Consortium of Social Science Associations

COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

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HOUSE SCIENCE SUBCOMMITTEE ALTERS NSF AUTHORIZATION LEVEL HS

The House Science Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Rick Boucher (D-VA), amended the National Science Foundation (NSF) authorization bill on May 2. The Subcommittee voted to bring the FY 1992 authorization bill in line with the President's FY 1992 budget request, a total of $2.722 billion. It also agreed to authorize the Education and Human Resources directorate, the Antarctic Program, Salaries and Expenses, and the Inspector General, at the President's requested level.

Boucher's panel altered the NSF authorization in order to correct flaws in the 1988 NSF authorization. The 1988 bill, which provided for five years of NSF operations, contained some levels of authorized funding which were soon exceeded in some programs by the appropriations bills, and others which were unrealistic in terms of budgetary constraints.

The authorized funding from the President's proposed budget for the Research and Related Activities line was reduced by $23.5 million to prohibit the construction of the Laser Interferometer Gravitational Wave Observatory (LIGO).

The Subcommittee also authorized spending $40 million for the Academic Research Facilities Modernization program, for which the President requested no funds in FY 1992. The remaining $33.5 million was authorized for the new Academic Research Instrumentation Program, reduced from the $50 million requested by the administration.

The Subcommittee also provided authorization levels for FY 1993. NSF can spend $3.07 billion, an increase of 13.7 percent over the FY 1992 authorization. There is no provision for a separate directorate for the social, economic and psychological sciences in the authorization for FY 1993. That is a battle that will have to be fought later. It will still be up to the appropriations committees to determine the actual spending levels for the NSF.

COSSA Testimony

With that important fact in mind, COSSA Executive Director Howard Silver presented testimony to the House Veterans' Affairs, Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee on May 2. Rep. Alan Mollohan (D-WV) chaired the hearing, in the absence of subcommittee chairman, Rep. Bob Traxler (D-MI).

Silver called for funding the 17.5 percent increase proposed for NSF in the FY 1992 budget, and especially the 16 percent increase in the research and related activities appropriations line. Noting that the social and economic science division had a proposed increase of 18 percent, he urged the appropriators not to allow this significant increment to be decimated at the altar of budgetary constraint, the way a similarly proposed large increase was destroyed by Gramm-Rudman-Hollings sequestration in FY 1986. He also urged support for the level proposed for funding research so that the behavioral science programs will receive an increase, albeit small (4 percent), in FY 1992.

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The testimony also reminded the Subcommittee of the upcoming report (due June 1) of the NSF's BBS Task Force "Looking to the Twenty First Century" which will recommend the creation of a separate directorate for the social, economic and psychological sciences. Since the report will become official after the House Subcommittee's planned markup (expected around the middle of May), it cannot be mentioned in the Subcommittee's report accompanying the spending recommendations, according to committee staff.

As he has done in previous years, Silver highlighted the contributions of social and behavioral science research to public policy, made the case for including these disciplines in NSF programs to improve pre-college and undergraduate science education, and asked continued support for the major social science data bases supported by NSF.

The Subcommittee takes into account the comments of witnesses from the public in determining its funding recommendations and the language that appears in its final report.

SCHROEDER HOLDS HEARING ON TAX BURDEN OF AMERICAN FAMILIES

In the wake of a growing body of data documenting the increased tax burden of middle-income families since World War II, the House Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, chaired by Rep. Pat Schroeder (D-CO), held a hearing on April 15, entitled "Reclaiming the Tax Code for American Families."

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Recent polling data, reported at the hearing by Celinda Lake, Vice President of Greenberg/Lake, a public opinion research company, indicates that families have a great deal of anxiety about the nation's economy and their ability to maintain a decent standard of living. For example, 82 percent of Americans expect their taxes to increase; disappointed with the tax reform package of 1986, over half think their taxes have gone up since it was passed.

C. Eugene Steuerle, Senior Fellow at the Urban Institute, testified about the details of the increase in family tax burden since World War II. In 1948, he noted, the $600 dependent exemption equalled 40 percent of per capita personal income, but by 1990, even though it had risen to $2,050, it was only 11 percent of per capita income. Had the exemption been indexed for inflation and real per capita income, Steuerle explained, it would be about $7,800 today.

Steuerle also suggested that the lack of integration between the welfare and tax systems can lead to an effective tax rate in excess of 90 percent for welfare recipients attempting to work their way off welfare.

Timothy M. Smeeding, Project Director of the Luxembourg Income Study and Professor of Economics and Public Administration at Syracuse University, described cross-national data on tax and income-transfer policies and their effects on family well-being. Smeeding noted that tax and cash grant provisions in the United States are smaller relative to average wages than in other countries. Furthermore, he said, in the U.S., these tax and grant provisions are tied to wages through a graduated percentage formula, while most other countries provide flat amounts of credit that are tax exempt or counted as income in of calculating taxes. Finally, Smeeding added, other countries are also more generous in providing universal child allowances.

These and other witnesses, while disagreeing on the specific methods, concurred that some revision of the tax code to better reflect the true cost of rearing children is needed. Proposals ranged from raising the Earned Income Tax Credit and making it refundable to increasing the personal exemption.

PEACE INSTITUTE RELEASES FY 1992 BUDGET REQUEST

The United States Institute of Peace, an independent federal agency, has asked Congress for a Fiscal Year 1992 appropriations of $11.9 million. By contrast, President Bush's FY 1992 budget request for the Peace Institute was $8.9 million.

The institute is not an agency of the executive branch; the administration's budget request is not binding, and the institute can and does submit its own budget proposal.

In its own proposal, the institute is requesting $10.2 million to fund its basic programming, as well as $1.6 million for a "Special Middle East Program in Peacemaking and Conflict Resolution," an outgrowth of the recent war in the Persian Gulf. The administration is requesting a "no growth" budget for the institute, which would account for inflation but otherwise not increase funding. For Fiscal Year 1991 the institute received an appropriation of $8.4 million.

Middle East Program established

Institute President Samuel W. Lewis, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel, recently created the special Middle East program by reallocating funds from the current institute budget, but told a Senate subcommittee earlier this year that additional funding will be required to sustain the program.

Immediate plans for the program include formation of advisory groups to examine major areas of post-war planning in the Middle East. Some of the topics expected to be discussed include: the Middle East arms race, Arab-Israeli peacemaking, multilateral security arrangements, lessons of the Gulf crisis, and the future course of political/social dynamics in the Arab world.

To this end, the institute intends to solicit grants, fellowships, and contracts with external researchers to examine peace-making opportunities in the Middle East. For further information, please contact the United States Institute of Peace, 1550 M Street, N.W., Washington D.C. 20005\(202) 457-1700.

SENATORS FRUSTRATED AT PACE OF REFORM AT AID

A bipartisan trio of Senators used a recent appropriations hearing to express frustration with the slow progress of managerial reforms at the Agency for International Development (AID). AID funds research programs and demonstration projects aimed at improving the well-being of the poor in developing countries.

At a May 8 hearing of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, chairman Patrick Leahy (D-VT) was joined by colleagues Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Robert Kasten Jr. (R-WI) in a sharp, skeptical round of questioning of AID administrator Ronald W. Roskens.

Roskens, who is completing his first year at the $6 billion dollar agency, defended his reform efforts, saying that AID is "on the right path," and he urged Congress to be patient. AID has been the subject of well-publicized reports of widespread fraud, abuse, and financial mismanagement. He outlined to the committee his internal reforms at AID, telling panel members that progress is being made.

AID Inspector General Herbert L. Beckington, a longtime critic of AID management, offered support for Roskens, but added that tangible results of Roskens's efforts are few and far between. In the past Beckington has released scathing reports about AID, focusing on the fact that AID has the highest number of senior officials convicted of fraud or bribery charges of any government agency.

In his testimony before Leahy's subcommittee, Beckington stated that much of AID is still resistant to managerial reforms, citing a "deep seated institutional mindset that relegates the nitty-gritty of the day-to-day application of basic internal controls to something less than a first rank concern." He also stated his view that AID is over-extended and that new policy initiatives "pose a real potential for adding to the already heavy management burden currently confronting the agency."

A visibly angry Leahy called AID "an agency in trouble" and urged Roskens to work for increased accountability of AID grant programs. Mikulski chimed in saying, "Frankly, the Senate has had it" with stories of AID mismanagement. For Fiscal Year 1992, AID is asking for increased funding for operating expenses, and Leahy sharply told Roskens

that if a vote were to be held this spring he would urge his committee to vote no.

While Leahy pledged to Roskens that he would postpone voting on the AID request for several months in hopes of seeing additional AID reforms, his stern message of frustration with AID was made most evident to all in attendance.

NIA HOLDS WORKSHOP ON ELDER ABUSE RESEARCH

The Behavioral and Social Research (BSR) Program of the National Institute on Aging sponsored a workshop on "Family Conflict and Elder Abuse," May 2-3, 1991 at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. The workshop brought together experts in family research, domestic violence, and aging to review current knowledge and to identify future research priorities.

The workshop began with an overview of the context of intergenerational conflict and solidarity, provided in a paper by Vern Bengston, AARP University Professor of Gerontology at the University of Southern California, presented, in his absence, by Katrina Johnson of BSR. Bengston noted that intergenerational conflict has existed throughout human history, but recently, the focus has shifted from rebellious youth as protagonist to the elderly. "The debate has begun to center on the economic, moral and social obligations of the middle-aged and young to an ever-growing group of elderly; and, in turn, of the elders' obligation to those younger in our increasingly aging societies," said Bengston. This shift is a result primarily of decreased mortality leading to longer life-expectancy and longer periods of intergenerational interaction; the effect often is longer periods of dependency.

According to Bengston, intergenerational conflict may arise as a result of the "beanpole" structure of families: "more members of successive generations are alive at any given point in time, while there are fewer members within each generation." This structure "increases the probability than family members will be involved in longer periods of elder-caring, due to chronic health disorders associated with aging," he said, a situation that produces family tension and may lead to violence.

Family Systems Theory

Carl Broderick, Professor of Sociology, also at USC, provided some theoretical background to the problem of elder abuse in families, by applying family systems theory. According to Broderick, "family systems theory focuses on the rules, and especially on the meta-rules...that govern family interactions." These meta-rules dictate ways of dealing with conflict between generations in a family, including conflict-avoidance, conflict-joining, and conflict-resolution. Additional rules about equity and empathy also operate. But the smooth functioning of this rule-system requires an advanced level of moral reasoning. If this is absent in any of the actors, said Broderick, violence may be a result.

Other presenters at the workshop discussed the state of knowledge--both theoretical and methodological--about elder abuse specifically. Richard Gelles, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Family Violence Research Program at the University of Rhode Island, characterized domestic violence research as "balkanized" and unincorporated into analyses of human violent behavior in general. He argued that most elder abuse theory is derivative--from general psychological and sociological theories or from research on wife and child abuse. Gelles reviewed a number of such theories and their implications and limitations for elder abuse.

Causes of Elder Abuse Critiqued

A strong critique of elder abuse research to date was offered by Karl Pillemer, Professor of Human Development and Family Studies at Cornell University. Common assertions about causes and correlates of elder abuse--for example that caregiving stress leads to elder abuse, or that one who was abused as a child is more likely to abuse an elder--are not empirically supported, he said. Indeed, according to Pillemer, nearly all research on elder abuse is not scientifically valid because of major methodological problems, including: 1) unclear and indiscriminate definitions and measures of elder abuse; 2) reliance on small, unrepresentative samples, with no control group designs; 3) reliance on professional accounts rather than first-person interviews; 4) lack of survey approaches; and 5) lack of evaluation studies. Until these are remedied, elder abuse research represents "folklore" more than it does science, said Pillemer.

As part of NIA's attempt to develop a better research agenda in elder abuse, a panel was assembled for the workshop that addressed issues of racial/ethnic diversity. The cultural context of aging and intergenerational family dynamics were described for Mexican-Americans, by Norma Williams, Professor of Sociology at the University of North Texas; for African-Americans, by Peggye

Dilworth-Anderson, Professor of Child Development and Family Relations at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro; for Native-Americans/American Indians by David Carson, Professor of Home Economics at the University of Wyoming; and for Japanese-Americans, by Susan Tomita, Department of Social Work, Harbor View Medical Center in Seattle. While describing the unique culture of each community, panelists noted the commonality of racial/ethnic groups' marginality in American society, and the contribution of social and economic discrimination to that culture's experience of family and aging.

FOCUS ON THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON ALCOHOL ABUSE AND ALCOHOLISM (NIAAA)

Located within the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration (ADAMHA), the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) is the lead Federal agency for research on the causes, consequences, treatment, and prevention of alcohol-related problems. NIAAA conducts and supports biomedical and behavioral research on the effects of alcohol on the human mind and body, prevention and treatment research, and epidemiologic studies. The current Director of NIAAA is Dr. Enoch Gordis, and Deputy Director is Loran D. Archer.

Social and Behavioral Research at NIAAA

Sociobehavioral research is conducted within various programs and divisions of NIAAA. The National Alcohol Research Centers (ARC) program, with 14 sites throughout the country, is dedicated to specific alcohol research topics in various disciplines. Extramural research in the behavioral and social sciences is concentrated primarily in the Treatment Research Branch and the Prevention Research Branch of the Division of Clinical and Prevention Research, but also is supported by the Epidemiology Branch of the Division of Biometry and Epidemiology.

Presently, NIAAA is supporting, among other things, sociobehavioral studies that focus on identifying and characterizing factors influencing the development, progression, and consequences of drinking problems. Increasing knowledge of these factors enables researchers to devise prevention strategies aimed at reducing the adverse effects of single bouts of drinking as well as the social and medical consequences that result from persistent drinking by alcohol abusers and alcoholics. Further, findings from sociobehavioral studies help advance efforts to develop and test effective approaches to treat alcohol problems.

What these studies are showing is that drinking behavior is affected by a number of determinants. Individual characteristics, such as age, gender and family history may place one at risk for alcohol use problems. In addition, family dynamics, peer influences, cultural values, beliefs and expectations, personality, price and availability, learning and a host of other influences in the environment appear to shape our thinking about drinking as well as affect drinking behavior and the risk of developing drinking problems.

NIAAA-supported research takes many different approaches, including: measuring and analyzing trends in alcohol use over time in the general population as well as in minority and special populations; studying the interrelationship of attitudes to drinking, responding to alcohol problems, and alcohol policies; defining the influence of drinking expectations and attitudes about drinking or drinking practices, and exploring a possible association among alcohol use, high-risk sexual behavior, and increased risk of HIV infection. The findings of such research can contribute to developing and implementing prevention strategies.

Other prevention studies evaluate the effectiveness of purposeful actions taken to prevent alcoholism and reduce problems related to alcohol use. Ongoing research includes studies to evaluate the effectiveness of changes in minimum drinking age, warning labels, and price on reducing alcohol use and related problems. Numerous prevention approaches aimed at modifying the drinking environment and changing individual behavior include school-based and community strategies, worksite programs, and legislation.

Psychosocial research also is responsible for substantial advances in generating effective treatment approaches for alcohol problems. Treatment research includes studies of treatment outcomes and treatment processes, with a new focus on "patient-treatment matching"--that is, determining the efficacy of different therapies for different patient types. In addition, NIAAA supports investigations of the utility of existing behavioral therapies (such as cognitive restructuring and skills training) in--or as adjuncts to--alcoholism treatment, and tests the

effectiveness of new therapies (such as relapse prevention models) as they are developed.

Several NIAAA-supported international projects also emphasize behavioral therapies. Among these is a study recently completed in Poland of the community reinforcement approach (CRA), which stresses interactions between behavior and the environment. Together with drug therapy and marital, family, social, and vocational counseling, the CRA study used behavioral therapies to help patients develop a new repertoire of behaviors for facilitating abstinence and improving life function.

Research Dissemination

The results of NIAAA supported research are published in reports and scientific journals and disseminated through ETOH, a bibliographic database of more than 65,000 records of alcohol research findings; the Alcohol Research Utilization System; and the Alcohol Epidemiologic Data System. Additionally, NIAAA publishes its own journal, Alcohol Health & Research World, and reports, monographs, and bulletins. The Alcohol Alert--a short bulletin geared toward health professionals and interested lay people--focuses on timely research and treatment issues, such as alcohol and women, alcohol and older persons, children of alcoholics, measuring the alcoholic population, alcohol and cognition, relapse, and other issues.

Funding Opportunities

Current NIAAA extramural social and behavioral research priorities include: neurological aspects of alcohol consumption; biological and environmental determinants of drinking; treatment; prevention (especially among special populations); safety, trauma, and alcohol-related performance; alcohol and pregnancy; and incidence and prevalence (epidemiology) of alcoholism.

NIAAA scientists and administrators are available to discuss research ideas and eligibility for grants or training opportunities. For more information, contact either the Division of Clinical and Prevention Research, NIAAA, Parklawn Building, Room 14C-20, Rockville, Maryland 29857, telephone (301) 443-1206, or the Division of Biometry and Epidemiology, NIAAA, Parklawn Building, Room 14C-26, Rockville, Maryland 20857\(301) 443-4897.

For a list of NIAAA research announcements, copies of individual program announcements, or information about how to obtain NIAAA publications, contact the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, P.O. Box 2345, Rockville, Maryland 20852,\(301) 468-2600.

(This report was written with the assistance of Diane Miller, Office of Scientific Affairs, NIAAA.)

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND ECONOMIC POLICY PANEL FORMED

The National Research Council recently announced the creation of the Board on Science, Technology, and Economic Policy. The board's mission will be to integrate scientific, technological, and economic factors into public policy formulation. A. Michael Spence, Dean of the Graduate School of Business at Stanford University will chair the new panel.

The panel will bring members of the business, academic, and public policy communities together to examine the dynamics of economic change on American industrial and technological strength. The board will be a standing unit of the National Research Council and will report directly to the NRC Governing Board. It is expected to work closely with the National Academies of Sciences and Engineering.

COSSA STAFF CHANGES

COSSA regrets the departure of Joe Thorndike, Staff Associate with COSSA since July, 1989. Mr. Thorndike, after a summer studying Spanish in Costa Rica, will pursue a Ph.D. in history at the University of Virginia. Thorndike's considerable editing experience will be missed, but we at COSSA wish him well in his new endeavors.

On a happier note, COSSA also announces the arrival of Michael Buckley as Staff Associate. Mr. Buckley will be responsible for monitoring the work of Congress, federal agencies, and other groups of interest to COSSA. He will also be the editor of the *COSSA Washington Update*. A native of Boston, Buckley received a B.A. in political science from The American University, and joins COSSA after serving as a legislative assistant to Rep. Jim Jontz (D-IN).

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: National Institute on Aging

COSSA provides this information as a service and encourages readers to contact the agency for further information or application materials. Additional application guidelines and restrictions may apply.

Behavioral and Social Research Program

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) invites qualified researchers to submit applications for research training and fellowship opportunitites in the Economics of Aging, Health, and Retirement. Research in economic and health issues relevant to the older population will be particularly important given continued increases in life expectancy. With these additional years of old age, new patterns of labor force participation and retirement have emerged. Given the impending changes in the size, composition, and characteristics of the elderly population, research on life course transitions of the elderly is necessary to ensure the provision of health and retirement services for tomorrow's elderly. Transitions in work, economic well-being, health, and interdependency are all interwoven, and research on life course transitions is needed to better understand such complex relationships.

Aging can be considered a movement through a series of life events. A dynamic approach to the study of life course events recognizes that transitions are not only dependent on factors present at the time of transition, but are also related to previous transitions. Major life course transitions relate to work and retirement decisions, wealth accumulation and decumulation, health status changes, long-term care, and housing and living arrangements.

Application Procedure: Applicants must use the research project application PHS 398, (revised 10/88, reprinted 9/89) that is available at the applicant's institutional research office and from the Office of Grants Inquiries, Division of Research Grants, NIH\(301) 496-7441. Individual fellowship applicants must use PHS 416-1 (revised 7/88). The application (with six copies) must be mailed to: Division of Research Grants, National Institutes of Health, Westwood Building, Room 240, Bethesda, MD 20892.

Eligible Applicants: Applications for research grants may be made by public or private, for-profit or non-profit organizations, such as universities, colleges, hospitals, or laboratories. Women and minority investigators, in particular, are encouraged to apply.

Funding Mechanism: The primary mechanisms for support of this initiative are the research project grant (RO1), program project (PO1), FIRST award (R29), institutional training grant (T32), individual fellowships (F32, F33), and research career development awards (KO4).

Review Process: Applications will be reviewed for scientific and technical merit by an appropriate Initial Review Group of the Division of Research Grants. Secondary review will be by the corresponding National Advisory Council. Applications compete on the basis of scientific merit.

Deadlines: Receipt dates for Research Project Grant, Career Development Award, and FIRST Award applications are February 1, June 1, and October 1 of each year. Those for the individual fellowships and institutional training grants applications are January 10, May 10, and September 10.

Contact: Although it is not required, potential applicants are encouraged to contact NIA staff in advance of formal submission. This may be accomplished by calling the program office listed below. Requests for additional information should be addressed to: Richard Suzman, Ph.D., Behavioral and Social Research Program, NIA, Bldg. 31, Rm. 5C32, Bethesda, MD 20892,\(301) 496-3136.

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