

**APPROPRIATORS START PROCESS
WITHOUT WAITING FOR BUDGET
RESOLUTION** *AS*

During the week of June 8, both the House and Senate appropriations committees began the process of deciding the FY 1999 budgets of federal agencies and programs. Neither panel seemed very interested in the outcome of the FY 1999 budget resolution which is supposed to provide guidelines to the appropriators. The Senate passed its budget resolution on April 2. The House did not do so until June 5 after forcing Budget Committee chair Representative John Kasich (R-OH) to scale back his ambitious plans to shrink government spending significantly beyond the balanced budget agreement of 1997. It appears that the differences between the two budget resolutions may preclude any formal agreement, although if one occurs, the appropriators may need to readjust some of their numbers.

**NSF Increased by 6.3 Percent
by Senate Committee**

The Senate VA, HUD, Independent Agencies appropriations subcommittee, chaired by Senator Christopher 'Kit' Bond (R-MO), marked up its bill on June 9. In his opening statement, the Chairman made clear that of the many agencies under the panel's jurisdiction his priorities were programs funding veterans and elderly housing.

Nonetheless, the Subcommittee recommended that the National Science Foundation (NSF) receive \$3.644 billion in FY 1999. This is an increase of \$215 million or 6.3 percent above the FY 1998 level. Yet, it falls short of the \$3.773 billion or 10 percent increase requested by the President and advocated by many of the scientific societies and universities.

For Research and Related Activities (R&RA), the Subcommittee allocated \$2.725 billion, an increase of \$179 million or 7 percent over last year's level, but \$122 million short of the President's request. The Subcommittee, as is the prerogative of appropriators,

rearranged some of the requested levels within the R&RA account. They added: \$10 million for plant genome research (a favorite of the chairman); \$24 million for arctic logistics support; \$6 million for information technology centers; \$12 million for additional Science and Technology Centers in applied molecular biology; and \$2 million to enhance undergraduate support at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). These would be offset by unspecified reductions in other areas.

The Subcommittee provided the budget request of \$683 million for the Education and Human Resources Directorate, an increase of \$50 million over last year. In this area, the panel also expressed preferences: an extra \$10 million for the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCOR), a favorite of small state Senators, such as subcommittee member Senator Conrad Burns (R-MT); an extra \$10 million for informal science education, for science museums and exhibitions; and an additional \$6 million for HBCU undergraduate support.

On June 11, the full Senate appropriations committee ratified the Subcommittee's actions. In the committee report to accompany the legislation, Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI) inserted language praising NSF's Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate. The House is expected to mark up its version of this appropriations bill on June 18. The Senate bill may reach the Senate floor before the break for July 4th that begins on June 26.

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AGRICULTURE RESEARCH BILL FINALLY EMERGES FROM CONGRESS: NEW PROGRAMS MAY GO UNFUNDED *HS*

After months of haggling over crop insurance programs and whether legal immigrants can receive food stamps, the bill reauthorizing the research programs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture is on its way to President Clinton for his signature. He is expected to sign the bill into law.

The bill creates a new mandatory spending account: the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems. Authorized at \$120 million a year for the next five years, the Initiative provides competitively awarded research funding to address "critical emerging issues related to future food production, environmental protection, or farm income." During the first year, priorities include: food genome; food safety; new and alternative uses and production of agricultural commodities and products; agricultural technology; natural resource management including precision agriculture; and farm efficiency and profitability. The last area includes "rural business enterprises." The bill asks the Secretary of Agriculture to "establish one or more institutes," virtual in nature, to conduct the research. The new mandatory spending in these areas may allow some reprogramming among the components of the National Research Initiative Competitive Grants program (NRI), according to a Department official. The question remains whether the new program will

be funded by the appropriators (see below).

Congress created the Fund for Rural America in 1996 to provide additional ways of supporting research and rural development by transferring funds "not otherwise appropriated" from the Treasury to this account. The new legislation extends the Fund to provide \$60 million a year for the next five years, including funding for FY 1998 (omitted in the original legislation). A third of the funds go to research, a third to rural development, with the final third at the Secretary's discretion. This too is in danger of going unfunded in FY 1999 as the Republican Congress is wary of providing a source of funds to be distributed at the administration's discretion, especially in an election year.

The reauthorization extends the agriculture research, education and extension programs, including the NRI, formula grants under the Hatch Act, and others. The bill applies peer/merit review to all grants, seeming to draw a distinction between peer and merit review. All research grants funded by the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service "on a competitive basis" must undergo "scientific peer review." In addition, a review panel, at least once every five years, "shall verify . . . that each research activity of the Department . . . has scientific merit and relevance." This also applies to Special Grants; those used by Congress to provide funds to projects they deem meritorious. For all education and extension grants, "merit review" must occur, but the review process can be established by the recipient of these funds.

In addition, the new legislation directs the Secretary "to conduct a performance evaluation to determine whether federally funded agricultural research, extension, and education programs result in public goods that have national or multi-state significance." An entity or entities "with expertise in research assessment and performance" will provide the Secretary with practical guidelines for measuring performance. This provision was advocated by COSSA and the Council for Food and Agricultural Resources and Economics in testimony on this legislation in 1997.

The bill also emphasizes the integration of cooperative research and education and multi-state,

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multi-institutional, and multidisciplinary efforts in research, education, and extension. Among the high priority research, education, and extension areas is "financial risk management" for agricultural producers and marketers of any agricultural commodity. Finally, the bill adds the "impact of multinational trade" as a topic for evaluation by the rural policy research centers, since Congress, according to the conference reports "recognize[s] the growing importance of international markets on the farm and agricultural sectors; the environment; rural families, households and economies and consumers, food and nutrition."

Senate Agriculture Appropriations Panel Allocates FY 1999 Funding

The Senate Agricultural and Rural Development appropriations subcommittee, chaired by Senator Thad Cochran (R-MS), made its allocations for FY 1999 spending on June 9. Its decisions included not funding the research portion of the Fund for Rural America, but appropriating \$120 million for the first year of the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems. The full appropriations committee accepted the subcommittee's recommendations on June 11.

The National Research Initiative received funding of \$97.2 million, the same as last year and considerably below the President's request of \$130 million. In addition, \$10 million of that funding is reserved for the Department's Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCOR) to fulfill the Committee's determination "to see that quality research and enhanced human resources development in the agricultural and related sciences be a nationwide commitment." Special grants totaled \$49.2 million, slightly below last year's level of \$51.5 million; however, once the House special grants are added later the final figure is likely to be above last year's number.

The Senate panel rejected the administration's attempt to reduce formula payments under the Hatch Act by almost \$15 million from last year. Instead, for the first time in many years, funding for this program was increased, getting a boost of over \$5 million to \$173.8 million, to "reaffirm the Committee's recognition of the centrality of these programs to the national support system for agriculture."

The Economic Research Service (ERS) saw its appropriation reduced by \$18.5 million to \$53.1 million. The reduction comes from a one year enhancement that provided funds to ERS to conduct food stamp, child nutrition, and WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) program evaluations. The administration asked that these funds return to the Food and Nutrition Service and the Senate panel agreed. While returning ERS to its FY 1997 level, the Committee encouraged ERS to continue to publish a number of reports it had hoped to curtail. The panel also asked ERS to study the Nation's fuel markets over the next decade and to develop recommendations for further expanding the use of ethanol and other biofuels.

The Senate Committee recommended \$104 million for the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) in FY 1999. This is about \$14 million below the FY 1998 level and \$3.2 million below the administration's request. The Census of Agriculture, recently transferred to NASS from the Commerce Department, received \$23.6 million. The reduction from last year reflects a decrease for the Census. The Committee did provide the \$600,000 requested in the budget for the agricultural economics and land ownership survey and the aquaculture statistics census.

The Committee was also frustrated with the administration's proposals to eliminate many ongoing agricultural production research projects funded by the Agricultural Research Service. It deemed the research proposal of the Department "less than adequate, unacceptable, and would not stand." Needless to say, the panel reinstated these programs in its FY 1999 recommendations.

The House began its process with a mark up by its agriculture appropriations subcommittee on June 10. The full House appropriations committee will consider the recommendations on June 16.

CONGRESS LOOKS AT AGING *AS*

On June 8, the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging held a hearing on *The Graying of Nations III: Productive Aging Around the World*. The hearing, said Senator Charles Grassley (R-IA), chair

of the Special Committee, was designed to look at aging and the quality of life and "global implications of increasing life expectancy." Grassely said, "people are living longer because they are healthy." Noting that the request for the hearing came from Senator John Glenn (D-OH), he further emphasized that many nations, including the United States, "are facing a dramatic demographic shift."

"The longevity revolution is occurring globally due to increasing life expectancy and declining fertility rates," said Glenn in his opening statement. He emphasized that America is "seeing an increase both in the total number of older people and in the proportion of older persons in our societies . . . By the year 2030, with the retirement of the Baby Boom generation, the number of Americans 65 and older will more than double . . . To fully celebrate our increased life expectancy, we must give people the opportunity to be healthy and productive in their later years," said Glenn.

"No doubt advances in medicine, science and technology, as well as health promotion and disease prevention, employment, volunteer and continuing education, will continue to enable Americans to make a difference in communities across the nation," said U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Aging Jeanette C. Takamura testifying before the Committee. Takamura told the panel that the Administration on Aging (AoA) recognizes "that longevity has become a way of life in America, and that its ramifications will permeate and touch every aspect of our society — from its work force to its transportation systems, to our health care systems and our families." Because of this recognition, the AoA is "reorienting [its] work . . . to address the current and emergent needs of multi-generational cohorts of older Americans in the next century."

"Active Aging"

"Active aging," testified National Institute (NIA) on Aging Director Richard Hodes, "is a critical issue not only in the United States, but internationally as well." Hodes discussed current NIA research efforts aimed at the prevention of disability and current and future international collaborative efforts to promote active aging through cross-national research. He told the Committee that the "good news is that we are

accumulating the tools to treat, delay, or prevent the conditions that interfere with active aging and constitute a terrible burden of pain and suffering. . . We are rapidly expanding our knowledge about the biological, behavioral and social changes that occur with advancing age."

In his written testimony, Hodes highlighted NIA's efforts, through its research, to help "define optimal needs regarding exercise, diet and diet supplements in older persons." Research, said Hodes, "not only indicates which behaviors, strategies and medications are effective in preventing disease and disability. It also indicates which are not."

Need for More Research

Stressing that demographic research has "shown that at least 1.4 million fewer older persons are disabled than would have been if the disability rates of the elderly had not improved since 1982," Hodes emphasized that we "do not fully understand the forces that have contributed to the decline in disability rates or whether these will continue."

Hodes concluded his testimony by noting that this is an "exciting time for aging research . . . Continued collaborative basic and applied biomedical and behavioral research will likely contribute to a better understanding of the aging process, disability trends, more effective prevention strategies and ways to foster less disability at older ages. Cross-national research could also shed light on which life styles and public policies contribute most significantly to healthy aging."

Longevity Revolution

According to Francoise Forette, Director of the International Longevity Center-France, France, "as well as all western countries, is facing an extraordinary Longevity Revolution." In 2025, he said, "800 million persons will be over 65 worldwide."

Forette said the main determinants of quality of life over 60 are: "satisfactory health status, financial autonomy, family links, positive image, social role and personal responsibility." He emphasized that the tools of prevention for "pathological aging" are "already in our hands." Echoing Hodes, he said that

the declining incidence of most conditions leading to a disability being observed in both Europe and the United States is "due to the fact that most of the age-associated invalidating diseases are accessible to prevention."

Concluding his testimony, Forette stated that a strong political will is needed to "promote the idea that healthy and productive aging is a challenge we can take up in our developed countries. . . We need to change our own attitude toward aging in order to drastically eradicate a sort of racial prejudice against the frail, handicapped, demented, incontinent, invalid elderly."

CENSUS MONITORING BOARD HOLDS FIRST MEETING

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The Census Monitoring Board kicked off its inaugural meeting June 3. Monitoring board Co-Chairmen Kenneth Blackwell (Republican) and Tony Coehlo (Democrat) opened the meeting with introductory remarks and were followed by opening remarks from the remaining six members. The meeting offered few fireworks, but it did see an admonition from one of its co-chairs. Blackwell told members of the board that they have a lot of work to do, but little time to do it. Coehlo agreed with Blackwell and said that in order for the monitoring board to do its work properly, they would have to ensure access to all relevant information. The board was created last fall in the appropriations bill as a result of a compromise between proponents and opponents of the use of statistical sampling in the upcoming census. Its primary duty is to oversee the Census Bureau's preparations for and operations during the upcoming decennial census.

After being officially sworn in, the board agreed to set aside \$1 million of its \$4 million budget for hiring joint staff. Board members also agreed to divide the remaining budget equally between the members appointed by President Clinton and those appointed by the Republican congressional leadership.

The members appointed by Clinton are Coehlo (co-chair), former U.S. Congressman from California

and now a private business consultant; Gilbert Casellas, former chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and now a lawyer with the firm McConnell Valdes LLP; Everett Ehrlich, former under secretary for economic affairs at the Department of Commerce and now president of ESC Company; and Lorraine Green, former deputy director of the Office of Personnel Management and now vice president for human resources at Amtrak.

The members appointed by Republican Congressional leaders are: Blackwell (co-chair), former deputy under secretary in the Department of Housing and Urban Development and now state treasurer in Ohio; David Murray, director of research for the Statistical Assessment Service (STATS), Mark Neuman, former director of legislative and intergovernmental affairs at the Commerce Department's Bureau of Export Administration and now an international trade and government affairs advisor for a leading specialty retailer; and Joe Whitley, former associate attorney general at the Department of Justice and now a partner at the Atlanta-based law firm of Alston & Bird.

COSSA COSPONSORS BRIEFING ON THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY

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On June 8, COSSA, along with the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COFAFS) and the Population Resource Center (PRC), sponsored a congressional briefing on the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is the United States Census Bureau's new program to meet the nation's growing data needs at the federal, state, and local levels. The briefing featured Nancy Gordon, Associate Director of the Census Bureau; Cynthia Taeuber and Mary Ellen Davis, also from the Census Bureau; Joseph Salvo, Director of the Population Division of the City of New York; and Paul Voss, Professor in the Department of Rural Sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. COSSA Executive Director Howard Silver served as the moderator and offered the welcoming remarks.

The New Survey

The ACS has been developed by the Census Bureau to provide annually updated demographic, social, economic, and housing. While the long-form collects information every ten years, the ACS will provide the same type of information every year. From 1996 through 1998, the Census Bureau has conducted a demonstration of the ACS in eight sites, including: Brevard County, FL; Multnomah County, OR; Rockland County, NY; Fulton County, PA; Franklin County, OH; Ft. Bend and Harris Counties, TX; and Otero County, NM. Beginning this year, the Census Bureau added two counties that are also being used as decennial census dress rehearsal sites, Richland and Kershaw Counties, SC. Testing the ACS in these two counties will allow the Bureau to examine the effects on both the ACS and the census of having the two activities occurring at the same time and place.

Between 1999 and 2001, the Bureau plans to add 37 comparison sites and 20 phase-in sites. The comparison sites will allow the Bureau to understand the differences between the 1999-2001 ACS and the Census 2000 long-form and to give a good tract-by-tract comparison between the two. Also, in 2001 the Bureau will be able to provide data users with economic, demographic and other data on areas of population of 250,000 or more. Further, pending Congressional approval of funding, between the years 2000 and 2002, the Bureau plans to add a national sample of 700,000 housing units per year to the ACS. Finally, in 2003 the Bureau plans to implement the ACS in every U.S. county with an annual sample of 3 million housing units. By 2003, the ACS will provide data for areas with populations of 65,000 or more. For areas with populations smaller than 65,000, it will take two to five years to sample the same number of households as in the decennial census. If the money is provided and the ACS works according to plans, it will ultimately replace the census long-form in 2010.

Uses for the Survey

The ACS will provide data users with more timely information on the nation's communities. Gordon said that a major problem with the decennial census data is that it gets "stale" after several years. She stressed that it is "costly to base current policy

decisions on old data." Whereas the long-form provides a snapshot of where the country is, the ACS, according to Gordon, will provide a "video." Specifically, the Bureau and policy makers will be able to see societal changes as they are occurring and, thus, plan accordingly. In addition, the ACS will be flexible. Specifically, the Bureau plans from time to time to add specialized questionnaires or supplements to collect new information and identify special populations or societal conditions.

Salvo noted that the time has come for a new survey to replace the long-form. He echoed Gordon's remarks and said that it is difficult for policy makers and data users to "accurately and adequately glean information from the long-form." Good decisions must be based on up-to-the-date information, he maintained. The Census Bureau, as noted on its Webpage, plans on producing the data within six months of the completion of the data collection. Voss, who was a speaker at COSSA's 1997 seminar on the census, stressed that the ACS will allow data users and government officials "to monitor trends." The ACS will provide a "much improved ability to distribute federal funds," said Voss. He also noted, as did Salvo, that the ACS will provide more frequent and timely information.

For more information on the ACS, contact the Census Bureau's Webpage at <http://www.census.gov>.

HAPPY 35TH BIRTHDAY NICHDI!

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According to National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Director Duane Alexander, "the best is yet to come." Alexander made the remarks at the June 3, *Scientific Exhibition and Reception: Celebrating 35 Years of the NICHD*. The NICHD, established in 1962 by an act of Congress and signed into law by President John F. Kennedy, is having an ongoing celebration of its 35th anniversary.

The event was hosted by the *Friends of NICHD Coalition*, which consists of more than 100 organizations, including COSSA, and 29 Honorary Congressional Co-Hosts, including: Senators Kit Bond (R-MO), Christopher Dodd (D-CT), Tom Harkin (D-IA), Jim Jeffords (R-VT), Herb Kohl (D-

WI), Connie Mack (R-FL), Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), Jack Reed (D-RI), Harry Reid (D-NV), Ted Stevens (R-AK), and Representatives Henry Bonilla (R-TX), Benjamin Cardin (D-MD), Diana DeGette (D-CO), John Dingell (D-MI), Anna Eshoo (D-CA), Greg Ganske (R-IA), Steny Hoyer (D-MD), Scott Klug (R-WI), Nita Lowey (D-NY), Carrie P. Meek (D-FL), Connie Morella (R-MD), Anne Northup (R-KY), David Obey (D-WI), Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), John Edward Porter (R-IL), Louis Stokes (D-OH), Ed Whitfield (R-KY), and Albert Wynn (D-MD).

The event featured 15 exhibits that demonstrated the depth and breadth of NICHD-supported research, from biomedical research to the social and behavioral sciences. NICHD has long served as an example of an institute that looks only to the physiological factors affecting health, but recognizes the importance of behavioral, social, environmental and genetic factors to health outcomes. Research societies, associations and universities provided the exhibits.

Displays representing the social and behavioral sciences included: *How Does Child Care Affect Child Development?* (Deborah Lowe Vandell — American Psychological Association); *The NICHD*

Family and Child Well-being Network (Arland Thornton, Brett Brown — American Sociological Association); *The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health* (Kathleen Mullen Harris — University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill); and *The Mexican Migration Project* (Douglas S. Massey — University of Pennsylvania).

Representative Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) noted that NICHD had “every reason to celebrate.” The three most important issues before the Congress, she continued, are — children, children, and children. It’s clear that the work at NICHD, concluded Pelosi, follows President Kennedy’s vision.

Representative Anne Northup (R-KY) told the group that although she did not know about the Institute prior to coming to Congress, she has come to love it. Northup particularly praised NICHD’s reading and learning disabilities research.

Other attendees included: Representatives Jim Moran (D-VA), Bob Etheridge (D-NC), Nick Smith (R-MI), and White House Office of Science and Technology Policy Director Arthur Bienenstock along with more than 100 Congressional staffers.

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT KC

COSSA provides this information as a service and encourages readers to contact the agency for further information or application materials. Additional application guidelines and restrictions may apply.

National Institute on Aging:
Pilot Research Grant Program

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) is seeking small grant applications in specific areas to: (1) stimulate and facilitate the entry of promising new investigators into aging research, or (2) encourage established investigators to enter new targeted, high priority areas in this research field. The Small grant (R03) Program provides support for pilot research that is likely to lead to a subsequent individual research project grant (R01) and/or a significant advancement of aging research. The deadline for applications is July 17, 1998 and November 17, 1998. For applications with primary emphasis on behavioral or social research on aging contact: Ms. Angie Chon-Lee, (301) 594-5943 or email: BSRquery@exmur.nia.nih.gov.

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