

# COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

Volume XIV, Number 11

June 19, 1995

## **NSF SOCIAL SCIENCE GIVEN SUPPORT; FUTURE OF SBE DIRECTORATE IN JEOPARDY**

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Future funding for the National Science Foundation's Social, Behavioral, and Economic Science Directorate cleared a hurdle before the House Basic Research Subcommittee on June 14. However as this issue of *Update* goes to press, COSSA has learned that there are strong indications that House Science Committee chair Bob Walker (R-PA) may move to eliminate the SBE Directorate as an organizational structure when NSF reauthorization comes before his panel on June 22.

Last week the Basic Research Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Steve Schiff (R-NM), approved legislation to reauthorize the Foundation for two years. Authorization bills establish overall limits for funding and often provide substantive directions to agencies. Appropriations committees make the decisions on how much each agency will have to spend in a particular year.

The Subcommittee agreed upon \$54 million in reduced future spending to conform with the guidelines set by the House Budget Resolution (see *Update*, May 22). Chairman Schiff took proportional reductions across all the NSF's research directorates. The SBE directorate lost \$3 million (2.2%) from its FY 1995 level of \$114 million. The losses for the six other directorates included in the research and related activities (R&RA) account ranged from 1.8 percent (Polar Programs) to 3.4 percent (Computer and Information Science). The total for R&RA in the authorization bill for FY 1996 is \$2.226 billion. Current FY 1995 funding is \$2.280 billion. President Clinton asked for \$2.454 billion in his budget released in February.

In his opening statement at the subcommittee markup, Schiff noted: "At this time, I am recommending that the Social, Behavioral, and Economic programs continue to receive support. However, I intend to ensure that research in these areas is truly fundamental and warrants Federal support." Schiff acknowledged the large volume of

mail he received from social, behavioral and economic scientists as well as others in the scientific community.

The reauthorization bill lasts for two years. In the second year, it does not include figures for each of the research directorates, but instead provides \$2.286 billion, a 2.7 percent increase over the FY 1996 total for research and related activities. The authorized level for the Education and Human Resources Directorate, for both years, is \$600 million, a \$6 million decrease from the FY 1995 level, but \$1 million above the President's request. The bill reduces the amount authorized for salaries and expenses by \$4 million from FY 1995 to 1996 and then keeps it level in the second year.

The total for NSF for FY 1996 would be \$3.126 billion; for FY 1997 \$3.171.4 billion. Current FY 1995 funding is \$3.395 billion (this includes the \$132 million in the recently vetoed rescission bill); President Clinton asked for \$3.336 billion in FY 1996.

During the markup, the GOP majority defeated attempts by the Democrats on the subcommittee to increase NSF's bottom line. Rep. Joe Barton (R-TX) withdrew his amendment to change the name of NSF to the National Science and Engineering Foundation after it was clear it would not pass.

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## Can the Directorate Survive?

The next step for the reauthorization bill is markup by the full House Science Committee scheduled for June 22, when a possible amendment may challenge the future existence of the SBE directorate. The Chairman, Rep. Robert Walker (R-PA), has suggested that he favors abolishing the directorate as an organizational structure and redistributing its programs to other parts of the Foundation.

The Directorate was created in 1991, by then-NSF Director Walter Massey, following the recommendation of a Task Force appointed by Mary Clutter, then Assistant Director for the Biological, Behavioral and Social Sciences Directorate. The Task Force was led by the Dean of Biological Sciences at the University of Minnesota, Pete Magee, and included a majority of biologists. The split from biology culminated a recognition by scientists of the growing importance of social, behavioral and economic research supported by NSF. The Task Force report also admitted that "the social, economics and psychological sciences need representation at the highest level of decision making in the Foundation through an Assistant Director."

The report further argued that through an Assistant Director "the needs and contributions of [these sciences] would thus be reflected increasingly in Foundation decisions and in the programs of other directorates that have in the past paid little attention to

these sciences." Finally, the report concluded that a separate directorate was "warranted by the size as well as the scientific significance of the fields."

In the past four years, SBE has played a significant role in ensuring these sciences are an integral part of the Foundation and U.S. science policy. The importance of having a social scientist, rather than a biologist, bringing the SBE perspective to internal NSF deliberations and representing these sciences to the external world, has made a significant difference.

## Appropriations: Less Money To Go Around

The same day as the House Science Committee markup of the authorization bill, the House HUD, VA, Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee will make its decisions concerning FY 1996 funding for NSF and the other agencies under its jurisdiction.

Subcommittee Chairman Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-CA) and his colleagues continue to face difficult decisions making tough choices among HUD, VA, NASA, NSF, EPA, FEMA and other small programs. They will do this with considerably less money to hand out than they had last year.

Also in the mix are pressures from the GOP leadership, authorizers who want more to say during the appropriations process, and competing interest groups. Rep. Walker, at the subcommittee markups of bills considered by the Science Committee, has stressed the desire to be "relevant" for appropriations. There are confirmed reports that House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-GA) has also met with the appropriations subcommittee chairs and stressed the importance of their appropriating within the parameters of the budget resolution. He also argued for protecting basic scientific research against major reductions, according to the reports.

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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 \$65; institutional subscriptions, \$130, overseas mail, \$130. 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

## HOUSE CUTS EXCHANGE PROGRAMS, MERGES AGENCIES *MB*

By a 222-192 vote on June 8, the House voted significant cuts in educational and cultural exchange programs and merged the U.S. Information Agency, the Agency for International Development, and the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency into the State Department. The measure, which authorizes foreign affairs programs for Fiscal Years 1996 and 1997, was opposed by President Clinton, who has promised to veto the bill.

The House authorized \$112 million for the Fulbright program for FY96 and \$88 million for the following year. A category known as "other exchanges" at USIA was authorized \$77 million and \$57 million for FY96 and 97 respectively. These final figures were lower than the original bill due to an amendment successfully sponsored by Rep. Donald Manzullo (R-IL) that further reduced exchange funding by \$20 million over two years. When the measure was before the House International Relations Committee, Manzullo tried unsuccessfully to eliminate exchange programs.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee is currently drafting the Senate version of the reauthorization bill. Committee chair Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC) has championed the agency consolidation, and has held hearings on the issue where Clinton administration officials opposed the idea. (see *Update*, April 24).

## SENATE HEARING LOOKS AT ACCURACY OF CONSUMER PRICE INDEX *MB*

A June 6 hearing held by the Senate Finance Committee saw agreement on the need to improve the accuracy of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as a measure of inflation. Panel chair Sen. Bob Packwood (R-OR) said that in a series of hearings his committee has learned that the CPI is overstated and will begin to explore options -- such as a national study panel or an internal reform effort within the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) -- to improve the indicator. Currently, BLS is in its second year of developing new surveys of market baskets of goods and services as well as improvements in collecting and processing

data for the CPI, with the goal of a revised CPI in 1998.

New York Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the committee's ranking Democrat, agreed with Packwood, adding that an accurate CPI is needed to faithfully execute laws that govern federal benefit programs such as Social Security. Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA) joined the chorus for reform by calling for an intellectually defensible revision, and not what he termed "an arbitrary political decision" made for philosophical reasons.

Michael Boskin, chair of the Council of Economic Advisers in the Bush Administration and currently a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institute, said that the flaws in the CPI are indicative of larger shortcomings in the federal statistical system. While in the White House, Boskin developed an initiative to improve the quality of federal economic data, an initiative he said that has lost momentum in the Clinton administration. Boskin said that the CPI is overstated by 1-2 percent, distorting the size of the economy. While cautioning against technical adjustments to the CPI "as a back-door method of public policy," he recommended that a blue-ribbon, bi-partisan panel develop short-term revisions to the measure. This, he said, should be coupled with increased resources for BLS to make long-term improvements to the data. In response to a Packwood question, Boskin said that such a panel could complete its work in a matter of months.

Introduced by Packwood as the "guru of gurus" on the subject, former COSSA Board of Directors member Zvi Griliches, Professor of Economics at Harvard University and Program Director of Productivity of Studies at the National Bureau of Economic Research, outlined his research findings for the panel. "Why isn't the CPI better? There are three related answers to this question. First, the economy is changing rapidly, and measuring such changes correctly is really hard. Second, the research base for improving measurement procedures is slim and underfunded, both inside the relevant agencies and in the academic community. Third, hardly anyone cares." In the face of the threats from the House Science Committee, Griliches made a passionate plea to the Senators to continue the National Science Foundation's support for economic research. (see *box on next page*)

### **GRILICHES ON THREATS TO SOCIAL SCIENCE AT NSF**

Harvard University economist Zvi Griliches before the Senate Finance Committee, June 6:

"I am also appalled by statements that are emanating from the other House implying that economics is a lower form of life, unworthy of support, and ready to be thrown out of the NSF mandate... almost all of the research on which today's discussion is based on, besides the in-house contributions of BLS, has been supported by the National Science Foundation. There is no other disinterested source of support for basic research on economic and social measurement issues out there.... I find it sad, therefore, that some members of Congress think that they are better off navigating the Ship of State blindly, without maps and without the desire to understand better the mechanics of propulsion or the force of the current facing them. There is no such thing as a free lunch in governing either. If we want to improve the functioning of our economic and social system, we must also invest in improving our basic understanding of how it actually works, and one of the most important prerequisites for that is to have accurate measurements of what is happening to it."

Janet Norwood, a former BLS Commissioner and a COSSA Board of Directors member and currently a Senior Fellow at the Urban Institute, called for more research before conclusions are reached about the CPI. "The assumption is that professional economists, public policy analysts, and the general public have clear knowledge that the CPI is too high, that they know precise the amount of that overstatement, and they know how exactly to improve that. I do not agree with that view. It is true that researchers have found examples of overstatement in individual components of the CPI, but I know of no comprehensive examination of all components, including those which may be understated." Regarding the indexing of Federal entitlement programs based on the CPI and its impact on the budget deficit, Norwood warned, "The Congress should not attempt to solve a political problem by legislating the level of a statistical index. I

can think of nothing that would be more damaging to the nation's statistical system."

Robert Pollack, Professor of Economics at the University of Washington, said that the CPI is inaccurate because of substitution and quality issues. He said that the question of the CPI's accuracy intersects with political issues such as taxation and intergenerational efficiency and equity. Contending that the credibility of the CPI depends on the perception that it is not being manipulated as a policy instrument, Pollack recommended separating the technical issues from the political issues as much as possible. He called for a panel of technical experts to examine the CPI led by either the National Academy of Sciences or the National Bureau of Economic Research.

Ellen Dulberger, Program Director for Strategy and Economic Analysis at IBM, told the panel that the upward bias in the CPI is primarily because technological changes affect the quality and introduction of new products in ways that are currently not adequately measured. She urged cooperative efforts between BLS, academia, and the business community. She cautioned against using a general measure of inflation such as the CPI to represent price changes of a particular program.

### **INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE LOOKS AT SOCIAL SCIENCE AND AIDS**

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The Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academy of Sciences recently held a two-day forum, "Workshop on the Social and Behavioral Science Base for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Intervention." As reported in the May 8 *Update*, the Office of AIDS Research (OAR) at the National Institutes of Health has asked the IOM to review NIH's AIDS programs. Former COSSA staff member Judy Auerbach is leading OAR's efforts in this area.

The workshop was designed "to address the status of basic social and behavioral research with potential application to HIV/AIDS prevention and intervention." An IOM study panel on the issue is chaired by Arthur Kleinman, Professor of Medical and Anthropology and Psychiatry, and Chairman, Department of Social Medicine at Harvard Medical

School. Patricia Mrazek is the Study Director.

Others appointed to the committee include:

**Baruch Fischhoff**, Professor of Social and Decision Sciences and of Engineering and Public Policy, Department of Social and Decision Sciences, Carnegie Mellon University; **Susan Folkman**, Co-Director, Center for AIDS Prevention Studies, and Professor of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco; **Samuel Friedman**, Senior Principal Investigator, National Development and Research Institute in New York; **Mindy Thompson Fullilove**, Associate Professor of Clinical Psychiatry and Public Health, Columbia University, and Research Psychiatrist, New York State Psychiatric Institute Community Research Group; **Edward O. Laumann**, George Herbert Mead Distinguished Service Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago; **Shirley Lindenbaum**, Professor of Anthropology and Executive Officer, Department of Anthropology, The Graduate Center, City University of New York; **Steve A. Rabin**, Executive Vice President and Managing Director, Porter-Novelli, Washington, D.C.; and **Sten H. Vermund**, Professor and Chairman, Department of Epidemiology, School of Public Health, and Professor and Director, Division of Geographic Medicine, and Professor of Pediatrics, School of Medicine, University of Alabama at Birmingham. The committee met in February to design the workshop.

The June 12-13 workshop allowed the participants, who included approximately sixty researchers and advocates, the opportunity to discuss and review theoretical and methodological approaches, in addition to determining where gaps exist in current prevention and intervention models. Participants were also given the opportunity to highlight the priorities for social and behavioral research with respect to HIV/AIDS prevention and intervention. Kleinman characterized the forum as "relating science to a major epidemic of our time" that warrants the use of "everything that science has to offer."

The event included discussion of a number of issues: (1) HIV/AIDS Prevention: Models of Individual Behavior in Social and Cultural Contexts; (2) HIV/AIDS Prevention: Models of Social Science Based Intervention; (3) Social and Behavioral Components of HIV/AIDS Medically-Based Prevention Trials; (4) The Conceptual Construction of Community: Relevance to HIV/AIDS Prevention;

## EDUCATION ASSESSMENT PUBLISHED *MB*

The U.S. Department of Education has released a *National Assessment of College Student Learning: Identifying College Graduates' Essential Skills in Writing, Speech and Listening, and Critical Thinking*. The purpose of the study was to identify and reach a consensus on specific communication and thinking skills college graduates need to adequately function in today's economy. For more information, contact the National Center for Education Statistics at (202) 219-1913.

(5) Public Communications and the Media: Evaluation Methodologies; (6) The Integration and Evaluation of Theoretical Models for HIV/AIDS Prevention and; (7) The Social Science Formulation of HIV/AIDS Policy.

Proceedings of the forum will be published and disseminated by OAR in the fall. For further information contact Patricia Mrazek of the Institute of Medicine at (202) 334-1734.

## IOM REPORT EXAMINES UNINTENDED PREGNANCIES *MB*

According to a new report by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academy of Sciences, nearly 60 percent of all pregnancies in the United States are unintended - a higher percentage than in several other Western democracies. Although the percentages of births from unintended pregnancies had been decreasing during the 1970s, the trend reversed during the 1980s; the proportion of births that were unintended -- either mistimed or unwanted altogether -- began to rise. That trend appears to have continued into the 1990s.

In the study, *The Best Intentions: Unintended Pregnancy and the Well-Being of Children and Families*, an IOM committee found that the consequences of unintended pregnancy are serious, imposing major burdens on children and families. In particular, unintended pregnancy forms the basis of three of the most bitterly debated social problems in

the country: teenage pregnancy, childbearing out of wedlock, and abortion.

The study panel recommended a multi-faceted, public-private national campaign that focuses on education and access to contraceptives. The campaign would draw on the experience of other successful efforts to address public health problems -- such as those for reducing smoking and drunk driving and increasing the use of seatbelts. It would focus on the following goals:

- Improve knowledge;
- Increase access to contraceptives;

- Address the role of feelings, attitudes, and motivation in contraceptive use;
- Develop and evaluate local programs; and
- Stimulate research, including examining the cultural, economic, social, biological, and psychological forces that result in unintended pregnancies

Leon Eisenberg of the Harvard Medical School was chair of the committee. For more information on the report, contact the IOM at 334-3313.

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## **SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

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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.

### **National Institute of Justice**

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the research agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, is inviting researchers to submit proposals to study and evaluate programs established by the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Enacted as Title IV of the Crime Act of 1994, VAWA provided funding for a variety of programs in enforcement and prosecution and to meet the needs of women victimized by violence.

NIJ is seeking proposals in three areas:

- A nationwide evaluation of the implementation of Chapter 2, Subtitle A of VAWA. This section of the Act created a major initiative to support the States and tribal governments in enforcement and prosecution.
- Evaluations of individual VAWA programs established at the State, local, or tribal government level in seven "purpose areas." In addition to training law enforcement officers, these include development, implementation, or expansion of enforcement and prosecution units, of more effective policies and services for police and prosecution, of data collection and communications, of victim services, of anti-stalking programs, and of programs that address the needs of Indian tribes.
- Evaluations of and research in programs and policies in other aspects of violence against women and family violence not covered by the other two areas.

**Contact:** National Criminal Justice Reference Service  
Box 6000  
Rockville, MD 20849-6000  
Phone: 800-851-3420

**Deadline:** August 1, 1995

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**SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT:  
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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.

**Fulbright Scholars Program****• 1996-97 Fulbright Visiting Scholar-In-Residence Program**

U.S. Colleges and universities are invited to submit proposals for a Fulbright grant to host a visiting lecturer from abroad. The purpose of the program is to initiate or develop international programs at colleges and universities by using a scholar-in-residence to internationalize the curriculum, set up global studies or area-specific programs, or otherwise expand contacts of students and faculty with other cultures. Preference is given to proposals in the humanities or social sciences, although other fields focusing on international issues will be considered. Liberal arts colleges, community and junior colleges, and institutions devoted primarily to undergraduate education are strongly encouraged to apply, as are institutions serving minority populations.

**• 1996-97 European Union Scholar-In-Residence Program**

Special program to bring officials or academics from the European Union to campuses where there are programs in international affairs, business, political science, or other fields in which an EU official-in-residence would be beneficial. Grants are for one semester or the full academic year. The resident official/scholar will give guest lectures and conduct seminars as appropriate, consult with faculty and students on research, engage in collaborative study, and provide outreach to neighboring institutions and the local community.

**• 1996-97 Fulbright International Education Administrators Programs**

Short-term group seminar programs in Germany, Japan, and Korea for administrators involved in international education. Topics include educational, cultural, and political issues.

**• 1996-97 Fulbright German Studies Seminar**

Four-week seminar in Bonn, Berlin, and parts of eastern and western Germany on Germany society today, including the political, social, and economic institutions of Germany and their recent history and current development. Applications are invited from professors of German, history, political sciences, and other humanities and social sciences related to the seminar topics.

**• 1996-97 NATO Advanced Research Fellowships and Institutional Grants**

Individual fellowships in political/military studies are to promote research leading to publication on political, security and economic issues directly affecting the health of the NATO alliance. Research in one or more of the European member countries, with time spent at NATO headquarters, is strongly encouraged. Institutional grants in political/military studies are offered to departments of political science, international affairs, institutes, centers for security studies, and research teams on issues mentioned above.

**Deadlines:** November 1, 1995, except for NATO programs, which have a January 1, 1996 deadline.

**Contact:** Applications materials are available from the Council for the International Exchange of Scholars, 3007 Tilden Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20008-30009. phone: (202) 686-7878

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Society for the Scientific Study of Religion  
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