

COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

Volume XII, Number 20

November 8, 1993

SENATE PRAISES NIH NOMINEE; NO MENTION OF BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES *SP*

In a week in which the Senate was distracted by subpoenaed personal diaries, the confirmation hearing for a new director of the National Institutes of Health became an opportunity to laud the career of nominee Harold Varmus. Varmus was enthusiastically received by the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee on November 3, with Senators warmly praising the Nobel Prize winner and sparing him difficult questions. Despite the recent creation of the Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research within the director's office, there was no mention at the hearing of NIH support for these disciplines.

The committee, chaired by Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA), will vote on the nomination during the week of November 8, and confirmation by the full Senate is likely.

Varmus, a professor of Microbiology, Biochemistry, Biophysics, and Molecular Virology at the University of California at San Francisco, was introduced to the committee by Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi (D-CA). Proclaimed by Boxer as a "renaissance man for our times who will make an excellent Director of NIH," Varmus was queried only once regarding his qualifications for the directorship, with Senator Dan Coats (R-IN) asking whether the nominee's lack of administrative experience would affect his ability to deal with NIH's bureaucracy and challenges from Congress. Varmus replied that although lacking in administrative titles, he has demonstrated leadership experience and is "no stranger to the issues."

In his statement to the panel, Varmus discussed his experiences and qualifications, beginning with the influence of his family. His mother, a psychiatric social worker, and his father, a family doctor who also served as the Jones Beach State Park (NY) physician, provided "an atmosphere that encouraged public service in the health professions." Although interested in a variety of medical careers before making his final decision, Varmus identified

his work at NIH in the 1960s as a Public Health Service officer as the "experience that converted me to [become] an enthusiastic bench scientist." After leaving NIH in 1970, Varmus stated that he was still indebted to NIH, since a large part of his salary was paid by an NIH Career Development Award, and that for over twenty years most of his work has been financed by grants from NIH.

Varmus explained that receiving the Nobel Prize brought the "unexpected consequence" of widespread interest in his views, resulting in his having "spoken out or taken action" on many topics including the funding of young investigators, indirect cost reimbursements, the training of new scientists, and science education for the public. He emphasized his strong support for basic research.

In articulating his qualifications, Varmus noted that his commitment to scientific excellence, his knowledge of the critical issues, and his first hand experience as a working scientist will serve him well in the stewardship of NIH. He further declared: "As a fair-minded citizen concerned with the role of science in our society, I will try to improve science

INSIDE UPDATE...

- ◆ Key OSTP Appointees Face Senate Confirmation Hearing
- ◆ OERI Reauthorization Emerges from Senate Committee
- ◆ OERI Awards Eleven Field Initiated Studies Grants
- ◆ Abraham Confirmed to Lead BLS
- ◆ COSSA Joins Coalition to Preserve Access to Data Highway
- ◆ Poverty Data Legislation Approved
- ◆ Aging Institute Creates New Centers to Apply Social and Behavioral Research
- ◆ Agriculture Department Proposes Reorganization; Research Affected
- ◆ Agency Holds Meeting to Evaluate Family Preservation Research
- ◆ Income Study Workshop Scheduled
- ◆ Sources of Research Support: United States Information Agency

education at all levels and to promote the careers of women and minority scientists."

Role of Behavioral and Social Sciences?

Although the hearing consisted of resounding accolades for NIH and its new director, the role the behavioral and social sciences will play at NIH under its new leadership is at best unclear. The issue went unaddressed by both Varmus and the Senators, with the exception of Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) once mentioning the word "behavioral" during the hearing. The Coalition for the Advancement of Health through Behavioral and Social Science Research recommended questions for Senators to ask Varmus regarding NIH support of these disciplines (see *Update*, October 11). According to a congressional staffer, Varmus will respond to them in writing for the official record.

After the hearing concluded without any mention of the behavioral and social sciences, COSSA Associate Director for Government Affairs Susan Persons discussed with Varmus various issues concerning the role of these disciplines at NIH. She asked Varmus about the relationship of the behavioral and social sciences to NIH's mission. He cited his mother's career as a psychiatric social worker, his plans to chair a conference at NIH on compliance, and his recognition of the importance of behavior to the AIDS epidemic. Yet, he also expressed concern about the methodologies used by behavioral and social scientists, implying some skepticism about their value.

Persons also asked Varmus about the status of finding a director for the new Office of Behavioral

and Social Science Research (OBSSR) (see *Update* October 11) since in his testimony, Varmus had commented on the search for a director for the Office of AIDS Research and other offices, but did not mention the OBSSR. Varmus replied that some progress is being made.

KEY OSTP APPOINTEES FACE SENATE CONFIRMATION HEARING *HS*

The Senate Commerce, Transportation and Space Committee held a brief hearing on October 28 to review the nominations of three nominees to fill Associate Director slots at the Office of Science and Technology Policy. The hearing, conducted by Science Subcommittee Chairman Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-WV), was cut short by a NASA review hearing that immediately followed.

Marci Greenwood, slated to be the Associate Director for Science, Jane Wales nominated as Associate Director for National Security and International Affairs, and Robert Watson designated Associate Director for the Environment, were all praised by their boss-to-be, Presidential Science Adviser and Director of OSTP Jack Gibbons, as eminently qualified to carry out what Rockefeller described as the Clinton administration's "revolution in American science and technology policy." (For backgrounds of Greenwood and Wales, see *Update* September 13).

In her testimony, Greenwood referred to the continued U.S. lead in science, but suggested that there are "indicators that all is not well." She noted the slow, flat, growth in funding, the backlog of research infrastructure needs, and the poor performance of U.S. students in science and mathematics international comparisons as examples of problems that required her attention. In addition, she committed herself to sponsoring a well balanced research portfolio to insure new scientific discoveries.

Wales viewed her major challenges as defense conversion and the non-proliferation and disposal of nuclear weapons. She noted that national security now means economic security and that policy relevant research was important to her area of concern. She also mentioned that a reinigorated President's Council of Advisers on Science and Technology (PCAST) would aid her in the near future.

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations represents more than 185,000 American scientists across the full range of the social and behavioral sciences, functioning as a bridge between the research world and the Washington community. *Update* is published fortnightly. Individual subscriptions are available from COSSA for \$60; institutional subscriptions, \$120, overseas mail, \$120. ISSN 0749-4394. Address all inquiries to COSSA, 1522 K Street, NW, Suite 836, Washington, D.C. 20005. Phone: (202) 842-3525, Fax: (202) 842-2788

Watson stressed the need to establish research priorities in the environmental arena and to put increased emphasis on evaluation research as ways to help implement many of the international agreements from the Rio conference and elsewhere. Rockefeller noted that China and India, because of their large populations and increasing industrialization, were keys to any international environmental solutions.

All three nominees are expected to win easy confirmation and join Lionel 'Skip' Johns, who was confirmed earlier as the Associate Director for Technology and Space Policy, as the key aides to Gibbons.

OERI REAUTHORIZATION EMERGES FROM SENATE COMMITTEE *HS*

The Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee unanimously reported S.286, the reauthorization of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) at the U.S. Department of Education, to the full Senate on November 3. The bill would substantially alter the structure of OERI in the hope of enhancing the status and funding of education research. The House passed its version of the bill in August (see *Update*, August 9).

The Senate version creates a 9 member Advisory Board appointed by the Secretary whose major role is to "advise" and "recommend." By contrast, the House bill creates an 18 member National Research Educational Research Policy and Priorities Board to develop comprehensive research priorities.

Like the House bill, the Senate would restructure OERI around five directorates for research: (the House calls them institutes)

- 1) Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (CIA);
- 2) Educational Achievement of Historically Underserved Populations;
- 3) Early Childhood Development and Education;
- 4) Elementary and Secondary Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking, and Management;
- and 5) Adult Education and Lifelong Learning.

Most of these mirror the House structure with the exception that the Senate did not include postsecondary education or libraries in the fifth directorate.

Within each directorate, one-third of all funds are reserved for Field Initiated Studies, and one-third of all funds would be reserved for National

OERI AWARDS ELEVEN FIELD INITIATED STUDIES GRANTS *HS*

The Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) has awarded 11 new Field Initiated Studies (FIS) program grants for FY 1993 totaling \$942,566. The grantees were selected by non-federal scholars, practitioners, and researchers who evaluated 246 proposals. The average grant was about \$85,000 and the success rate was under 5 percent.

The topics the grantees will be researching include: developing successful teachers in urban elementary classrooms; predicting school dropouts; examining the effects of tracking in high schools on students' educational aspirations and academic success; developing and disseminating plans to introduce technology in the classroom; strengthening parental and community involvement in schools; and measuring the consequences of choosing private or public schools.

The 1994 FIS application guidelines are now available and the deadline for proposals is December 10, 1993. For a copy of the 1994 application, write OERI, Office of Research, FIS Grants Program, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20208-5646. Applicants are invited to propose research on any topic that will advance educational theory and practice. The amount of funds available will likely be about the same as in FY 1993. In future years, the funding for this program should increase as a result of the set-aside in the new OERI authorization bill (*see other story*).

Research Centers, with a minimum of \$1.1 million for each Center. Although the authorization for the five directorates is \$100 million (same as the House), the Senate did not treat each directorate equally (as the House did) in terms of funding and wound up creating a more complicated funding formula.

The House provided an equal \$20 million apiece for its five institutes. The Senate provided percentages for each directorate. Under the Senate version, if the appropriation is above \$70 million the CIA directorate would receive 30 percent of the funds, the other three directorates 10 percent, research synthesis activities would receive 10

percent, and 20 percent would be reserved for discretionary activities.

If the appropriation is less than \$70 million, CIA would receive at least 25 percent, Underserved Populations and Early Childhood would get at least 10 percent each, while Elementary and Secondary and Adult Learning would be guaranteed at least five percent. The same ten percent would apply to synthesis activities, with discretionary activities potentially up to 35 percent of the funding. For FY 1994 the appropriation for Education Research is \$78 million, which includes \$31 million for the Centers, \$38 million for the 10 regional laboratories, and less than \$1 million for FIS.

The bill also includes provisions that could lead to an expansion of the number of regional laboratories from the current 10. It authorizes \$41 million for the labs. The ERIC data clearinghouse system also was reauthorized at a \$10 million level.

Minority Focused Civics Education

Also included in the bill is a section to encourage improved instruction for minorities and Native Americans in American government and civics. Grants would be given to conduct a national program of accredited summer teacher training and staff development seminars or institutes. These would be followed by academic year inservice training programs conducted on college and university campuses or other appropriate sites for social studies, civics and American government teachers and others who work with minority and Native American youth. The Senate authorizes \$5 million for this new program.

The OERI reauthorization bill is expected to move quickly to the Senate floor in the hope that a House-Senate conference committee can work out the differences in the two versions of the bill in time for final passage before the adjournment of the first session of the 103rd Congress later this year.

ABRAHAM CONFIRMED TO LEAD BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS *MB*

Katharine G. Abraham, a labor economist and professor at the University of Maryland at College Park, was confirmed by the Senate on October 7 as the Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Abraham replaces Deputy Commissioner William Barron, who had been acting head of BLS since the 1992 departure of Janet Norwood, who had led BLS for twelve years.

BLS collects and publishes statistics on the labor force, prices and the cost of living, compensation and working conditions, productivity and technology, and economic growth and employment projections. It also funds data collection for the National Longitudinal Survey of Labor Market Experiences, as well as research projects using that data collection.

Abraham received a B.S. from Iowa State University, and a Ph.D. from Harvard University. She was an associate professor at MIT's Sloan School of Management, a research associate at Brookings Institution, and most recently on the faculty of the University of Maryland. Her research has focused on labor markets, and she is the author of numerous articles, most recently "Female Workers as a Buffer in the Japanese Economy," "Improving Job Matches in the U.S. Labor Market," and "Job Security in America: A Better Approach."

COSSA JOINS COALITION TO PRESERVE ACCESS TO DATA HIGHWAY *MB*

COSSA recently joined a broad coalition of over 70 organizations in an effort to urge policymakers to ensure that the proposed national "data highway" serves the public interest through universal and equitable access to information.

The coalition, the Telecommunications Policy Roundtable, is an outgrowth of concerns that if a national network developed by market forces it may not include the services need by researchers and not reach minorities or persons with disabilities.

At an October 26 press conference, the roundtable declared seven principles that should be followed in developing the data highway:

- ◆ Universal access: All people should have affordable access to the information infrastructure.
- ◆ Freedom to Communicate: The information infrastructure should enable all people to effectively exercise their fundamental right to communicate.

- ◆ Vital Civic Sector: The information infrastructure must have a vital civic sector at its core.
- ◆ Diverse and Competitive Marketplace: The information infrastructure should ensure competition among ideas and information providers.
- ◆ Equitable Workplace: New technologies should be used to enhance the quality of work and to promote equity in the workplace.
- ◆ Privacy: Privacy should be carefully protected and extended.
- ◆ Democratic Policy Making: The public should be fully involved in policy making for the information infrastructure.

Among the members of the roundtable are COSSA affiliate the Association of Research Libraries, The American Law Libraries Association, and the National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History.

AGING INSTITUTE CREATES NEW CENTERS TO APPLY SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH *MB*

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) recently announced a \$6.4 million award to start six new Centers for Research on Applied Gerontology. The centers are designed to move promising social and behavioral research findings out of the laboratory and into programs to improve the lives of older people and their families.

The centers will seek application of new research in areas such as computer skills, driving, exercise, caregiving, and nursing home care and will feature collaboration between scientists, major corporations, and organizations involved with older people.

The six centers will be established at: Western Kentucky University, University of Miami (Florida), New England Research Institute in Watertown, MA, Hebrew Rehabilitation Center for the Aged in Boston, Cornell University, and a consortium of the University of Georgia, Georgia Institute of Technology, and Memphis State University.

For more information, contact Vicky Cahan of NIA at (301) 496-1752

POVERTY DATA LEGISLATION APPROVED *MB*

The Poverty Data Improvement Act of 1993, which would require the Census Bureau to produce, at least every two years, current data relating to the incidence of poverty in the United States, was approved by the House Subcommittee on Census, Statistics, and Postal Personnel on November 4.

The bill was introduced by subcommittee chair Rep. Tom Sawyer (D-OH) and aims to address the infrequency with which such data is now collected, and its subsequent lack of reliability. Each year the Federal government provides over \$20 billion in aid to State and local governments based on data relating to income and poverty status. The infrequent collection of this data can lead to dramatic shifts in Federal funding after each decennial census.

Sawyer's bill now moves on to the full House Post Office and Civil Service Committee. The Fiscal Year 1994 appropriation for the Census Bureau that was recently approved by Congress includes \$600,000 for intercensal poverty estimates.

AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT PROPOSES REORGANIZATION; RESEARCH AFFECTED *115*

Responding to calls from Congress and the National Performance Review (Vice President Gore's reinventing government initiative), Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy has proposed a reorganization of the Department that streamlines its headquarters and field operations. Included in the plan is a recommendation to combine its research and economics offices.

According to Espy, the plan will enhance the USDA's traditional commitment to strong research and education programs. A new Assistant Secretary for Research and Economics will replace two Assistant Secretaries -- one for science and education and one for economics.

A new Agricultural Research and Education Service will combine the old Agricultural Research Service, the Extension Service, the Cooperative

State Research Service, and the National Agricultural Library. This configuration has been tried in the past and created problems because of the different nature of the research programs. ARS focuses mainly on intramural efforts, while the CSRS and the Extension Service are cooperative arrangements with the states, with some grants awarded competitively.

The new Agricultural Economics Service will combine the Economic Research Service and a small office of rural transportation and energy research. There are also plans to create an Office of Chief Economist for the Department who would report directly to the Secretary and do policy relevant research connected to the policy plans for the Department. A similar situation exists in the Department of Labor.

The National Agricultural Statistical Service will also be placed under the new Assistant Secretary.

Another part of the reorganization will elevate food and nutrition concerns to the level of an Undersecretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services (In federal government organization charts undersecretaries are higher than assistant secretaries). The current food and nutrition service will become the Nutrition Research and Education Service.

Despite misgivings by some interest groups, Congress seems willing to grant Espy the power to carry out the reorganization.

AGENCY HOLDS MEETING TO EVALUATE FAMILY PRESERVATION RESEARCH *SP*

The Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) of the Department of Health and Human Services recently met with researchers and evaluators working in the areas of family preservation, family support, and child welfare to discuss the best ways in which to evaluate programs funded by the Family Preservation and Family Support Services Act. The legislation, approved by Congress earlier this year, provides \$1 billion over five years to child welfare agencies.

The purpose of the legislation is to "encourage and enable each State to develop and establish, or expand, and to operate a program of family preservation services and community based family

support services." "Family preservation services" are defined as activities to assist families in crisis, often families where a child is at imminent risk of being placed in out-of-home care because of abuse and/or neglect. "Family support services" are primarily preventive activities with the aim of increasing the ability of families to successfully nurture their children, most often provided at the local level by community-based organizations.

As mandated by the legislation, the five year plan must include goals, methods to measure progress toward the goals, periodic review and updates of progress toward accomplishment of the goals, and reflect improved coordination among programs serving families and children. To assist in the evaluation process, participants were asked two questions: 1) What do we want to learn about family preservation and family support? 2) How do we design the research to answer the questions?

The morning session of the meeting consisted of a brainstorming activity on the most pressing questions and why they are important. The group also discussed strategies that are available, the likelihood of research producing meaningful policy-relevant data, barriers to research, how to set priorities, and outcome variables for research and policy. The afternoon session broke out into three groups which focused on family preservation, family support, and systems change.

For more information, contact Deborah Roderick Stark of ACYF at (202) 205-8347.

LUXEMBOURG INCOME STUDY WORKSHOP SCHEDULED *MB*

The Luxembourg Income Study (LIS), which includes several large microdata sets measuring income and economic well-being for a set of modern industrialized welfare states, announces a two-week pre- and post-doctoral workshop designed to introduce young scholars in the social sciences to comparative research in income distribution and social policy using the LIS database.

The 1994 workshop will be held July 18-30, 1994 in Luxembourg. For more information, contact LIS Project Director Timothy M. Smeeding of Syracuse University at (315) 443-9042.

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY 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.

United States Studies Branch

The United States Information Agency (USIA) invites applications to conduct a six week, graduate-level summer institute (including an integrated follow on tour) in the American economic system for approximately 18 foreign university teachers (primarily members of economics, social science, business or public policy faculties) who are either currently teaching about some aspect of the American economic system or are planning to do so. Participants will be selected by the United States Information Service (USIS) posts overseas and will have high-level fluency in English.

USIA is asking for detailed proposals from colleges, universities, consortia of colleges and universities, and other not-for-profit academic organizations that have an established reputation in the discipline of economics and/or public policy and expertise in conducting graduate-level programs for foreign educators.

Program Design: The institute should be designed specifically for experienced foreign university-level educators and should not duplicate courses normally given by graduate departments for American graduate degree candidates.

Budget: Applicants must submit a comprehensive line-item budget for which specific details are available in the application packet. The total USIA-funded budget must not exceed \$145,300. USIA-funded administrative costs as defined in the application packet must not exceed \$43,648. Applications requesting more than \$43,648 for administrative costs and/or more than \$145,300 for the total institute costs to USIA, or that do not allocate these costs consistently with the budget instruction will not be considered.

Deadlines: The original and 14 copies of the completed application, including required forms, should be submitted to the USIA by 5 p.m., Washington, DC time on Monday, January 10, 1994. Applications are to be sent to:

United States Information Agency
Ref: Summer Institute in the American Economic System for Foreign University Teachers
Grants Management Division, E/XE
301 4th Street, SW, Rm. 336
Washington, DC 20547.

Contact: Interested organizations/institutions should contact Don Q. Washington, Chief, U.S. Studies Branch at the USIA, Office of Academic Programs, Division for the Study of the U.S., 301 4th St., SW, Washington, DC 20547, telephone (202) 619-4559 to request detailed application packets, which include award criteria additional to this announcement, all necessary forms, and guidelines for preparing proposals, including specific budget preparation information.

Notification: All applicants will be notified of the results of the review process on or about March 1, 1994. Awarded grants will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements.

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