

# COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

Volume XII, Number 21

November 22, 1993

## PRESIDENT OF COSSA MEETS WITH PRESIDENT CLINTON *145*

William Julius Wilson, Lucy Flower University Professor of Sociology and Public Policy at the University of Chicago, and the current President of COSSA, joined a dozen scholars at the White House early in November to review the Clinton presidency with the President and his closest advisers.

Over dinner, Wilson and the others discussed such problems as the decay of urban America brought about by the disappearance of jobs in poor neighborhoods, the crime that results, and other major social problems the nation now faces. Asked whether these meetings would be regularized, a White House aide noted that "they should be," but it was unlikely to happen.

A week later, President Clinton travelled to Memphis to deliver an impassioned speech about violence and the disintegration of moral life in urban America. He also spoke of the breakdown of families, the rise of illegitimacy and child abandonment by fathers. Emphasizing the need for work as an organizer of life, the President declared: "I do not believe we can repair the basic fabric of society until people who are willing to work have work."

In the speech, the President called Wilson's award winning book The Truly Disadvantaged "stunning" and noted the important arguments it makes chronicling "in breathtaking terms how the inner cities of our country have crumbled as work has disappeared." Wilson elaborated on these themes and the increased racial tension in America in a speech to the COSSA Annual Meeting on November 15 in Washington, D.C.

## WILSON DISCUSSES RACIAL TENSIONS IN URBAN AMERICA *MA*

At the COSSA meeting Wilson discussed the increasing racial tensions in American cities, focusing particularly on the large role unemployment plays in producing this problem.

Wilson argued that it is often forgotten that racial antagonisms are products of social, political, economic, historical, and demographic situations, and that to understand increases or decreases in tensions, one needs to comprehend the situations that produce them.

He identified several factors that enhance urban troubles: white flight from the central city, an increase in the percentage of minority populations, and an overall decrease in urban population leading to cities that are poorer, have more minorities, and a declining tax base. According to Wilson, in the eyes of many "minorities symbolize the ugly urban city left behind."

Turning to the growing urban/suburban racial divide, Wilson cited 1990 census data showing that 68 percent of those in Chicago were minorities, while whites constituted 83 percent of the suburban population. The declining influence of American cities, he argued, is rooted with minorities being associated with the city and whites with the suburbs. Cuts in state and federal aid to cities have devastated human service provision and brought many cities to the brink of bankruptcy, he added. As cities are increasingly unable to cope with issues of crime, AIDS, and homelessness, cities are viewed as undesirable places to live.

As urban industrial jobs move to the suburbs, Wilson noted, lower income whites are unable to

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afford suburban housing and are left to compete with urban minorities for scarce jobs and resources. These whites feel trapped, he added, and tensions are exacerbated.

Wilson spoke of what he calls "the new urban poverty" -- poor, segregated neighborhoods with high numbers of adults either unemployed or out of the workforce. In some areas of Chicago, he said, only 1 in 3 adults are employed.

Citing research showing declining levels of social organization in areas of high unemployment, Wilson said that these areas lose values fostering the formal and informal networks that supervise and provide control and responsibility for the neighborhood. In contrast, Wilson noted, neighborhoods with employed lower-income residents are less likely to experience a breakdown of social organization than those with high rates of joblessness. He termed employment "an anchor" and said that joblessness increases crime, drugs, violence, and breakdown of the family.

According to Wilson, many do not understand the complexities of urban poverty and racial antagonism, making them susceptible to fall for simplistic views that focus on the individuals involved rather than the larger forces at work. During hard times, he said, people are more receptive to demagoguery that forces attention away from the real issues and turns people on each other. What is needed, Wilson said he told the president, is strong moral leadership to channel frustration in positive directions.

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## COSSA ANNUAL MEETING FEATURES DISCUSSIONS OF SCIENCE POLICY *MB*

In addition to Wilson's speech, the 1993 COSSA Annual Meeting brought together over 70 researchers and policymakers for broad discussions of federal science policy as it affects the social and behavioral sciences.

COSSA Executive Director Howard J. Silver noted the changes occurring in the nation's science policy under the Clinton administration, changes that Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) recently called a "revolution." The replacement of the national security rationale for federal support of science by economic competitiveness and national needs, as the basis for that support, creates new chances to extol the importance of the social, behavioral, and economic sciences, Silver noted.

### GREENWOOD OUTLINES OSTP PLANS

M.R.C. Greenwood, recently confirmed as Associate Director for Science at the White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) spoke of her commitment to enhance the role of the social and behavioral sciences at OSTP.

Greenwood told the gathering that she expects to appoint an OSTP Assistant Director for the social sciences early in 1994. She pledged an increased presence of social and behavioral scientists in a revitalized Federal Coordinating Council on Science, Engineering, and Technology (FCCSET) to be known as the National Science and Technology Council. The Clinton administration will soon announce a "recast" Presidential Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST), Greenwood said.

Greenwood said that the social and behavioral sciences can help achieve national goals through the development of knowledge, particularly in the areas of health care, where she cited preventive care and behavioral change, and the environment, where she cited the importance of anthropology and sociology.

Saying she wants to "turn national knowledge into national wealth," Greenwood spoke of the importance of connecting basic knowledge to arenas where it can help American competitiveness. She said that President Clinton wants to shift the split between civilian and military research and development, recently 60/40 favoring military, to



50/50 in a major effort to improve national competitiveness.

Aiming to reassure those who have been worried that the administration would favor research directly linked to economic competitiveness at the expense of basic research, Greenwood said that "foundational" (a new name for "basic") research will remain a major FCCSET concern.

Greenwood commented that for basic research, it is both "the best of times and the worst of times," expressing the administration's strong support for basic research in a time of severe budget constraints.

She expressed interest in having an OSTP subcommittee examine the health of the research infrastructure, commenting that under the aegis of reinventing government, progress could be made in tax laws and indirect costs that would free up resources for universities.

#### **NSF'S MARRETT CITES "UNTOLD OPPORTUNITIES" FOR SBE SCIENCES**

Cora B. Marrett, Assistant Director for the Social, Behavioral, and Economic (SBE) Sciences at the National Science Foundation (NSF) addressed the meeting on the role of these disciplines at the Foundation. Marrett spoke of "untold opportunities" for the social sciences to conduct research that will have an impact on the nation's needs.

Marrett cited three reasons for her optimism. First, the level of interest in science in general allows for the SBE sciences to play a role in shaping the vision of the future of science, she said. Second, according to Marrett, the issues of our day are about human beings and their social, political, and economic contexts. Third, she spoke of a high level of interest but a low level of understanding of the social sciences which she said provides an opportunity to clarify what is in the human realm.

Citing the numerous reports in recent years calling for a re-examination of the basis for federal support for science with an eye toward linking science to economic goals, Marrett said that the distinctions between the disciplines are irrelevant because the debate has been about science in a collective term. It does not benefit the cause of science to emphasize these differences, she opined.

Marrett urged a "cultivation of opportunity" both within the social sciences and with "sister

disciplines" in the physical, life, and engineering sciences. She cited commonalities between SBE and other sciences because they all look at patterns in a systematic manner.

Because the great issues of our day have at the heart of their concern the public welfare and enhancing the quality of life, and they can be approached in a systematic way, Marrett said that there is a strong need for the social sciences.

Marrett called for activism on the part of the SBE sciences, saying that if they did not step up to advocate their importance, no one else would do it for them. She urged leaders of disciplines not to be defensive, but to rather work together with other leaders in pursuit of common goals.

Addressing the concerns of the Senate NSF appropriations report (see *Update*, September 13) that called for a "transformation" of NSF research toward national goals, Marrett said that the language is "not unique" and recurs in other speeches or reports from science leaders. She said that criticism is a sign of interest in science on the part of policymakers, and part of why she sees exciting opportunities for science.

According to Marrett, when one strips away the rhetoric of the Senate report, one sees areas of shared concern between NSF and the Senate such as improved planning and assessment of NSF programs and the need to improve academic infrastructures. She said that the call for a 60/40 split between strategic and non-strategic research is close to the current ratio of NSF support. Marrett argued that all research has a strategic component, and that NSF is an agency committed to discovery and strategy is at the heart of these efforts. She concluded by saying that there are great differences in terminology, and that if scientists do not take the initiative to define these terms, others less receptive to research may do it for them.

#### **ELLWOOD ON ROLE OF RESEARCH IN POLICY**

David T. Ellwood, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at the Department of Health Human Services, discussed his involvement with the Clinton Administration's welfare reform efforts as an example of the role of social science in public policy. Saying "where you stand is where you sit," Ellwood discussed public policy formulation and implementation from his experience at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and from his



current role as co-chair of the president's working group on welfare reform.

Ellwood cited three components of analysis that the administration is using in its welfare efforts: research, values, and site visits. He said that research was "quite fundamental" in the evolution of the five administration themes on welfare reform: make work pay, greater child support enforcement, access to education and training, welfare should be transitional, and preventing welfare in the first place. Ellwood outlined some of the specific findings of research that have gone into the formulation of these premises.

The Assistant Secretary suggested three key elements needed for research to be incorporated into sound public policy. The first, he said, is that researchers "can't be afraid" to set out values. He contended he has been effective at influencing policy because he has stated what his beliefs and suggested how to implement them. According to Ellwood, one needs to cope with the issue of values to get into the policy world.

The second element, he said, is for researchers to anticipate what will become a major public policy issue. According to Ellwood, it is "critical that social science research has to be done ahead of time," adding that this also includes applied research. He said that by the time something happens it is too late for research to begin and that policymakers do not have the time to delve heavily into research because "there is just too much going on" in the policy process.

The final element for research to influence policy, according to Ellwood, is for research to address implementation and institutional change, saying one "needs to know how it [policy] gets to the street level." He argued that researchers need to know that the federal government can have a major effect on an issue, and that research needs to take a greater look at policy implementation.

As a way to incorporate researchers into the policy process, Ellwood said he intends to make considerable use of a federal policy that allows for researchers to come to an agency on loan from an academic institution.

The meeting also featured roundtable discussions of science policy by representatives of COSSA organizations and guests.

## HOUSE SCIENCE CHAIRMEN ASK SOCIAL IMPACT STUDY OF NEW TECHNOLOGY *MS*

Reps. George Brown (D-CA) and Rick Boucher (D-VA), chairmen, respectively, of the House Science, Space and Technology Committee and its Science subcommittee, have requested the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) to conduct a study of wireless communication technology and its impact on the applications for the planned national information infrastructure (NII).

A bill to extend the vision of a national information highway was introduced by Boucher (H.R. 1757) and passed the House on July 26 (see *Update*, August 9). It calls for the Office of Science and Technology Policy to develop plans which 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." Companion legislation in the Senate has languished and faces an uncertain future.

Brown and Boucher wrote in their request to OTA that "in order for NII to fulfill its promises many different existing information delivery infrastructures -- such as broadcasting, cable television, data communications networks, telephone wireline networks and wireless cellular networks -- will need to be molded into an integrated infrastructure." Without adequate attention to the issues of integration, the Congressmen note, the applications the NII will provide may not be accessible to all who need them. The NII is slated to carry voice, data, graphic, and video communications to homes, businesses, and schools and provide access to a diverse range of information from sources around the county and the world.

To address these issues, the legislators asked OTA to consider:

◆ What effects should convergence of wireline and wireless technologies and new industry alliances have on regulation of communication and information services?

◆ How can wireless technologies enhance the diversity of communication and information services available to the American people?



♦ What are the social privacy and security implications of ubiquitous wireless communications?, and

♦ What are the relevant federal policy options for ensuring that wireless technologies become an effective component of the NII?

Boucher noted that "Through this study, I am hopeful that we will identify and solve all of the issues associated with wireless technologies and thereby avoid serious problems down the road."

The Office of Technology Assessment was created in 1972 as an analytical arm of Congress to produce non-partisan responses to technical policy questions. Roger Herdman is the current Director, replacing Jack Gibbons who is now the President's Science Adviser and Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy.

## TWENTY YEARS OF MEASURING CRIME: OVERALL CRIME DOWN, BUT MORE MINORITY AND YOUNG VICTIMS <sup>HS</sup>

A Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) report, based on 20 years of the National Crime Victimization Survey, indicates that while overall crime has declined, violent crimes against minority and young people have increased to the point that in 1992 young minority males in central cities are violent crime victims at the highest rates the survey ever recorded.

The National Crime Victimization Survey asks a sample of Americans whether they are victims of rape, robbery, assault, burglary, personal and household larceny, and motor vehicle theft. More than 4.4 million interviews were conducted from 1973 to 1992. The survey does not measure homicide (a challenge for even the best survey researcher), kidnapping, or commercial crime. Murder rates (as measured by the Uniform Crime Reports) have increased by 8 percent over the 20 years. After peaking in 1980, a decline set in until 1988. After four years of escalation, in 1992 the homicide rate rose to its highest level since 1980.

According to the new report, "Highlights From 20 Years of Surveying Crime Victims," the number of overall criminal victimizations has dropped 6 percent since the survey began in 1973. From 1973 until the early 1980s the number of victimizations rose, but since 1982 there has been a decline in

overall crime. The steepest declines are in crime against property, such as household burglary and theft. Total victimizations for violent crime have increased by 24 percent during the past 20 years.

Among other highlights of the report: Handguns are used in about 10 percent of all violent crimes; Males are more likely to be victims of violence inflicted by strangers, whereas females are more likely to be hurt by family members and close associates; In robberies during which the offender threatened the victim before the attack, those victims who defended themselves were less likely to lose property but were more likely to be injured than victims who took no action; and Black male teenagers (ages 12-19) are more likely to be victims of violent crime than any other group of people.

Single copies of the report are available from the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, Box 6000, Rockville, MD 20850. Phone: (800) 732-3277.

## COSSA, RURAL SOCIOLOGISTS HOLD FORUM ON RURAL POVERTY <sup>MB</sup>

COSSA and the Rural Sociological Task Force on Persistent Rural Poverty co-sponsored the November 8 Congressional Colloquium on Rural Poverty, which sought to engage researchers and congressional staff in a dialogue on pressing rural issues.

Richard Hobbie, staff director of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources, spoke of the Clinton administration's proposed time-limiting of welfare, saying that many on Capitol Hill are wondering "what happens to the kids" when their family's welfare payments end. He spoke of the need to address long-term welfare, particularly in rural areas, and wondered if there would be different time-limit policies for urban and rural areas. Hobbie also questioned whether scarce federal resources and popular calls to reduce the budget deficit would prevent the federal government from supporting regional economic development.

Michael Wiseman, professor of public affairs, urban and regional planning and economic planning, and economics at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, discussed the need to find "the right window" to develop a plan to limit welfare, adding that there are few models on how this would affect rural areas. Wiseman echoed Hobbie's concern that



### WOMEN'S POLICY RESEARCH GROUP JOINS COSSA

The Institute for Women's Policy Research has announced it is joining the Consortium as a Contributor. COSSA looks forward to working with the Institute on issues of common concern.

little money exists for regional economic development, but stated that there are opportunities through the Job Training Partnership Act that can help rural areas.

Terri Nintemann, a member of the minority staff of the Senate Agriculture Committee, engaged in a dialogue on child nutrition education programs with Christine Olson, professor of nutritional sciences at Cornell University. Olson said the two main needs in an educational program are to change eating behavior and to provide the resources needed to make behavioral changes possible. Nintemann asked how to integrate educational programs into a curriculum, with Olson responding that her leadership of a Cornell effort in New York public schools showed that in elementary schools it should be infused into all subjects and into specialized subjects in later grades. She added that health teachers who integrate nutrition into sports and fitness are very effective. According to Olson, behavior changes can occur through linking a school's lunch program with what is taught in the classroom.

Gary Green, professor of rural sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, discussed his research on community development, particularly the Small Business Administration's (SBA) microloan program, which assists the poor in becoming self-employed. The program, usually administered by local non-profits, is supposed to provide business training and planning assistance. Green said that these programs have little success in rural areas, given the lack of entrepreneurial resources, such as technical information, in these areas. He said that rural banks tend to be very conservative in their lending practices and that most SBA assistance centers are in urban areas. He called for more research on ways of getting technical assistance to rural areas.

### "CHILLING EFFECT" GONE FOR SEXUAL BEHAVIOR RESEARCH *SP*

The "chilling effect" of the Bush Administration's prohibition of sexual behavior research at NIH (See *Update*, February 22) is dissipating as more federal research opportunities are becoming available. The Health and Human Services Department's Office of Population Affairs (OPA) is currently funding research on adolescent premarital sexual behavior, its consequences, adoption options for young unmarried mothers, parenting by teen mothers, and adolescent pregnancy services.

Specifically, the Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Programs at the OPA is interested in research addressing "the influence of family, peers, societal norms, the media and other social, demographic, economic and psychological factors on the postponement of adolescent premarital sexual relations; consequences of adolescent premarital sexual relations; influences on and effects of the adoption option for the unmarried adolescent mother and her baby; parenting behavior of the unmarried adolescent mother and its effects on the child; and evaluations of public and private strategies or interventions designed to deter adolescent premarital sexual relations, support families in character development and rearing of their children, or provide services to pregnant and parenting adolescents."

In FY 1994, the OPA expects to fund about seven grants that average \$150,000. Higher education institutions and private nonprofit and for-profit organizations are eligible for these grants. The deadline dates for applications are February 1, June 1, and October 1, 1994.

For further information, contact: Eugenia Eckard, Office of Population Affairs, Health and Human Services Department, Parklawn Bldg., 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857; (301) 594-4008.

### HISTORIC MEETING OF RESEARCHERS AND ACTIVISTS *SP*

In perhaps the first symposium of its kind, researchers, lesbian and gay activists, community leaders and organizational representatives recently met to discuss the use and abuse of social and behavioral science research in the battle for lesbian and gay civil rights. The American Psychological



Association (APA), along with the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the Human Rights Campaign Fund, organized the symposium where Gregory Herek, Ph.D., research psychologist from the University of California, Davis, was the speaker. A discussant panel including Wendy Baldwin, Ph.D., Acting Deputy Director for Extramural Research, and Stuart Michaels of the National Opinion Research Center responded to Herek's speech, and a full discussion with the audience concluded the event.

Herek's speech, entitled "Sex, Lies and Factoids: The Uses and Abuses of Scientific Research in Fighting for Lesbian and Gay Civil Rights," began with a definition of scientific terms including "validity," "reliability," "sampling," "population or universe." Herek emphasized the distinction between a "representative sample" and a "convenience sample," citing how the media and others often make the mistake of using convenience samples to generalize to the population as a whole. Herek stressed the need for scientific literacy, and said that it is important to understand the limitations of scientific inquiry.

Herek also warned against the use of "factoids," statements that are widely assumed to be correct because they are constantly repeated, but have no scientific basis in fact. Herek used the factoid, "10% of the U.S. population is gay" as an example. This statistic, derived from the Kinsey studies of the 1940's, is erroneous because the data is from a convenience sample, which can not be generalized to the whole population, and because what was being measured was homosexual behavior, not sexual orientation. Kinsey's study, Herek reports, was, nevertheless, important because it showed that homosexual behavior was more common than previously thought.

An overview of social science theory and empirical research concerning sexual orientation is articulated in an article by Herek entitled, Myths about Sexual Orientation: A Lawyer's Guide to Social Science Research, which was distributed to the audience. In this paper, Herek discusses eight common societal issues relating to lesbians, gay men, and homosexuality--1) the relationship of homosexuality to mental illness; 2) the psychological effects of stigma on lesbians and gay men; 3) the origins of sexual orientation and possibilities for changing it; 4) homosexuality and child molestation; 5) the effects of lesbians and gay parents and role models on children; 6) lesbian and gay male intimate relationships; 7) lesbian and gay people as

## EDUCATION RESEARCH GRANT AVAILABLE

KC/MB

The Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) is seeking applicants to conduct an independent evaluation of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Trial State Assessment for 1994. The deadline for applications is December 27. For more information, contact OERI at (202) 219-1761.

a minority group; 8) the effects of lesbian and gay people on organizational efficiency and moral.

### Comments on the Presentation

Baldwin and Michaels, members of the discussant panel, commented on Herek's presentation. Baldwin, largely agreeing with Herek, stated the need to separate issues of human rights and scientific inquiry. She said that data do often frame an issue, but that the data regarding homosexuality are not good, and that more data are needed, especially to answer questions on the impact of homosexuality on health. She recommended a broader research agenda for understanding homosexuality. Michaels agreed with Baldwin when he said that "we need to be careful about mixing politics and science." He also stated that "social context defines gayness," and warned advocates about getting into the numbers game.

Bill Bailey, of APA, concluded the symposium by leading a discussion of what a research agenda on sexual orientation might entail. Questions posed by the audience and panel included: What are the underlying variables for sexual orientation? Does it matter if homosexuality is a choice or predetermined genetically or a combination? How is sexuality developed? What are the determinants in the developmental process? How do children learn about sexuality? What is the nature of prejudice in this process? How do children develop tolerance? How is sexual behavior actually played out? What opportunities are there for research at NIH on homosexuality?

A second meeting is being planned for the near future as there was strong consensus that the symposium was helpful to advocates and researchers alike. Contact Bill Bailey, American Psychological Association, (202) 336-6062, for more information.



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