foreign language studies programs (Title VI/Fulbright-Hays). These programs had already experienced substantial cuts in recent years, and the Senate bill would leave them 63 percent below FY 2011 levels. A reduction of this magnitude would severely and indefinitely impair these long-standing, bipartisan programs that support the development of U.S. human resource capabilities vital for our national security, economic competitiveness and global engagement.
  - We ask that a final FY 2016 agreement restore funding for IES and Title VI/Fulbright-Hays programs.

## AGENCY-SPECIFIC TALKING POINTS

(Provided here are additional details on specific research agencies. You may choose to discuss any or all of the following.)

### National Science Foundation (NSF)

- NSF provides funding for 24 percent of all federally-supported basic research in U.S. colleges and universities. The Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE) Directorate—one of seven directorates at NSF—funds 55 percent of the university-based basic social and behavioral sciences research in the nation. Yet, it remains the smallest of the directorates, accounting for only 3.7 percent of the entire NSF budget in FY 2014.
- The discoveries made through SBE-funded research often have profound impacts on people’s lives. As a result of this research, we are:
  - Learning how to respond to disasters;
  - Enhancing teaching and learning in education, including STEM education;
  - Improving the safety of our troops in combat areas;
  - Reducing violence among our youth;
  - Improving public health;
  - Modeling water planning to enhance sustainability;
  - Improving the effectiveness of the criminal justice system; and
  - Helping paralyzed individuals communicate, to name a few.
- Scientists funded by SBE are trained in a wide range of disciplines and contribute substantially to the knowledge that benefits the U.S. taxpayer. Without this science, policy-making on major national issues will not be based on evidence and billions of dollars will be wasted.
- Some in Congress have sought to pick winners and losers among the scientific fields based solely on “political review,” sidestepping NSF’s current practice for prioritizing research investments that relies on technical experts working at NSF, a world-renown and highly regarded merit review process, and countless scholars housed at universities and laboratories across the country.
- While researchers supported by federal dollars must be accountable to taxpayers and the work supported by NSF should be in the nation’s interest, the scientific enterprise must remain insulated from political and ideological pressure if we are to encourage the most innovative science.
- I hope you will work to keep NSF whole by fighting attempts to splinter the agency and pit scientific disciplines against one another.

## National Institutes of Health (NIH)

- NIH is the world's leading supporter of basic biomedical and behavioral research. Investment in NIH fosters scientific discoveries to enhance the health and well-being of the American people.
- More than 80 percent of the NIH's budget supports high-quality jobs for more than 300,000 research personnel at 3,000 universities, medical schools, and other research institutions in every state.
- The **NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR)** was established by Congress in recognition of the important role behavioral and social factors often play in illness and health. The Office's mission is to stimulate behavioral and social sciences research throughout NIH to improve our understanding, treatment, and prevention of disease.
- Public health achievements of behavioral and social science research supported by NIH include:
  - **Reducing Tobacco Use**—The biggest public health success story of the 20<sup>th</sup> century may possibly be the reduction of tobacco use and smoking-related diseases. Behavioral and social sciences research has led to the development of interventions, such as smoking bans in public places. These interventions have led to declines in smoking rates. Without them, according to the CDC, more than 45 million Americans might still be smoking, resulting in thousands of preventable deaths, not to mention the millions of dollars in the accompanying excess costs.
  - **Preventing Diabetes**—For many years, scientists believed that medication was the only tool to treat diabetes. The landmark Diabetes Prevention Program demonstrated that lifestyle interventions (e.g. modest changes in diet and regular physical activity) can reduce the risk of developing Type-2 Diabetes in high-risk adults. The lifestyle intervention was so successful that a group-based lifestyle intervention was offered to all of the study participants in the next phase of the program. The findings led to “Small Steps, Big Rewards,” the first national diabetes prevention campaign.
  - **Slowing the HIV/AIDS Epidemic**—Social and behavioral science research has extended our understanding of decision-making, drug use, and sexual behavior. The result has been innovative interventions to modify behaviors that slowed the spread of HIV/AIDS. Accordingly, the number of people infected with HIV each year has dropped from a peak of 150,000 in the early 1980s to approximately 50,000 in 2011. The mother to child transmission has fallen 94 percent from its peak in 1992.

## **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)**

- AHRQ is the only federal agency with the sole mission of conducting research on the U.S. health care system. It produces invaluable evidence that tells us how we can improve the quality of health care in America and make it safer and more affordable, equitable, and accessible.
- The research AHRQ supports is based on the understanding that developing new treatments is only part of the battle; we need to know how to get those treatments to the people who need them, efficiently and effectively.
- The important health services research AHRQ supports includes:
  - Research on preventing healthcare-associated infections (HAIs).
  - Learning how to improve care for patients suffering from multiple chronic conditions.
  - The National Quality Measurement Clearinghouse, a repository of detailed information on measures that are proven to be associated with better or worse care.
  - The National Healthcare Quality Report and National Healthcare Disparities Report, a Congressionally-mandated report with detailed information on health care quality and health care disparities among racial and ethnic minorities, women, children, and low-income populations.
  - The Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS), the nation's only national source of comprehensive annual data on the how Americans use and pay for medical care.

## Federal Statistical Agencies

- Accurate, objective, representative, timely, reliable and accessible data and statistics are necessary ingredients to the conduct of evidence-based analyses of federal programs.
- Statistics from the Census Bureau and a dozen other statistical agencies measure progress in our nation and gauge, among other things, the state of:
  - The American economy (BEA and Census in Commerce; BLS in Labor; IRS Statistics of Income)
  - Employment, retirement, and the labor force (BLS; ORES in the Social Security Administration)
  - Health of the American people (NCHS in HHS)
  - Health care costs, utilization, and availability (NCHS, Census)
  - Educational attainment and progress (NCES in Education; NCSES in NSF)
  - Agriculture, farming, and food in the U.S. (ERS and NASS in USDA)
  - Energy and natural resources (EIA in Dept. of Energy; ERS)
  - Our transportation network (BTS in Dept. of Transportation)
  - Crime and the justice system (BJS in DOJ)
- Statistics from the Census Bureau and other federal statistical agencies are necessary for a range of activities affecting the American people, including:
  - Allocating fairly, to whom and where needed, over \$400 billion in federal funds to states, cities and local governments for public health and safety, education, housing, poverty and other services.
  - Developing a Homeland Infrastructure Protection Plan.
  - Producing the economic indicators the Federal Reserve Board uses to determine interest rates.
  - Measuring the nation’s food security.
  - Drawing school district boundaries.
  - Establishing and enforcing fair lending practices.
  - Helping small businesses make good business decisions.
- Statistical agencies have been underfunded for at least the last three years, causing some of them to stop producing certain measures and jeopardizing the confidence with which others can provide the statistics that help the country, its businesses, and communities run efficiently and effectively.

### ACRONYMS

Bureau of Economic Analysis	BEA
Bureau of Justice Statistics	BJS
Bureau of Labor Statistics	BLS
Bureau of the Census	Census
Bureau of Transportation Statistics	BTS
Economic Research Service	ERS
Energy Information Administration	EIA
Statistics of Income ( <i>within IRS</i> )	SOI
National Agricultural Statistics Service	NASS
National Center for Education Statistics	NCES
National Center for Health Statistics	NCHS
National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics	NCSES
Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics ( <i>within Social Security Administration</i> )	ORES

## Department of Justice (DOJ)

- DOJ's Office of Justice Programs (OJP) houses the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). Both NIJ and BJS saw significant cuts in the FY 2015 omnibus bill, this at a time when evidence-based policy making for our justice system is needed more than ever.
- NIJ is the research arm of the Department of Justice. The institute plays a critical role in helping us understand and implement science-based strategies for crime prevention and control.
- The Bureau of Justice Statistics' (BJS) national data collections provide statistical evidence needed by criminal justice policy decision makers.
- Social science research supported by the agencies inform issues such as:
  - Human trafficking;
  - Evaluation of anti-gang programs;
  - Policing;
  - Crime and justice;
  - Children exposed to violence;
  - Sentencing alternatives to incarceration;
  - Elder abuse; and
  - Reentry and probation.
- The request plans to continue DOJ's school safety initiative and proposes a new \$4 million research program on domestic radicalization to better understand violent extremism and advancing evidence-based strategies for effective prevention and intervention.
- Taken together, NIJ and BJS represent the only dedicated sources of federal research support committed to enhancing our understanding of crime and the criminal justice system.
- Increased investment in criminal justice science is needed to ensure future policies and decisions are evidence-based and to contain escalating costs associated with public safety.

## Department of Education

- The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) supports research and produces statistics and data to improve our understanding of education at many levels — early childhood, elementary and secondary education, and higher education. Research examining special education, rural education, teacher effectiveness, education technology, student achievement, reading and math interventions, and many other areas is also supported by IES.
- IES supports studies that not only increase knowledge of the factors that influence teaching and learning, but also apply those findings to improve educational outcomes—helping us incorporate evidence-based practices into our education system.
- The HEA-Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs are the federal government’s most comprehensive programs for developing and maintaining a steady supply of graduates with deep expertise and high-quality research on foreign languages and cultures, international markets, world regions and global issues that support our diplomatic, defense, commercial and educational interests, among an increasing number of other areas. Cuts to these programs would severely and indefinitely impair these long-standing, bipartisan programs that support the development of U.S. human resource capabilities vital for our national security, economic competitiveness and global engagement.