

# Consortium of Social Science Associations

## COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

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### **CONGRESS AIMS TO ADOPT SPENDING BILLS, ADJOURN EARLY** *HS*

Congress returned to Washington the day after Labor Day and quickly plunged into its work on Fiscal Year 1998 spending bills. The goal is to approve all the appropriations bills by the October 1 start of the new year, avoiding either the adoption of a Continuing Resolution to keep the government open, or another government shutdown.

Eight of the thirteen bills have passed both Houses and await action by conference committees to reconcile differences. These include Agriculture, VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies, Defense, Transportation, Foreign Operations, Legislation, Energy and Water, and Military Construction. The conferences are still at the staff discussion stage, as final decisions about allocations (how much money each bill may spend), and some sticky problems await resolution. On the VA, HUD bill, which provides funding for the National Science Foundation, there is a complication caused by the non-passage of legislation to change certain housing programs that would free up more dollars for appropriations. On Defense, there is still discussion on how to reconcile the House desire to cut basic research funds with the Senate and administration's decision to increase this funding. Foreign Operations is bogged down over disputes concerning use of U.S. dollars for overseas groups who provide or promote abortions.

As *Update* goes to press, the Senate has just passed and the House is trying to finish the massive Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill. Conservatives in the House have offered numerous amendments to shift funding. Most have been defeated. However, it appears that the House, and perhaps the Senate, will prohibit spending on one of the administration's major education initiatives, the development of a voluntary National Testing program.

The Commerce, Justice, and State bill has passed the Senate, but still needs House approval. The dispute over using sampling in the 2000 Census remains. An amendment to overturn the appropriations committee's ban on sampling is expected. The Interior bill, has passed the House, but still needs Senate approval. The future of the National Endowment for the Arts, which the House has voted to close down, remains a major issue. Treasury, Postal Service, General Government has passed the Senate, but also still needs House approval. The DC appropriations bill has started to move within the guidelines laid down in the budget agreement.

Besides appropriations, there are a number of bills that could move to the floor and final action in the next two months. However, given the expressed desire of the congressional leadership to adjourn the session by the end of October, how many of them will actually get attention is difficult to determine. NSF reauthorization, extension of agricultural research programs, the new juvenile crime legislation, reauthorization of the higher education act, State department reauthorization, including the merging of USIA into State, restructuring job training programs, and a number of others, are all at various stages of the legislative process. They may have to wait until the second session for final enactment. Delays may also occur because of Democratic threats to prevent

#### **INSIDE UPDATE...**

- Agriculture Research Bill Emerges from Senate Committee
- APSA Panel Looks at Politics of Census
- NICHD Releases Study on Adolescent Health
- Cancer Institute Restructures
- Senate Hears Experts on Women's Health
- NIH Hearing Highlights Behavioral and Social Science Role in HIV
- Paper Calls
- COSSA Adds Three Universities

action on non-appropriations measures because of their unhappiness with the Republican insistence on continuing the probes of last year's Louisiana Senate election and a California congressional race.

## **AGRICULTURE RESEARCH BILL EMERGES FROM SENATE COMMITTEE** *HS*

The Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, chaired by Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN), has approved a bill to reauthorize and reform agricultural research, extension and education programs. The legislation, S. 1150, provides new resources, an emphasis on multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary research that addresses national and multi-state problems, increased stakeholder input, and greater use of scientific peer review to ensure accountability.

The bill reauthorizes current programs for five years. The National Research Initiative Competitive Grants program receives an authorization level of \$500 million. This continues to reflect the optimism of the National Academy of Sciences when it called for the creation of such a program. Unfortunately, the appropriations for the program continue to stagnate at around \$100 million.

The Fund for Rural America, created in last

### CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

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Public Affairs:	Michael Buckley
Government Affairs:	Angela L. Sharpe
Administrative Officer:	Karen Carrion

President:	Eleanor Maccoby
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year's farm legislation, is renewed through 2002. A mandatory spending program, it allocates \$100 million per year divided between rural development programs (\$50 million) and research (\$33 million), with the balance available for either at the discretion of the Agriculture Secretary.

A new Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems provides mandatory funding of \$780 million for five years (\$100 in FY 1998 and \$170 million per year thereafter through 2002) for competitively awarded research funding to address critical emerging issues related to future food production, environmental protection, and farm income. Its priorities for the first year include human nutrition research, food safety, and natural resource management. Future year priorities will be determined by the National Research, Extension, and Education Advisory Board. The Board also receives the authority to conduct annual reviews of the total research, extension, and education portfolio with increased input from stakeholders.

The Committee extends peer review to studies conducted by the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), federal formula fund activities of land grant institutions, and to Special Grants. The panel is quick to point out that "it does not intend to restrict the authority of the Appropriations Committee to make special grants." However, Lugar's committee wants these grants peer reviewed, although the scrutiny would be conducted by a panel arranged by the grantee.

The bill also includes a provision requiring the Secretary to "contract with an expert in research assessment and performance evaluation to develop and propose practical guidelines for measuring the performance of federally funded agricultural research, extension and education programs." According to the Committee, "despite the Government Performance and Results Act," Congress wants a "clearly defined set of guidelines that can be used to evaluate performance." University scientists working with Department of Agriculture officials should develop these measures. In addition, the bill asks the National Academy of Sciences to review the ARS's performance, as well as the broader role of federal funding across the entire area of agriculture research, extension and education.

Given the congressional desire to end the first session of the 105th Congress by the end of October, how much further this bill moves in the process toward enactment is unclear.

## APSA PANEL LOOKS AT POLITICS OF CENSUS *mb*

An American Political Science Association panel, *The Politics of Census 2000*, brought leading policy and statistical leaders to APSA's recent annual meeting.

The moderator, Rep. Stephen Horn (R-CA), a political scientist who chairs the House Subcommittee on Government Management, Information, and Technology, gave an overview of his panel's work on proposed changes to federal racial and ethnic classifications and addressed the congressional climate toward the 2000 Census.

Noting the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) proposal to allow Americans for the first time to choose more than one racial category in identifying themselves on census and other federal forms, Horn said that his panel will examine questions of tabulation and policy implications of such a change. (see *Update*, July 14).

Horn said that only a small number of Representatives have begun to seriously focus on issues related to the Census Bureau's proposed use of sampling in the 2000 survey, and that predicting the outcome of a floor vote on the topic would be difficult. Not all Members, he commented, accept the Bureau's contention that traditional enumeration methods are no longer effective. Moreover, he said, some in Congress are uncomfortable with what they perceive as turning congressional apportionment issues over to a small number of statisticians.

David McMillen, a Democratic staff member of the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee, gave a strong defense of sampling, and put the current debates in historical perspective. The Census, McMillen said, has long connected politicians and statisticians, "in a way that neither side has ever been completely comfortable." This tension echoes in current congressional debates, he

added, noting that questions of accuracy, methodology, and content have plagued the Census since its inception.

McMillen explained that the advent of the punch card machine came from the Census Bureau, a move that was controversial at the time for fears of adding error into the process. When the 1970 census used mail-back forms, it was a dramatic change that is now considered a given facet of the process, he added. Social and economic change have constantly forced the Bureau to keep changing, he argued. The Census Bureau, McMillen concluded, is under "conflicting pressures." One on hand, they have been charged with doing their job well in an era of scarce resources. However, he said, they must produce something that is "politically defensible."

Richard Rockwell, of the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, gave the perspective of the statistical community on the proposed use of sampling. Rockwell said that the Census Bureau has "exhausted every avenue of advice" in formulating the "most scientifically sound" census ever. He added, though, that the agency's sales pitch to Congress "hasn't been as successful." Rockwell gave an overview of the challenges facing the Bureau. The undercount is growing, and it disproportionately affects those in rural and urban areas, and the young, old, and minorities. Participation in the census — and the ability of enumerators to track down non-respondents — is declining because of a number of factors: alienation from and hostility to government, families with more than one parent in the workforce, increased immigration among non-English speaking populations, gated communities, and an increase in junk mail. Saying that "many of the uninformed critics of sampling have sat in your classroom," Rockwell urged social scientists teaching undergraduates to better explain how scientific sampling is the underpinning of much knowledge in a wide range of disciplines.

Addressing the race and ethnicity issue was Robert B. Hill of Morgan State University. Hill, chair of the Census Bureau's Advisory Committee on the African American Population, supported the OMB proposal. Revisions to federal classifications should be "a political vehicle and not a social

vehicle" and should respond to legislative and statutory needs, he argued. The "check more than one" option is a "fair compromise" over creating a "multi-racial" category, Hill said. His panel and three other Bureau advisory committees opposed a multi-racial option. He added that he is concerned about how those who opt for more than one classification will be tabulated. Citing three "principles to govern tabulation," Hill called for historical comparability, compliance with statutory requirements, and accuracy in naming racial and ethnic groups.

### **NICHD STUDY LOOKS AT INFLUENCES ON HEALTH AND BEHAVIOR** AS

The first results of the congressionally-mandated National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) have been released by the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Add Health is a survey designed to measure the effects of family, peer group, school, neighborhood, religious institutions, and community influences on behaviors that promote good health. Health risks such as tobacco use, sexual activity, sun exposure, and drug and alcohol use are also measured by the study, conducted by a multidisciplinary team of scientists led by C. Richard Udry of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

A two phase study; the first phase consisted of roughly 90,000 students from grades seven through 12 at 145 schools around the U.S. The students answered brief questionnaires to provide information about themselves and other aspects of their lives, including their health, friendships, self-esteem, and expectations for the future. Parental support for the in-school survey was strong. In order for students to participate in the study, parents had to give their permission through procedures approved by each school. Some parents even volunteered their time to help administer the questionnaire.

In the second phase, the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago trained about 500 interviewers to conduct a 90 minute computer-administered interview of approximately

20,000 students and their parents in their homes. Written consent was obtained from both the students and the parents. The interview covered each adolescent's health and health behaviors, family life, peer relationships, goals and aspirations, and related topics. Parents were interviewed regarding the adolescent's health, family relationships, family income and health insurance, and parents' own health behavior.

Students were interviewed a second time, one year later in their homes. Consequently, it is possible to measure directly the influence of their experiences at one time on their later behaviors, and the consequences that such behaviors have on later outcomes.

The independent measurement of contextual influences on adolescent health was one of the hallmarks of the study. Participating school administrators completed a short questionnaire regarding school characteristics, that along with the in-school student questionnaires, will provide comprehensive information on the school environment. Additionally, investigators used independent sources to compile a rich data set measuring health-related aspects of the local neighborhood and community. These include measures of poverty, housing quality, attendance at churches or other religious institutions, unemployment rates, access to health services, public policies and expenditures.

The study collected information about peer groups directly from peers, and information about home life from parents and siblings. The large sample of siblings, twins, and adopted youth allows an examination of how health behaviors vary within families, and how the same family may influence its children in different ways.

Large samples of Cuban, Puerto Rican, Chinese, and African American youth participated to ensure adequate samples of minority populations. In addition, disabled youth were included to provide national data on the health and well-being of disabled adolescents.

### Data Available to Researchers

The data from the Add Health Study are available to researchers in two forms -- public-use data sets and restricted-access contractual data sets. The first release of public data, which includes Wave I in-school questionnaire data, in-home parent and adolescent interview data, and the Add Health Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, is available now. A second release of public use data, scheduled for the winter of 1998, will also include Wave II in-home adolescent interviews, the community contextual data, and the school friendship network data.

The public-use data sets are available from: Sociometrics Corporation, 170 State Street, Suite 260, Los Altos, CA 94022-2812, Tel: 650/949-3282; Fax: 650/-949-3299; Email: Socio@social.com.

For further information regarding contractual data sets, contact: Jo Jones, Carolina Population Center 123 West Franklin Street, University Square East, Chapel Hill, NC 27516-3997. Additional information is available on The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health: <http://www.cpc.unc.edu/addhealth>.

### CANCER INSTITUTE RESTRUCTURES

The National Cancer Institute (NCI), in an effort to strengthen its cancer control and prevention programs, and the administration of its extramural research programs, recently announced the abolishment of the Division of Cancer Prevention and Control. Two new extramural divisions were created: the Division of Cancer Control and Population Science (DCCPS) and the Division of Cancer Prevention (DCP).

Barbara K. Rimer will become the first director of the DCCPS. She is currently a professor and director of Duke University's Cancer Prevention, Detection and Control Research Program and has served as the chair of the National Cancer Advisory Board for three years.

The DCCPS will be the focus for NCI-sponsored research programs aimed at studies in populations,

behavior, surveillance, special populations, outcomes, and other aspects of cancer control. The division will be created from cancer control programs currently in NCI's Division of Cancer Prevention and Control and the extramural portions of NCI's Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics. The Office of Cancer Survivorship, created last fall, will also be a part of the new division.

"This new division also emphasizes our commitment to population science, behavior, surveillance, and cancer control," said NCI Director Richard Klausner in announcing the reorganization. He noted that Rimer, "a natural leader and an articulate spokesperson for the National Cancer Program," has achieved national and international prominence for her research on behavioral aspects of cancer control, particularly on issues of risk communication, decision making, early detection, and screening. "Her willingness to take on this important new leadership role is, I believe, a powerful statement regarding the revitalization of the NCI," he added. Rimer will continue her research at NCI, where she will establish an intramural research program within NCI's Division of Clinical Sciences.

Peter Greenwald will be the acting director of the new Division of Cancer Prevention. The division will include the Cancer Prevention Research Program, with its Diet and Cancer and Chemoprevention Branches, and the Early Detection and Community Oncology Program with its Early Detection, Preventive Oncology, and Community Oncology Branches.

The new prevention division will bring added visibility, prominence, and strength to national and international prevention research sponsored by NCI, Klausner said. Additionally the division will help plan for the implementation of the recommendations of the Cancer Prevention Program Review Group, a committee of outside experts.

## SENATE HEARING HEARS <sup>AS</sup> EXPERTS ON WOMEN'S HEALTH

"Over the past several years we have become increasingly concerned about women's health," said Chairman of the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee Senator James M. Jeffords (R-VT) at a recent hearing. The session attempted to improve "our understanding of how information relating to women's health care is disseminated to women and their providers," according to the chairman.

The hearing included witnesses with expertise in a variety of areas including: encouraging health behaviors during pregnancy, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and unplanned pregnancies, prevention of heart disease and stroke, and early detection of breast cancer and genetic counseling for women at risk for developing breast cancer. "In addition to developing our understanding of gender-based health issues, we should also be cognizant of whether people are able to make that information useful. Ultimately, the question we should ask is whether people are healthier," Jeffords said.

"Although great strides have been made in women health research, there still are enormous gaps in knowledge," said Phyllis Greenberger, Executive Director of the Society for the Advancement of Women's Health Research. "Because of these gaps and efforts to inform the public about the latest scientific progress, the public is confused about ways to improve women's health. Increased funding for both biomedical and behavioral research, with an emphasis on women's health, would go a long way toward addressing the scientific areas in which we are seeking answers," Greenberger continued. "We have a threefold problem: 1) We need more research. 2) The media provides contradictory and often confusing coverage, and 3) we truly do not yet know the best ways to change behavior," she said. She urged the support of biomedical [behavioral] research with a "priority on research to determine the best approaches to change behaviors that put women's health at risk."

Noting that the National Institutes on Health, through the Office of Research on Women's Health, has made women's health research a priority, Judith LaRosa noted on behalf of the American Heart

Association that while the research supported has "included behavioral aspects of disease prevention and intervention, . . . there is much we have yet to learn. We must direct attention to understanding how human beings obtain and act upon the information and incorporate it into their lives. This is as pressing an issue as many of the basic research questions since research is not of much value if it cannot be passed on to those in need," she said. LaRosa also highlighted that among the American Heart Association's recommendations is support for "behavioral research that enables us to understand how individuals of different sexes, racial and ethnic groups, and ages adopt health lifestyles."

Women "have a tremendous need for information that will help them make the best health care decisions for themselves and their families," said Judith L. Lichtman, President of the Women's Legal Defense Fund. "Managed care plans and providers are clearly positioned as a principal source of health information for a large proportion of American women," Lichtman said. "What is not clear is whether managed care will fulfill its potential for educating women on the range of issues they confront. Some managed care plans currently have policies that can impair, rather than encourage, women's access to the most up-to-date, useful health information," she noted.

## NIH FORUM HIGHLIGHTS BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE ROLE IN HIV <sup>AS</sup>

"While most scientists and the public realize the need for behavioral and social prevention and treatment approaches to substance abuse and AIDS, the necessity for basic behavioral and social research is often unrecognized. Yet, findings from basic research can indeed inform and help refine our interventions," declared Director of the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Norman B. Anderson at the recent mini-symposium *Substance Abuse and AIDS: Research from the Behavioral and Social Sciences*.

The event was sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Behavioral and Social Sciences Interest Group and the NIH AIDS Interest

Group, in collaboration with the NIH Office on AIDS Research (OAR), the NIH Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR), and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). It highlighted the contributions of social and behavioral research to addressing the issues surrounding HIV risk related to substance use and abuse -- including its link to sexual risk -- and the behavioral and social sciences research underpinning effective interventions. Topics included discussions in the areas of epidemiological and survey research; neurophysiology, neuroendocrinology, and animal models; ethnographic research; and randomized trials.

"The OBSSR has actively encouraged NIH staff to work to ensure that the larger NIH community is aware of some of the ground-breaking discoveries in the behavioral and social sciences," said Anderson, noting that the agenda topics "traverse almost every level of analysis, and make salient the fact our attack on substance abuse and AIDS must be multifaceted." "There are questions that can be addressed by ethnography that we cannot address by neurophysiology, and vice versa," he concluded.

OAR Director William Paul stressed the important intersection of substance abuse and HIV both domestically and internationally. Paul announced that the OAR "expects to continue the Prevention Science Initiative in FY 1998, where this issue will continue to be addressed." NIDA Director Alan Leshner agreed: "It is virtually impossible, based on our current knowledge, to talk about HIV/AIDS without talking about drug abuse." "The two problems are inextricably linked. The behavioral and social science fields have enormous roles to play in helping the broader community understand these complex issues," stressed Leshner.

Paul Farmer, a physician and an anthropologist at Harvard Medical School, discussed the role of ethnographic methods in AIDS research. Farmer emphasized that there are a lot of things researchers will not know without doing ethnographic work. Farmer stressed that researchers have not learned enough how to link behavior with large scale forces. He further emphasized that while ethnography is a "complicated process of participant observation," it is hard to get NIH funding for this type of research.

Sherry Deren, Director of the Institute for AIDS Research at National Development and Research

Institute, Inc., noted that a review of 36 studies by two NIDA researchers found that outreach has been effective in reducing injection drug use and HIV risks including injection frequency, sharing of needles, indirect sharing and unprotected sex. Deren stressed that more research is need on the outreach process.

## PAPER CALLS *MB*

The National Academy of Science's Board on Children, Youth, and Families is accepting applications, due November 15, 1997, for its *Frontiers of Research on Children, Youth, and Families* 1998 Symposium. The program will highlight recent policy-relevant research by young and mid-career researchers to encourage more sustained interactions between researchers and policymakers and foster development of young scholars working at the intersection of science and public policy. The Board will select six scientists to prepare papers for presentation. For more information, contact <http://www2.nas.edu/bocyf> or call (202) 334-2998.

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) announces its conference, *Women's Progress: Perspectives on the Past, Blueprint for the Future*, to be held in Washington, D.C. June 12-13 1998. IWPR welcomes papers that focus on policies that affect women, on policy-relevant research on women's lives, and on the intersection between policy making and research. Proposals are due October 17, 1997. For more information, contact <http://www.iwpr.org> or call (202) 785-5100.

## COSSA ADDS THREE UNIVERSITIES *MB*

COSSA is pleased to announce that the University of California, Davis, the University of Maryland, and the University of Pennsylvania have joined the Consortium as Contributors. Davis is a new addition; Maryland and Pennsylvania are returning members.

We are looking forward to working with three universities on issues of common concern.

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Consortium of Social Science Associations

1522 K Street, N.W., Suite 836, Washington, D.C. 20005

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