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HOUSE PASSES INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE BILL: SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS RESEARCH INCLUDED ^{MS}

On July 26 the House passed H.R. 1757, legislation that extends the vision of a national information highway capable of routing voice, video and data traveling at gigabit speeds to every school, library, home, research institute, and business in the nation.

The National Information Infrastructure Act of 1993, shepherded through the House by Rep. Rick Boucher (D-VA), chairman of the House Science Subcommittee, improves the High Performance Computing Act of 1991, by providing Federal research and development funding to projects supporting near-term applications of the information network. A number of agencies are authorized to spend already provided funds on these new programs.

The bill calls for the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) to develop a plan for computing and networking applications. The plan shall "include basic and applied research activities related to the long-range social and ethical implications of applications of high-speed networking and high-performance computing." This provision is reinforced by bill report language including "research activities in the social sciences" as part of the research needed on the "issues underlying all of the computing and network applications being developed." It codifies COSSA's efforts to persuade policy makers, since the announcement of the high performance computing and communications initiative, that there must be research on the social consequences of this attempt to change how we educate, how we communicate, and how we live.

The OSTP plan shall also specify research and human resource development in computer science and engineering, mathematics, computer visualization, and human cognition as well as research programs necessary to ensure the security and privacy of digitally transmitted information and to facilitate the management and protection of copyrighted information.

The National Science Foundation (NSF) will lead efforts to develop and apply computing and networking technologies for use in education at all levels from early childhood education through higher education and to develop digital libraries of electronic information. The National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Prevention shall implement activities to develop these technologies to improve the quality and enhance the cost-effectiveness of health care. Finally, the technologies will be used to provide improved public access to information generated by Federal, State, and local governments, including the development of a federal information locator.

Following intense lobbying by the telecommunications industry the bill clearly identifies the respective roles of the public and private sector in deploying, owning and operating the information infrastructure. Private companies will be responsible for the physical network and the software necessary to route the information over the network. The government role is to help develop a set of uniform standards, to research and develop new networking technologies, and to support projects for the near term application of the high speed network. Negotiations between the user (universities, libraries, et. al) and provider communities (telephone companies) led to

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provisions to help protect access of researchers to the network.

Senate Activity

The Senate Commerce Committee, chaired by Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-SC), has reported out for full Senate consideration, S.4, The National Competitiveness Act of 1993, which includes as Title VI an Information Technology Applications Research Program. It includes report language echoing the House bill language concerning the long-range social and ethical applications of high speed networking and high performance computing.

In the meantime, the Senate has assigned H.R. 1757, the House bill, to be reviewed by the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, chaired by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA). The rationale for this jurisdictional change is that the authorizations contained in the House bill affect agencies-- NSF, NIH, CDC-- that come under the scrutiny of the Labor committee. It is unclear how this will affect the ultimate outcome for this bill, which has the strong backing of Vice President Al Gore, the chief sponsor of the 1991 legislation.

OERI REAUTHORIZATION PASSES HOUSE *HS*

Declaring that "the failure of the Federal government to adequately invest in educational research and development has denied the Nation a sound foundation on which to design school improvements, leading to a history of faddism and

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failed experimentation," the House of Representatives, by voice vote on August 2, passed legislation to reauthorize and restructure the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI). Sponsored by Rep. Major Owens (D-NY), chairman of the Subcommittee on Select Education and Civil Rights, H.R. 856 enjoyed bipartisan support during its journey through the House.

The goal of the reauthorization, according to Owens, is: "To establish a worldclass research and development system to guide and drive the national effort to improve education and achieve the national goals." To meet this objective, the legislation aims to move OERI "from the periphery to the center of educational reform and innovation in America... [to] become the locomotive which pulls and guides the national effort to improve education with sound, research-based leadership for change."

The bill creates an 18 member National Educational Research Policy and Priorities Board composed of educational researchers and representatives of teachers, parents, school administrators and other stakeholders in the educational system. The Board, modeled on the National Science Board, would work with the OERI Assistant Secretary to develop a comprehensive research priorities plan to end, what Owens called, "the incoherent flavor of the month" approach that has limited OERI's effectiveness.

Would Create Five Institutes

H.R. 856 would restructure OERI around five institutes for research related to: 1) The Education of At-Risk Students; 2) Educational Governance, Finance, and Management; 3) Early Childhood Development and Education; 4) Student Achievement; and 5) Postsecondary Education, Libraries, and Lifelong Learning. The institute approach would incorporate, rather than eliminate, the current research and development centers. Field Initiated Studies, currently a less than \$1 million program, would receive at least 15 percent of the \$20 million authorized for each institute. These provisions follow the recommendations of a National Academy of Sciences report: *Research and Education Reform: Roles for the Office of Educational Research and Improvement*.

Finally, the bill creates an Office of Reform Assistance and Dissemination within OERI responsible for ensuring that research results are translated into improvements in practice. The Office would include the existing ERIC

Clearinghouses, regional laboratories, and National Diffusion Network. New programs would include: a SMARTLINE interactive electronic network; special projects utilizing new technologies, such as CD-ROM and satellite programming to disseminate information; a Goals 2000 Community Partnership program, modeled on the agriculture extension program, to provide field-based technical assistance in utilizing research results; and a teacher research dissemination network to train teachers in the use and application of research knowledge.

The bill faces an uncertain future in the Senate. The House passed an OERI reauthorization bill last year that was not enacted into law because of difficulty in reaching agreement with the Senate. The Administration, after negotiating some minor changes in the House bill, remains unhappy with the policy board and the potentially inflexible institute structure, and might use a Senate bill as a vehicle to get what it wants. The Senate will not begin to examine its options until September at the earliest.

SENATE PASSES COMMERCE, JUSTICE, STATE FUNDING; CENSUS FUNDS RESTORED *MS*

On July 29 the Senate passed the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 1994 by an 87-13 vote. The legislation affects several programs, outlined below, of importance to social and behavioral scientists.

At the **Census Bureau**, research and design efforts to plan the 2000 Census were funded at \$18.2 million, a marked contrast to the House vote cutting \$15 million from the Administration's \$23 million request for this program (see *Update* July 26). The Senate action, which included an additional \$6 million allocated for address improvements, came on the heels of vigorous lobbying by COSSA and its allies in the research community. The matter now moves to a joint House-Senate conference committee.

The **Economic and Statistics Administration** at the Commerce Department, which includes the **Bureau of Economic Analysis**, was appropriated \$45.2 million, \$4.5 million less than the President's request, but \$5.9 million over current funding. The Senate figure is identical to the House allocation for FY 94.

At the Justice Department, the Senate voted \$22.5 million for the **National Institute of Justice**, a

reduction of \$495,000 from both current funding and the House allocation. The Senate awarded \$20.9 million for the **Bureau of Justice Statistics**, an amount that is \$430,000 below both current funding and the House amount. The **Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention** received an increase from \$72.3 million in FY 1993 to \$100.0 million for 1994, with the bulk of the increase supporting new delinquency prevention training and technical assistance programs.

Voting \$250.7 million for educational and cultural exchanges supported by the **United States Information Agency (USIA)**, the Senate increased the President's request by \$7.8 million, current appropriations by \$27.3 million, and the House request by \$33.0 million. The majority of the increase is not targeted toward any specific program, but for general expansion of USIA exchange programs. The Senate allocated \$1.0 million for a new program to provide collections of American Studies materials at overseas university libraries. The committee report language urges USIA to build on programs in these areas currently supported by the Organization of American Historians.

VARMUS NAMED DIRECTOR OF NIH *SA*

After months of rumor, the White House announced its nomination of Harold Varmus as the new Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). He replaces Bernadine Healy, who left the position June 30 at the request of the Administration (see *Update*, March 8). Varmus is the first NIH director to have won a Nobel prize.

Varmus is a professor of microbiology, biochemistry and biophysics and American Cancer Society Professor of Molecular Virology at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). Varmus came to UCSF in 1970 as a postdoctoral fellow, was appointed to the faculty that same year, and became a full professor in 1979.

In 1989, Varmus shared a Nobel Prize with J. Michael Bishop, under whose tutelage he served when he first joined UCSF. Their Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine was the result of studies of genes showing that cancer genes can arise from normal cellular genes. Varmus also studies retroviruses, work with a special relevance to AIDS through a focus on biochemical properties of HIV, and to breast cancer, through investigation of mammary tumors in mice.

Varmus, like most biomedical scientists in academe, receives grants for his research from NIH, including an Outstanding Investigator Grant from the National Cancer Institute, a drug discovery program for AIDS from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and a structural biology program for AIDS from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences.

A prolific author/editor of four books and nearly 300 scientific papers, Varmus also serves as Chairman of the Board on Biology for the National Research Council, an advisor to the Congressional Caucus for Biomedical Research, a member of the Joint Steering Committee for Public Policy of Biomedical Societies, and Co-Chairman of the New Delegation from Biomedical Research. He also was awarded membership to the Institute of Medicine, the National Academy of Sciences, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Varmus received his B.A. in English at Amherst, M.A. in English literature from Harvard, and his M.D. from Columbia.

HACKNEY CONFIRMED TO LEAD NEH

Sheldon Hackney, former President of the University of Pennsylvania, was confirmed by the Senate on August 3 as President Clinton's choice to chair the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Hackney replaces Lynne V. Cheney, who resigned effective January 20 after over six years as NEH chair.

The nomination was approved by a 76-23 margin, with those in opposition citing Hackney's role in several controversies at Penn over speech codes affecting language or conduct related to race, ethnicity, and national origin.

BLUMSTEIN TESTIFIES BEFORE HOUSE PANEL ON SENTENCING REFORMS *MB*

Alfred Blumstein, Dean of the H. John Heinz III School of Public Policy and Management at Carnegie Mellon University and former member of the COSSA Board of Directors, recently urged a House subcommittee to reform sentencing laws, particularly for drug offenses.

IREX ANNOUNCES OVERSEAS PROGRAM COMPETITIONS *MB*

The International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) is now taking applications for its 1994-1995 academic programs. IREX offers a range of overseas research and training opportunities for scholars in the humanities and social sciences.

Deadlines and eligibility requirements vary by program. For more information, contact IREX at (202) 628-8188.

Testifying at a July 29 hearing held by the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Intellectual Property and Judicial Administration, chaired by Rep. William Hughes (D-NJ), Blumstein told the panel that increasing the length of prison sentences through mandatory-minimum sentencing laws is an ineffective approach to fighting crime.

Blumstein, immediate past-president of the American Society of Criminology, said that the nation's prison population has steadily increased at about 8 percent annually, largely because of "the growing disposition of our political system to respond to every undesired behavior by a call for increased punitiveness, increasingly with mandatory-minimum sentencing laws. This is done with little reference to how effectively that will counter the undesired behavior."

A Futile Approach to Drugs

Blumstein said that mandatory-minimum sentencing laws are a particularly futile approach to combatting illegal drugs because attacking the supply side is of little effect in a demand-driven market. Those incarcerated and deterred by lengthy sentences are easily replaced on the street by substitutes, he said. While 60 percent of Federal prisoners and 25 percent of state prisoners today are in prison on a drug charge (a figure that was 5 percent a decade ago), Blumstein said the effect this has had on illegal drug transactions is minimal.

Echoing Chairman Hughes' concerns about lack of data on what sentencing options actually work, Blumstein linked this with the public's desire to take strong action to fight drugs, commenting that "democratic political systems find it extremely difficult to confess that they really don't have any good ideas about what to do that will demonstrably make things better. Even more unfortunately, they

have discovered something that does get them off that hook: It seems that, when they demand increased punishment for the objectionable behavior, the public not only seems to accept that as a satisfactory response, but actually to cheer them on."

Blumstein's specific recommendations to Congress were: eliminate mandatory-minimum sentencing laws; increase appropriations for the National Institute of Justice to expand the base of knowledge on crime and criminal justice issues, and create a presidential commission to examine the effectiveness of existing crime and drug-control policies.

CBO EXAMINES STUDIES OF RETURN ON SCIENTIFIC INVESTMENT *MS*

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO), at the request of Rep. George Brown, chairman of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee, has examined the studies of the relationship between academic research and industrial innovation conducted by University of Pennsylvania economist Edwin Mansfield.

Among the most widely cited findings of these studies, used by proponents of federal funding for science, is that the rate of return to society from the funds invested in academic research is an estimated 28 percent. How precise is this estimate? CBO concludes: "Given the nature of the assumptions, definitions, and other methodological questions, as Mansfield notes, his result is more properly regarded as indicating a broad range of likely orders of magnitude of the return from academic research and development (R&D) than as a point estimate (28 percent) of the return from federal investment in this area."

CBO also asks: How relevant is the 28 percent rate-of-return estimate to federal science policy and the federal budget process? The conclusion: "the return from academic research, despite measurement problems is sufficiently high to justify overall federal investments in this area." However, the methodological difficulties, which Mansfield acknowledges, "does not lend itself to use in the annual process of setting the level of investment in research and development."

For further information about the analysis contact the author of the report: Phillip Webre, Natural Resource and Commerce Division, CBO, 202/226-2940.

THE CENSUS: MEASURING THE MELTING POT *MS*

According to the 1990 Census the population of the United States is now more racially and ethnically diverse than at any time in our country's history. We know this from responses to questions on the Census with "categories of convenience that are often misleading," according to Rep. Tom Sawyer (D-OH), Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Census, Statistics, and Postal Personnel.

Yet, the government's racial and ethnic categories serve many purposes from ensuring compliance with civil rights laws, helping to draw legislative district lines, and making programmatic policy decisions. Thus, how you count the melting pot has consequences. Sawyer, in conducting three hearings on April 14, June 30, and July 29, has raised a number of problems with the current method of measuring race and ethnicity. These problems include: the identification of multi-racial persons; Hispanics and Middle Easterners and others who do not identify with any of the four major racial categories; and self-identification by foreign-born persons whose understanding of race is shaped by different definitions and understandings in their countries of origin.

Five Categories Created in 1977

The categories for racial and ethnic measurement derive from Directive 15, an order promulgated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in May, 1977. Five categories were to be used by all Federal agencies in reporting on racial and ethnic data: 1) American Indian or Alaskan Native; 2) Asian or Pacific Islander; 3) Black; 4) Hispanic; and 5) White. The difficulty with these groupings is that four are racial, while Hispanic is an ethnic classification, leading to categories such as Hispanic-whites and non-Hispanic whites. The directive does not limit the collection of data to these categories, provided that the additional detail can be aggregated into the five basic racial and ethnic categories.

As Sally Katzen, administrator of OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA), pointed out at the July hearing, attempts to revamp these categories in 1988 drew vehement opposition from Federal agencies involved in civil rights issues, many members of Congress, and large corporations. Those who voiced their opposition, according to Katzen, thought the system in place provided

sufficient data, and argued that the changes would disrupt historical continuity, cost too much money, and be potentially disruptive. Minorities were particularly fearful that changes would produce diminished counts of their populations which would affect programmatic decisions. This view was reiterated at the recent July hearing by Billy Tidwell of the National Urban League who declared: "Proposals to revise the current reporting system must be carefully examined for any potential they might have to undermine, attenuate, or impair the utility of the system to the African-American community or otherwise jeopardize the protections and gains that have been achieved."

Improvements Debated

The hearings have heard calls for various improvements in the categories. These include: 1) adding a multi-racial category so that respondents would not be forced to deny part of their heritage by having to choose a single category; 2) adding a "Middle Easterner" category to the list of racial designations; 3) including Hispanic as a racial designation, rather than as a separate ethnic category; 4) including Native Hawaiian as part of the Native American category rather than in the Asian or Pacific Islander group; 4) giving some special category recognition to people from the Cape Verde Islands; 5) providing an open-ended question to solicit information on race and ethnicity, or combine the concepts of race, ethnicity, and ancestry.

Katzen agreed "it is time to review the current set of racial and ethnic categories." Recognizing that the process "has deep personal significance for individuals," especially those from multi-racial backgrounds, she called for a special workshop convened by the Committee on National Statistics of the National Academy of Sciences to articulate the issues that must be addressed and develop an agenda for how the government should proceed.

Can all this be done in time to impact the 2000 Census? William Hunt of the General Accounting Office argued at the April hearing that it was important to develop "consensus on the race and ethnic questions as soon as possible to avoid disruption" to planning for the next Census and also to withstand increasing pressure from new groups and subgroups for identification on the census form and in census data products. For the 1990 Census, Congress forced the Census Bureau to include subgroups for the Asian or Pacific Islander category very late in the process.

EDITOR'S NOTE

With Congress adjourning until after Labor Day, this will be the only issue of *Update* for the month of August.

We will resume publication with the September 10 issue.

The 1990 Census asked questions about race, Spanish origin, and ancestry. Although the five categories are required by OMB, the 1990 questionnaire had 14 responses under the race question. Including the Spanish origin question confused a number of respondents who, according to Acting Census Director Harry Scarr, reported their Spanish origin ethnicity in one of the race write-in areas or simply did not respond. Reynolds Farley of the University of Michigan, testifying at the April hearing, argued that the series of questions were "overlapping," and "confusing" and created "a cumbersome and fallible process." He advocated greater use of open ended self-identification responses within the five categories of Directive 15.

Cognitive Research Conducted

Scarr reported that the Bureau in planning for the 2000 Census is "placing emphasis on changes to the 1990 race and ethnic questions rather than on developing new ones." Cognitive research on how respondents identify their race and ethnicity is underway. He is also concerned with the increasing demands for additional data on race and ethnicity by government and nongovernmental data users. These include small area data for more race and ethnic groups, and unique data on characteristics of specific population groups such as American Indians.

As Sawyer noted in summing up the difficulty of this issue: "We are trying to measure complex notions of human self-identity. Americans are composites of many cultural, ethnic and racial backgrounds. Their concepts of self-identity may even change over time and in different social contexts." Coming to grips with this issue presents policymakers with the difficult trade-offs many have been unwilling to face. As we seek more precise methods of measurement, the anticipated consequences for programs and policies often link people to existing ambiguities and imprecisions.

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION *KC*

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.

Applications are invited for new awards for FY 1994 under title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (the HEA), for the Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Program, the International Research and Studies Program, and the Business and International Education Program. These programs support National Education Goal 5, which calls for all Americans to possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy.

Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Program

Purpose of Program: Provides grants to strengthen and improve undergraduate instruction in international studies and foreign languages in the United States.

Applications available: 8/27/93; deadline: 11/5/93; budget: \$2,135,000; number of awards: 35.

Contact: For applications or information contact, Christine Corey, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3053, ROB-3, Washington, DC 20202-5332, (202)708-7283.

Business and International Education Program

Purpose of Program: Provides grants to enhance international business education programs and to expand the capacity of the business community to engage in international economic activity.

Applications available: 8/27/93; deadline: 11/8/93; budget: \$1,575,000; number of awards: 21.

Contact: For applications or information contact, Susanna C. Easton, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3053, ROB-3, Washington, DC 20202-5332, (202)708-7283.

International Research and Studies Program

Purpose of Program: Provides grants to public and private agencies, organizations, institutions, and individuals to conduct research and studies to improve and strengthen instruction in modern foreign languages, area studies, and other international fields to provide full understanding of the places in which the modern foreign languages are commonly used.

Applications available: 9/7/93; deadline: 11/5/93; budget: \$1,000,000; number of awards: 10.

Contact: For applications or information contact, Jose L. Martinez, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3053, ROB-3, Washington, DC 20202-5332, (202) 708-9297.

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