

**CHAIRMAN AND WITNESSES SUPPORT  
"LONG FORM" IN 2000 CENSUS** *DH*

The census long form questionnaire received almost unanimous support from a long list of panelists at a recent hearing of the Subcommittee of the Census of the House Committee on Government Reform and Oversight. Subcommittee Chairman Dan Miller (R-FL) noted there is absolutely "no question that there will be a long form in the 2000 census."

The May 21 hearing was convened to discuss the short and long questionnaires in the upcoming census. Most of the testimony, however, related to the usefulness of the long form questionnaire, the data it provides, and the importance of its survival. Panelists who testified before the Subcommittee included Representative Constance Morella (R-MD), sponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 246 in support of continuing the long form in the census; Representative Charles Canady (R-FL), sponsor of a bill (HR 2081) that would provide for the enumeration of family caregivers; James Hubbard, American Legion; Wen-Yen Chen, Formosan Association for Public Affairs; David Clawson, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials; Marlo Lewis Jr., Competitive Enterprise Institute; David Crowe, National Association of Home Builders, representing the Coalition to Preserve Census Data; and Helen Hatab Samhan, Arab American Institute.

All of the panelists, except Lewis, lauded the long form and the data it provides. Samhan said that "collecting demographic and socio-economic data on the American population is essential to understanding who we are as a nation and where we are headed." Crowe noted that "census data is the foundation of sound decisionmaking in virtually every sector of our economy." Lewis argued against the continuation of the long form, claiming that it breeds public distrust of the federal government and "very likely" is driving down the census mail-in response rate.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE HEARS NSF SBE  
ACHIEVEMENTS AND PLANS** *HS*

Sparked by an upbeat Assistant Director, the Advisory Committee to the National Science Foundation's Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE) heard about current successes and an ambitious future agenda at its two day meeting held May 20 and 21. It also discussed expanding infrastructure opportunities, allocating funds among programs in the Social, Behavioral and Economic Research Division, and an upcoming review of the Science Resources Studies Division.

Assistant Director Bennett Bertenthal asserted that the directorate had positioned itself well to take advantage of the three key thematic agendas — Knowledge and Distributed Intelligence (KDI), Life in Earth's Environments (LEE), and Educating for the Future (EFF) — driving NSF's activities the past few years and into the future. He relished the success of social and behavioral scientists in the Learning and Intelligent Systems part of the KDI initiative, whose initial competition last year led to funding of many projects with significant SBE input. The competition this year in the Knowledge Networking component should produce more support for SBE based projects, Bertenthal suggested. In the future, SBE participation in KDI, the Assistant Director declared, could include research on the ethical, legal, social and economic impacts of information technology, basic research in cognitive neuroscience particularly with

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respect to "normal functioning" individuals, new and improved surveys with samples of 1 million respondents, integrated web based data centers, and international digital libraries.

The recently announced Urban Research Initiative component of LEE (see story, p. 3) offers another opportunity for SBE scientists. Bertenthal also projects opportunities in the LEE area to include: developing new knowledge and tools to integrate and analyze spatially referenced data through improved Geographic Information Science; integrating research on sustainable eco-systems with international partners and social and economic analyses; and multidisciplinary research on human origins.

In the EFF area, SBE has and will have "a pivotal role" to play, according to Bertenthal. Multidisciplinary research on the development of human capital will continue. Research on human learning and educationally relevant technologies, part of a proposal in the President's FY 1999 budget for NSF and the Department of Education, will provide more impetus for SBE scientist participation. Providing international experiences for undergraduates and graduate students, and gathering new and improved data on the Science and Technology workforce are also part of the directorate's agenda in this area.

Bertenthal also announced that he was "making progress" in convincing NSF to expand the pie for

#### CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), an advocacy organization for federal support for the social and behavioral sciences, was founded in 1981 and stands alone in Washington in representing the full range of social and behavioral sciences. *UPDATE* is published 22 times per year. 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.

infrastructure needs in the SBE sciences. He asked the advisory committee to think big, "a Manhattan Project" for these sciences, as he seeks enhanced funds from NSF for databases, archives, equipment, and other requirements to pursue social, behavioral, and economic science inquiries into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Looking at the current portfolio, SBER Division Director William Butz cited a number of examples of interesting and exciting activities. He mentioned the increasing use of laboratory experiments by SBE scientists. Butz demonstrated how Vernon Smith of the University of Arizona and Charles Plott of Cal Tech, using human-computer simulations, have examined the behavior of individuals and markets and how they lead to speculative bubbles followed by crashes. He also noted that research by linguists on acoustical phonetics has provided a detailed understanding of the physical nature of the sounds of speech. This knowledge has allowed engineers and programmers to succeed in developing systems to recognize continuous speech. Finally, Butz discussed the sample survey as a key tool of social research. He used the General Social Survey as an example of how SBER supported data archives combined with the Internet provide professors and students the ability to find in one place compilations of information from many sources.

#### Program Budgets' Allocations Explained

Following the completion of the appropriations process each year, NSF receives a single figure for its Research and Related Activities. The Foundation then divides this up among the six research directorates according to its proposed budgets (with alterations for increases or reductions Congress may make in the total figure). Each of the directorates then provides the funds for its divisions, who in turn provide the dollars to the individual programs.

This year, decisions made by SBER Division Director William Butz have raised some eyebrows. For the 17 programs within his division he provided increases of close to \$500,000 to four — Archaeology, Economics, Human Cognition and Perception, and Law and Social Sciences — and an increase of \$10,000 to the 13 others. Butz explained his actions to the Advisory Committee.

Butz noted that he used criteria that included, most importantly, whether there is scientific energy and upheaval in the field. "Are there substantial pockets of fundamental innovation in theory? data? methods?" He and deputy division director Hilleary Everist made these determinations by reading proposal jackets, program statistics on grant success rates and sizes, extensive reading and conversing on SBER fields, talking with deans and provosts "who must make similar judgments," and consulting with other NSF division directors. He told the Advisory Committee that these are "tough decisions," but that the four fields which received the large increases were "on fire." Archaeology, Economics, and Human Perception and Cognition, have new tools that scientists are utilizing to make important new discoveries. Law and Social Sciences received its reward because much of its research has immediacy for societal goals.

Butz commented that these four were special programs for this year. In previous years, other programs received end-of-the year upward adjustments to their budgets based on similar assessments. Next year may be different, Butz suggested, although he did not shy away from repeating the selective distribution of funds.

#### Academy to Assess Data Division

The Division of Science Resources Studies (SRS), led by Jeanne Griffith, is responsible for the production and dissemination of high quality data and analyses related to science, engineering and technology. To accomplish this purpose it carries out surveys, acquires data from other federal agencies, analyzes these data, and produces reports, issue briefs, and related data products. Because the science and technology system is undergoing major changes, SRS decided it was time to review its overall portfolio of data collection activities and seek guidance on how best to meet current and future information needs.

The National Academy of Sciences, through its Office of Scientific and Engineering Personnel and its Committee on National Statistics, will undertake a two year review of SRS assessing the relevance of current data collection and acquisition, considering options and priorities for revising or enhancing these

activities, and suggesting cost-effective changes, so that the data can better inform the debate on science and technology policy issues. Janice Madden, Vice Provost for Graduate Education at the University of Pennsylvania, will chair the committee, and the report is expected in April 1999.

#### NSF AND OERI HEADS CONFIRMED *HS*

Before leaving Washington for the Memorial Day recess, the Senate confirmed Rita Colwell as the next Director of the National Science Foundation. The University of Maryland Microbiologist will take over the post when current Director Neal Lane moves to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

The Senate also confirmed C. Kent McGuire as the new Assistant Secretary for the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) at the U.S. Department of Education. McGuire replaces Sharon Robinson who resigned in December 1996.

#### NSF URBAN RESEARCH INITIATIVE *HS*

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is soliciting applications for research on "The Dynamics of Change in Urban Environments." As part of the Life in Earth's Environments theme, the Urban Communities emphasis will be a multi-year activity encompassing a series of research opportunities "designed to examine the functional interrelations among physical, biological, social and engineering systems and processes" This is the first of a number of opportunities in this area.

The research proposal for this solicitation must fit into a context that addresses the complex interactions among the built, human, and natural environments of urban areas. Examples of research in the Human/Built intersection include: equity, accessibility, valuation, life cycle issues, impact of housing, transportation, and information infrastructure. Examples in the Built/Natural intersection include: urban ecology, environmental

technology, deterioration, tradeoffs. The Natural/Human intersection would include research focusing on: diversity, access to nature, resource management and development. The intersection of all three environments would include studies of: optimization, systems analysis, full scale valuation, decision studies, political research, disaster and hazard prediction, response and mitigation, and education to inform the citizenry.

Potential investigators are encouraged to consult the final report of an NSF sponsored workshop held in July, 1997 to develop a broad urban research agenda. It can be found at: <http://www.nsf.gov/cgi-bin/getpub?sbe981>. In addition, researchers are encouraged to contact the relevant NSF Urban Working Group Representatives. NSF expects to make approximately 10-20 awards totaling \$6 million. Proposals are due on July 17, 1998.

Questions by email are encouraged. Contacts: Frank Scioli ([fscioli@nsf.gov](mailto:fscioli@nsf.gov), 703/306-1761), Chair of Working Group, SBE representative; Daniel Burke ([dburke@nsf.gov](mailto:dburke@nsf.gov) 703/306-1602) Education and Human Resources. Other contacts and the full announcement can be found at: <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf9898>.

### NSF ADVOCACY GROUP PRESENTS EXHIBITION OF RESEARCH

The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF), an ad-hoc advocacy group promoting enhanced funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF), held its 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Exhibition and Reception on May 20.

The event featured 30 exhibits demonstrating the broad range of NSF supported research and education projects. Universities and scientific societies provided the exhibits and brought scientists, graduate, and undergraduate students to Washington to display their results and discuss them with members of Congress and their staffs.

Nine members of Congress and close to 100 staff members attended, as well as NSF Director Neal

Lane and Deputy Director Joe Bordogna. The legislators included: Rep. Vern Ehlers (R-MI), Vice Chair of the House Science Committee; Rep. George Brown (D-CA), Ranking Democrat on the Science Committee; Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, (D-TX) and Rep. Lois Capps (D-CA), members of the Science Committee; and Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ) and Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), members of the VA, HUD, Independent Agencies appropriations Subcommittee. Others members present were Rep. Ed Pease (R-IN), Rep. Marc Souder (R-IN), and Rep. John Sununu (R-NH).

The social and behavioral sciences were represented by exhibits on *The Political Geography of Democracy* (American Political Science Association), *Understanding and Fostering Spatial Competence* (American Psychological Association), *International Social Survey Program and General Social Survey* (American Sociological Association), and *Linguistic Phonetics: Organizing the Sounds of Spoken Language* (Linguistic Society of America).

### ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE IN THE U.S.

A recently released study, *The Economic Costs of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in the United States*, by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) reports an overall cost to the nation of alcohol and drug abuse for 1992 of \$245.7 billion — \$148.0 billion for alcohol abuse and alcoholism; and 97.7 billion for drug abuse and dependence. This estimate represents \$965 for every individual living in the United States in 1992. Previous estimates of these costs were published in 1990 based on 1985 data. The new figures for 1992 — the most recent year for which sufficient data were available — are 42 percent higher for alcohol and 50 percent higher for drugs than the estimates reported in the earlier study, after accounting for the increases for inflation and population growth.

According to the report, more than 80 percent of the increase in estimated costs of alcohol abuse can be attributed to changes in data and methodology employed in the new study, suggesting that the

previous study significantly underestimated the costs of alcohol abuse. Conversely, "over 80 percent of the increase in estimated costs of drug abuse is due to real changes in drug-related emergency room episodes, criminal justice expenditures, and service delivery patterns."

"This study confirms the enormous damage done to society by alcohol- and drug-related problems," said NIAAA Director Enoch Gordis. "The magnitude of these costs underscores the need to find better ways to prevent and treat these disorders." NIDA Director Alan Leshner emphasized the "serious medical and social consequences" of substance abuse and addiction, warranting "a strong, consistent, and continuous investment in research prevention and treatment."

According to the report, the drug abuse estimate is for illicit drugs and other drugs taken for non-medical purposes. "Therefore a drug like nicotine is not included in this estimate. The number would be substantially higher if tobacco products were included."

The study further projects the estimated costs of alcohol and drug abuse for 1995 based on inflation and population growth between 1992 and 1995. The total estimated cost of alcohol and drug abuse for 1995 is \$276.4 billion, of which \$166.5 billion is for alcohol abuse and 109.8 billion is for drug abuse.

"Much of the economic burden of alcohol and drug problems falls on the population that does not abuse alcohol and drugs," said Henrick Harwood of The Lewin Group, the study's author. According to the study, 45 percent of the costs of alcohol abuse is borne by those who abuse alcohol and members of their households; 39 percent by federal, state, and local governments; 10 percent by private insurance; and 6 percent by victims of abusers. For drug abuse, 44 percent of the cost of burden is carried by those who abuse drugs and members of their households, 46 percent by governments, 3 percent by private insurance, and 7 percent by victims of drug abusers.

### Topics for Future Research

The study's authors note that "this entire report can be read as an agenda for future research on the

epidemiology, etiology, and economic impacts of alcohol and drug abuse disorders." Topics that "continue to pose major challenges, as much because their apparent magnitude as because of their complexity," include: 1) Medical consequences of alcohol and drug disorders, 2) Health benefits of moderate alcohol consumption, 3) The impact of alcohol and drug abuse on earnings, 4) "Willingness-to-pay" analyses, 5) The impact of employee alcohol and drug problems on new employers, and 6) The impact of employee alcohol and drug problems on new employers.

### COSSA SEMINAR FOCUSES ON GROWING UP POOR

DH

The May 15 COSSA congressional breakfast seminar, *Growing Up Poor: The Effects on Achievement, Parenting and Child Care*, brought three leading social scientists to Washington to discuss their research and its implications for policy makers. The seminar was attended by congressional staffers, federal agency officials, and interest group representatives.

After a brief welcome by COSSA Executive Director Howard Silver, Greg Duncan, Professor of Education and Social Policy and faculty associate in the Institute for Policy Research at Northwestern University, spoke about the role played by parental income in promoting child and adult achievement; the role of timing of economic deprivation during childhood, especially poverty very early in life; and how welfare reform might affect children's poverty and development.

Duncan indicated that there are several reasons why financial resources or income "might make a difference for child development." Financial resources, according to Duncan, enable families to buy higher quality learning environments and higher quality day care, to move to better neighborhoods, and to enroll their children in private schools or higher education. Financial resources reduce the stress in relationships between parents and the relationships between the parents and children.

Family income, according to Duncan, matters most for children in early childhood — while making little difference for children after early childhood — for three reasons. First, mental ability, personality, and physical development are most malleable in early years. Second, the family is the most important context for a child's development. Third, family income is often lowest in a child's early years. He noted that periods of deep poverty early in childhood "appear to have the biggest effect on a child's potential development."

In conclusion, therefore, Duncan declared that policy decisions should focus "first and foremost on situations producing deep poverty for young children." He also suggested that families with very young children be exempt from the work requirements and sanctions and time limits of welfare reform. Duncan recommended a reconsideration of other policies that might be restricted to families with young children, including: refundable tax credits and child allowances. Finally, he suggested the adoption of a system in which families can borrow money on future anticipated earnings to provide for their children today.

### Parenting Stress

Vonnie McLoyd, Professor of Psychology and research scientist at the Center for Human Growth and Development at the University of Michigan, followed Duncan and focused her discussion on how economic disadvantage affects parenting behavior and how this, in turn, influences children's development. McLoyd told the audience that socioeconomic disadvantage and negative life events (or "stressors") have "significant implications for parenting." Mothers who experience high levels of stressors, according to McLoyd, "perceive parenting as more difficult and less satisfying . . . [and] tend to be more critical towards the child, less affectionate, less responsive, and spend less time with the child."

McLoyd discussed how parenting behavior contributes to the negative effects of economic disadvantage on children's development. She summarized research showing that the differences in cognitive and academic functioning between "poor and non-poor children" is partly the result of the "academic and language stimulation that children receive at home." This interaction includes: reading

and talking to the child; teaching the child the alphabet, numbers, and colors; and having toys in the home that assist in learning. In fact, she noted that the amount of emotional support and cognitive stimulation in a child's home environment accounts for one-third to one-half of the disadvantages in verbal, reading and math skills among persistently poor children in elementary and middle school.

Research, McLoyd said, suggests the need for concrete social services that ease the stress (or stressors) of poverty. In addition, the research justifies increased efforts to shore up the services component of the Head Start Program. There is evidence, according to McLoyd, that "Head Start and other preschool education programs make a difference in terms of poor children's academic readiness [and have] positive effects on children's socioeconomic functioning." She recommended that more resources be devoted to job training programs that teach parents to hold better jobs.

### Child Care Dilemma

Aletha Huston, Priscilla Pond Flawn Regents Professor of Child Development and Research Associate in the Center for Population Research at the University of Texas at Austin, concluded the seminar by focusing on child care issues. Huston noted that child care is an issue that is "high on the public agenda these days." Child care is particularly important for low-income mothers who have to find work because of welfare reform. Huston pointed out the policy dilemma that surrounds child care: the ability to provide more children with child care while at the same time improving care. Huston stated "there is a real danger that a lot of it [child care] will not be very good quality."

Child care, according to Huston, is based on two goals: 1) as an adjunct to women's work force participation and 2) as early education to promote cognitive and social development. Over the last several years, child care programs have seen increased government funding, especially federal, state, and local subsidies for people with low incomes. Huston noted that in 1996 the federal government passed legislation that "combined funding streams into one program of block grants to states." This system, she said, made the child care programs more efficient, but removed the entitlement feature.

She added, however, that "more federal money will be needed" to provide more child care and ensure the high quality of that care.

Huston then focused on the overall quality of child care programs. This is, she said, "especially important for children of low income families for all the reasons that you've heard from the other two speakers." She referred to a child care staffing study that shows that the quality of care is directly related to wages, turnover, and benefits. She also noted that the child care profession suffers from three serious problems: low wages, lack of adequate training, and a high staff turnover rate of 31 percent.

She concluded that there should be more quality requirements for child care programs mandated by the federal government. She also called for increased evaluation of the child care programs. She said that "we don't know very much about what's happening as a result of these subsidies . . . we really need to be conducting some research."

## WELFARE REFORM FILM DISCUSSED

Roger Weisberg, award-winning producer of the 1994 documentary, "MAKING WELFARE WORK," expressed his "indebtedness to the social scientific community," at the May 28<sup>th</sup> preview of his new film, "ENDING WELFARE AS WE KNOW IT," which premieres, Friday, June 5 at 9 p.m. on PBS.

The new documentary takes an "in-depth and very human look at the actual impact of welfare reform on real families." It follows six welfare mothers over the course of a year as they struggle to comply with new work requirements, find reliable child care and transportation, battle drug addiction and depression, confront domestic violence, and try to make ends meet in the new era of welfare reform.

A panel of researchers, Anna Kondratas, Urban Institute; John Foster-Bey, Jr, Urban Institute; Jack Meyer, Economic and Social Research Institute; LaDonna Pavetti, Mathematica Policy Research; and Freya Sonenstein, Urban Institute; and moderator Derek McGinty, CBS News and WETA-TV correspondent, discussed the documentary following the preview.

Weisberg, responding to questions and expressions of frustration from the audience regarding the decision-making of the individuals selected for the documentary, emphasized that the film "in no way endorses the old system." The purpose of the documentary, said Weisberg, "is to show the struggles of those for whom the welfare system had become a long-termed safety net."

Sonenstein addressed the audience's concern about the inadequacies of the new welfare law and noted it did not incorporate the "things needed to help people make choices." Echoing Sonenstein, Foster-Bey further emphasized "an awful lot of data was not incorporated into the legislation, given the barriers [these individuals] have to overcome to become productive." Pavetti said that "we don't have the answers for the problems," citing mental health and learning disabilities as two situations faced by some individuals on welfare. "Behavioral change is very difficult and we are just starting to struggle with it." She added, "We have not accepted that there are people for which there is no place in the labor market who will remain in low wage jobs."

Pavetti suggested that the film's absence of race [there are no people of color in the film] "helps you to focus on the issues, because the issues are the same for a certain type of people." Meyer noted that the people depicted in the film need major interventions that cannot be provided by nonprofit groups such as Goodwill Industries, despite some apparent successes.

Responding to the question regarding the impact of the research on policy decisions, "given that the political climate is highly resistant to empirical research," Meyer emphasized that results have to be translated. He claimed that we are being forced to choose between the conservatives who believe an individuals' circumstances are the result of "irresponsible behavior" and the liberals who believe welfare recipients are victims of circumstance. Sonenstein emphasized that the "packaging of findings is critical."

Kondratas concluded the event by stating that without Weisberg's work, the discussion that followed the film would not have been listened to by many people in the room.

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