



CONSORTIUM *of* SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

Analysis of the FY 2017 House Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill | May 24, 2016

On May 24, the House Appropriations Committee approved the fiscal year (FY) 2017 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies (CJS) Appropriations Bill. This bill serves as the vehicle for annual appropriations for the National Science Foundation (NSF), Census Bureau, National Institute of Justice (NIJ), Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), and countless other federal departments and agencies. The Senate Appropriations Committee advanced [its version](#) of the CJS bill on April 21.

At a Glance...

- **The House bill would provide NSF with a total budget of \$7.4 billion in FY 2017, slightly below the FY 2016 level of \$7.46 billion.** The bill does not include language targeting social science accounts for cuts, as we saw last year.
- **The House bill would provide NIJ and BJS with \$40 million (+11%) and \$48 billion (+17%), respectively.** The Senate proposed flat funding for both agencies.
- **The House bill includes \$1.47 billion for the Census Bureau for FY 2017, an increase of 7.3 percent over the FY 2016 level, but 10 percent below the amount requested by the President.** The amount is below the Senate's proposal for Census.

The next step for the bill is consideration by the full House of Representatives. It is unclear at this time whether that will occur before Congress leaves for summer recess.

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

The Committee's full report can be found [here](#), and a webcast of the markup is posted on the Committee [website](#).

National Science Foundation

The House CJS bill includes \$7.4 billion for NSF in FY 2017, which is slightly below (0.8%) the FY 2016 enacted level and the President's request. The House mark is also about \$100,000 below the Senate proposal. The Administration's request for NSF was \$7.64 billion in discretionary funding.

Similar to the Senate bill, the Research and Related Activities account, which funds NSF's six research directorates, would be roughly flat funded at \$6.08 billion (+0.8%); the Education and Human Resources Directorate (EHR) would also be held flat at \$880 million.

Missing from the House bill is any language targeting the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE) for cuts, which we saw last year when SBE and the Geosciences Directorates were

singled out. COSSA worked with its partners over the last year to ensure that the FY 2017 bill did not repeat this unnecessary redirection of funds. This year, the report accompanying the bill includes much more positive language:

*“Peer review.—The Committee has long been supportive of NSF’s peer review process to identify and recommend funding for scientifically meritorious research. NSF’s ability to fund cutting-edge research helps keep the United States at the forefront of research **across all scientific disciplines** [emphasis added], which in turn builds the technological capabilities that underpin economic growth and prosperity.”*

However, the report does include language pulled from the [Scientific Research in the National Interest Act](#) (H.R. 3293), sponsored by Science Committee Chairman and social science critic Lamar Smith (R-TX):

“Abstracts.—The Committee directs NSF to continue its efforts to ensure that award abstracts clearly explain in plain English the intent of the project and how the project meets both the intellectual merit and the broader impact review criterion. Improving the peer review process and project abstracts are critical to protecting NSF’s stellar scientific integrity. The abstracts serve as a public justification for NSF funding decisions by articulating how the project serves the national interest, consistent with the Foundation’s mission as established in the National Science Foundation Act of 1950 (42 U.S.C. 1861 et seq). The Committee believes that abstracts should explain how a project increases economic competitiveness in the United States; advances the health and welfare of the American public; develops an American STEM workforce, including computer science and information technology sectors, that are globally competitive; increases public scientific literacy and public engagement with science and technology in the United States; increases partnerships between academia and industry in the United States; supports the national defense of the United States; or promotes the progress of science for the United States.”

While [COSSA opposed](#) the so-called “national interest” bill, the language added to the CJS bill would not in practice do much—if anything—to change NSF’s award processes, but instead sends a reminder to NSF that it must ensure all of the research it supports is in the “national interest,” broadly defined.

In addition, the EHR section of the report includes language directing NSF to “fully implement section 4 of the [Research Excellence and Advancements for Dyslexia Act](#) exactly as enacted in Public Law 114-124.” This is legislation enacted earlier this year directing NSF to include funding in its annual budget request for research on dyslexia and other learning disabilities.

<i>(in millions)</i>	Enacted FY 2016	Proposed FY 2017	FY 2017 House	House vs. FY 2016	House vs. Request	FY 2017 Senate	House vs. Senate
National Science Foundation	7463.5	7564.0	7406.1	-0.8%	-2.1%	7509.8	-1.4%
Research and Related Activities	6033.6	6079.4	6079.4	0.8%	0.0%	6033.6	0.8%
Education and Human Resources	880.0	898.9	880.0	0.0%	-2.1%	880.0	0.0%
Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction	200.3	193.1	87.1	-56.5%	-54.9%	246.6	-64.7%
Agency Operations and Award Management	330.0	373.0	340.0	3.0%	-8.9%	330.0	3.0%
National Science Board	4.4	4.4	4.4	0.2%	0.0%	4.4	0.2%
Office of the Inspector General	15.2	15.2	15.2	0.3%	0.0%	15.2	0.0%

National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Statistics

The House bill would provide NIJ and BJS with \$40 million and \$48 billion, respectively. This would represent an 11 percent increase for NIJ and 17 percent increase for BJS. The Senate bill proposed flat funding for both agencies.

The report accompanying the bill includes some notable language. First, NIJ is encouraged to increase funding for research on human trafficking. It further encourages BJS to “develop a data collection process to accurately capture the number of deaths and injuries from police pursuits and high-risk vehicular events.”

<i>(in millions)</i>	Enacted FY 2016	Proposed FY 2017	FY 2017 House	House vs. FY 2016	House vs. Request	FY 2017 Senate	House vs. Senate
Bureau of Justice Statistics	41.0	58.0	48.0	17.1%	-17.2%	41.0	17.1%
National Institute of Justice	36.0	48.0	40.0	11.1%	-16.7%	36.0	11.1%

Census Bureau

The House CJS bill includes \$1.47 billion for the Census Bureau for FY 2017, an increase of 7.3 percent over the FY 2016 level, but 10 percent below the amount requested by the President. Within the total is flat funding for the Current Surveys and Programs activity and a 9 percent increase for the Periodic Censuses and Programs line, which “will support completion of research and the beginning of design, development, and testing for the 2020 Census.” The House proposal is about 4 percent below the Senate mark for Periodic Censuses and Programs.

In contrast to the [Senate’s bill](#), the House report continues to reflect the concern of some about the “burdensome nature” of the American Community Survey (ACS), but falls short of making the survey voluntary. The report states:

“American Community Survey (ACS).—The Committee is very concerned about the burdensome nature of the ACS and directs Census to focus on its core, constitutionally mandated decennial Census activities. The Bureau shall continue to provide quarterly briefings to the Committee on efforts to ensure the necessity of all the questions on the ACS; on efforts to ensure that non-response follow-up is conducted in the least intrusive manner; and on congressional outreach conducted by the [Respondent Advocate](#).”

The Committee also expresses concern with the lifecycle cost of the 2020 Decennial Census, and directs the agency to submit a report detailing how it will improve its cost estimation processes. Containing costs of the 2020 Census continues to be a primary concern of both chambers.

<i>(in millions)</i>	Enacted FY 2016	Proposed FY 2017	FY 2017 House	House vs. FY 2016	House vs. Request	FY 2017 Senate	House vs. Senate
Bureau of the Census	1370.0	1633.6	1470.0	7.3%	-10.0%	1518.3	-3.2%
Current Surveys and Programs	270.0	285.3	270.0	0.0%	-5.4%	270.0	0.0%
Periodic Censuses and Programs	1100.0	1348.3	1200.0	9.1%	-11.0%	1248.3	-3.9%

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