

LANE MAKES FINAL APPEARANCE AS NSF HEAD AT HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS PANEL

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Neal Lane made his last appearance before the House VA, HUD, Independent Appropriations Subcommittee as director of the National Science Foundation on April 1. Defending the agency's FY 1999 budget before the panel chaired by Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-CA), Lane received kudos from the members, as he prepares to leave NSF to become the President's science adviser and head of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (see UPDATE March 9).

Lane advocated for the 10 percent increase proposed by the administration that would boost NSF's budget by \$344 million to \$3.773 billion. He asserted that the activities paid for in the proposed budget "will enable new discoveries that result in the new knowledge that will help our nation address some of the most critical challenges of the 21st Century." He identified those challenges as "better health, increased economic well-being and opportunity for all its citizens, a cleaner environment and better schools for our children."

Stokes Lauded For Support of SBE Projects

In addition to Lane moving on, Rep. Louis Stokes (D-OH), who is the ranking Democrat on the Subcommittee, has announced his retirement from Congress at the end of the current year. Lane praised Stokes for his strong support of the Foundation during his tenure in Congress. The Director specifically noted the Congressman's advocacy for the Human Capital Initiative and the National Consortium on Violence Research, two programs sponsored by NSF's Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE).

Chairman Lewis noted the strong bipartisan favor science enjoys in the Congress, mentioning Speaker Newt Gingrich's (R-GA) stated desire to increase funding in this area. Yet, Lewis expressed concern

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COSSA TESTIFIES ON STATISTICS CONSOLIDATION BILL

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COSSA Executive Director Howard J. Silver appeared on a panel testifying to the House Subcommittee on Government Management, Information and Technology, chaired by Rep. Steven Horn (R-CA), on March 26. The hearing examined a proposal (S. 1404) to establish a commission to explore how to consolidate the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) into an independent agency known as the Federal Statistical Service. The bill would also remove barriers to agencies' sharing data for statistical purposes. Horn had sponsored a similar bill in 1996 and had held hearings that year on it, but the legislation did not pass.

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) opened the hearing making the case for consolidation. He noted that the collection of social science data is ordained in the U.S. Constitution with its provision for a decennial census. The New York Senator, one of the prime sponsors of S. 1404, along with Senator Sam Brownback (R-KS), argued that the decentralized U.S. statistical system was too scattered, too duplicative, and too costly. He cited a letter from almost all the former Chairs of the President's Council of Economic Advisers in support of the legislation.

Silver was joined on his panel by L. Nye Stevens, Director, Federal Management and Workforce Issues, General Accounting Office, Joel Popkin, President of his own firm and a former Associate Director of BLS,

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and Chuck Waite, a former Census Bureau official. All the panelists agreed that the section of the bill providing for data sharing among agencies, while establishing uniform confidentiality protections to prevent the non-statistical use of individually identifiable information, was an excellent idea. In fact, Silver argued simply enacting this provision of the legislation would go a long way, as former BLS commissioner Janet Norwood wrote, "to reduce the cost of unnecessary data collection and to improve the data produced."

On the issue of centralization, Popkin and Waite spoke strongly in favor of the consolidation. Stevens was generally supportive, since the idea of the Commission met previously announced GAO reorganization principles. Silver, while not opposing the Commission or consolidation, sounded a number of notes of caution.

He argued, again quoting Norwood, that "organizational structure by itself, cannot always solve all the problems a system faces...It is the people who make a system..." Consolidation, he declared will not be a panacea. He wondered whether the search for efficiency for the statistical system would indeed lead to effectiveness. Is there a case for maintaining a pluralistic, decentralized system? Those who proposed a centralized Department of Science a number of years ago, backed off after the science community decided that a multi-agency system produced excellent science.

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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.

Since the members of the Commission will be appointed by the President and the leadership in Congress, Silver told the Subcommittee: "Maximum consultation with scientific and professional groups is paramount. Even the appearance of political interference with the integrity of the statistical system would create even more havoc than we are currently experiencing with the debate over sampling in the 2000 Census." He also called for an independent evaluation of any consolidation. He recommended a combined panel from the National Research Council's Committee on National Statistics and the National Academy of Public Administration.

The role of the Chief Statistician, now currently housed in the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of the Office of Management and Budget, was another issue raised by the proposed consolidation and the creation of a new independent agency. Although the Chief Statistician sits on the Commission, his/her role with regard to the new entity is left vague. Waite bemoaned the depletion of personnel in recent years in the Office of Statistical Policy, which is headed by the Chief Statistician. There seemed to be a consensus that the Office needed strengthening, but it was unclear where the resources would come from to accomplish that. Finally, Silver noted the need for congressional reorganization to match any statistical system reconfiguration. Committee jurisdictions would need rearranging, both authorizing and appropriating panels.

The Commission is given a life-span of 18 months. Any recommendations for legislation would receive fast-track consideration by the House and Senate. In essence, Congress would vote to accept or reject in total the Commission's proposed legislation. A companion bill to S. 1404 will be introduced soon in the House. The bills are expected to pass. The White House will issue its statement on the legislation in the near future.

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NSF APPROPRIATIONS HEARINGS (Continued)

that the administration had built its proposed NSF increase on a house of cards known as the tobacco settlement. He was skeptical that any funds for NSF would come from the settlement, if indeed there is one. He also recognized the balanced budget agreement and the spending caps as further limits on the Subcommittee's ability to meet the budget request. As all chairmen of this Subcommittee have done over the years, Lewis described the competing pressures it faces because of the different agencies under the panel's jurisdiction -- HUD, NASA, Veterans' Administration, EPA, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and NSF. He specifically mentioned the need to increase funds for veteran's medical health care as a possible barrier to providing the increase for NSF.

Lewis asked Lane what he would do if the Subcommittee did not provide the full increase. Lane suggested that the proposed budget emphasized cross disciplinary themes — Knowledge and Distributed Intelligence, Life in Earth's Environments, and Educating For the Future — that would continue as NSF's priorities, even if the full increase was not granted. He also said the proposed increases for the Directorates, SBE is slated for 15 percent, would be reduced proportionately.

Lane argued for his enhanced budget in order to fund more proposals for a longer period of time at a higher average rate. If the full increase occurred, about 600-800 additional grants could be awarded, including many to new, young investigators, Lane asserted. The average duration of a grant would go from 2.4 years to 2.7 years and average award size, now about \$83,000 would increase by 7 percent.

Members of the Subcommittee expressed interest in the education programs of the Directorate. The latest results from the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMMS), where U.S. 12th grade students fared rather poorly keyed a number of questions from Stokes and Rep. John Walsh (R-NY). Rep. David Price (D-NC) discussed NSF's Advanced Technology Education program, which provides grants to community colleges, and Informal Science Education. Rep. Alan Mollohan (D-WV) made a case for more funding for math and science education

reform programs in rural areas. Stokes also inquired about the joint program between NSF and the Department of Education funded at \$75 million in the President's budget (\$50 million for ED, \$25 million for NSF).

Lane hypothesized that the TIMMS results may not fully reflect the recent education reform efforts that have occurred in this country, including the systemic reform initiative sponsored by NSF. Noting that U.S. 4th grade students did rather well, followed by a falloff in the 8th and 12th grade results, Lane suggested that when TIMMS is administered again next year, the results in the upper grades may be more positive, as the students exposed to the reform programs of the 1990s move through the school system. Stokes accepted this "incremental approach," but also suggested it might be time to re-evaluate the EHR directorate. Lane said he would leave that to his successor, Maryland Microbiologist Rita Colwell. Lane also said he looked forward to further collaboration between NSF and the Department of Education.

Vera Rubin, an astronomer at the Carnegie Institute of Washington and a member of the National Science Board, who joined Lane at the witness table indicated that the NSB has established a Task Force to draft a report for its May meeting to examine the TIMMS results and to compile data on "what works" in science and math education.

NSF Hurricane Research: The Impact on People

Rep. Carrie Meek (D-FL) inquired as to what NSF was doing regarding research on hurricanes. Bob Correll, NSF's Assistant Director for the Geosciences, explained NSF's joint efforts with NASA, the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, and the Office of Naval Research, on the U.S. Weather Research Program to help predict the intensity and track of these often devastating storms. Meek declared that was interesting, but she was more concerned with "what happens to people?" She noted the paucity of data on the social implications of natural disasters and wanted to know if NSF was supporting "behavioral science" research in this area, especially since the victims are often poor

and female. NSF promised to respond for the hearing record.

In the FY 1998 appropriations committee report, the Congress asked NSF to study the feasibility of creating a National Institute for the Environment within the Foundation. Rep. Rodney Freylinghuysen (R-NJ) inquired whether NSF was ready to provide Congress with an answer. Although Lane indicated the report was not yet ready, NSF seemed to indicate where it would come out when the National Science Board passed a resolution at its March meeting that states: "A separate organization or entity would not be an effective means of achieving the intellectual goals connected with the proposed NIE because it would isolate environmental research from related science and engineering research, as well as be duplicative of the existing policy and management structure and entail unnecessary cost." Reps. James Saxton (R-NJ) and Neal Abercrombie (D-HI), co-sponsors of legislation to create an NIE, have already expressed their displeasure with this statement, suggesting that Congress wanted to know *how* an institute would be established, not whether it *should*.

NIH INSTITUTE DIRECTORS FACE APPROPRIATORS

On March 19, National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Director Alan Leshner testified before the House Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee regarding NIDA's "year of exceptional accomplishment." Leshner told Subcommittee members that "NIDA-supported researchers made enormous strides toward improved understanding, prevention and treatment of one of our Nation's most serious public health problems — drug abuse and addiction."

Leshner highlighted NIDA's efforts to launch its first ever large scale multi-center clinical trial for cocaine medication. "In designing this trial we are capitalizing on a body of current findings that suggest that medications consistently work better when they are used in combination with behavioral therapies," said Leshner. The Institute "hopes to expand upon the trial by launching a National Drug Treatment

Clinical Trial Network to ensure that all potential addiction treatments are tested in real life settings. Our science has matured to the point where we can take a more systematic approach to rapidly and efficiently test the effectiveness of behavioral, psychosocial and pharmacological treatments in large-scale, multi-site clinical trials," he continued.

Leshner emphasized that identifying the protective factors — behaviors, environments and activities — that "enables many people to avoid drug use altogether or to get right back on track if they falter or relapse during treatment," is important. NIDA supports research that focuses on the "special needs of older children and adolescents who have been placed in juvenile court detention programs, dropped out of school, or have become homeless." Concluding his testimony, Leshner stressed the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to "unravel the remaining mysteries of addiction."

NIAAA

"Alcoholism is one of our country's most serious and persistent health problems. Approximately two-thirds of all American adults drink an alcoholic beverage during the course of a year," said National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism Director Enoch Gordis who also testified before the Subcommittee on March 19. Gordis highlighted recently published data from NIAAA's National Longitudinal Alcohol Epidemiologic Survey (see *UPDATE*, January 19). The study, which assesses lifetime risk for alcohol use disorders, said Gordis, "provides convincing evidence that the younger the age of drinking onset, the greater the chance that an individual at some point in his or her life will develop a clinically diagnosable alcohol use disorder."

Gordis informed Subcommittee members that "while the promise of research is that science will yield practical applications, some areas of investigation will require longer time to fulfill the promise than others." He cited studies investigating the effect of alcohol on the brain "and the relationship of these effects to behavior" as examples of an area where it "will take longer to develop information that can be used to design new medications."

Noting that NIAAA-supported research has "diversified and consolidated our knowledge of

alcohol problems," Gordis said future NIAAA research directions include: determining "which aspects of the vulnerability to alcoholism are inherited; how genetic and non-genetic factors interact in the development of alcoholism; how biology and behavior interact in the development of alcohol use disorders; and by developing and testing new prevention and treatment and methods to reduce the risk for alcoholism, improve the chance for recovery and reduce the risk of a relapse."

Responding to Chairman John Porter's (R-IL) question of whether research will discover ways to lessen the misuse of alcohol, Gordis indicated that it was NIAAA's "main goal" to discover why some people do not get into trouble with alcohol and others do. "Behavior and social influences are profound," he said, noting that research has not come to grips with the problem because of the complexity surrounding that particular research question.

NIMH

Four of the ten leading causes of disability in the United States are mental disorders, testified National Institute of Mental Health Director Steve Hyman. He informed the Subcommittee that the four are unipolar major depression, schizophrenia, manic depressive illness, and obsessive compulsive disorder. He continued by stating that the other leading causes of disability include alcohol use, dementia, stroke, and drug use. "When one adds these conditions to the four mental disorders . . . eight of the ten leading causes of disability are seen to be brain and behavioral disorders," he said. Hyman told the Subcommittee that "mental disorders often begin early in life . . . often at a time when a young person is just completing his or her education."

According to Hyman, NIMH's research priorities for FY 1999 include "modernizing and expanding the field of childhood mental disorder research — a task that entails attention to research training needs." Another area highlighted as a priority is prevention research. "In response to our National Mental Health Advisory Council report on Basic Behavioral Science, we have launched an effort that will bring to bear the yield of behavioral science on prevention of mental disorders, a critical public health need," noted Hyman in his written testimony. "Behavioral research has

much to offer in efforts to enhance treatment adherence and compliance and the development of new psychotherapies," he concluded. (See other story)

When asked by Representative Louis Stokes (D-OH) whether NIMH's research takes into consideration the social, cultural, and environmental factors of mental disorders, Hyman answered that the NIMH is funding a number of minority research centers.

NIA

"As life expectancy increases, the need to keep the additional years disease- and disability-free becomes more urgent," testified National Institute of Aging Director Richard Hodes. Hodes noted in his written testimony that the NIA is implementing a new centers' initiative which focuses on enabling older people "to enhance physical and cognitive function, to decrease risk of disease and disability, and to remain fully engaged in life."

Highlighting the fact that demographic research by the NIA has revealed that "at least 1.4 million fewer older persons in the U.S. are disabled than would have been if the disability rates of the elderly had not improved since 1982 as reported in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*," Hodes emphasized that additional analyses will look at the dynamics of old-age life expectancy, the support ration, the implication of trends in health, disability and life expectancy for national policies on retirement and programs for the elderly, and health expenditures.

NCI

"From 1973 to 1990, overall cancer incidence rates increased by 1.2 percent per year. Since 1990, they have decreased by 0.7 percent per year," noted National Cancer Institute Director Richard Klausner during his testimony before the Subcommittee. Lung, colorectal, and prostate cancers were included in the decline. Breast cancer rates, which were increasing by 1.8 percent per year, are now flat, said Klausner. Klausner emphasized that "identifying populations and individuals at high risk for cancer is a growing focus" of the Institute.

To this end, the NCI's Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences has issued a Program Announcement (PA-98-028) to stimulate epidemiologic studies of cancer etiology and behavior in special populations in the U.S. "Innovative approaches that involve inter-disciplinary collaboration of basic, behavioral or clinical research with epidemiologists are encouraged." The research scope includes:

- 1) Cross-cultural studies of cancers with striking ethnic disparities in incidence rates, among groups residing in the same or different geographic areas, to identify more specifically the etiologic factors and to study their relationships with biomarkers of exposure.
- 2) Studies exploring culturally sensitive and socioeconomically sensitive, appropriately tailored approaches for dietary modification, monitoring compliance via appropriate means, to assess cancer risk in U.S. special populations.
- 3) Studies of motivational and behavioral strategies, including use of adjuncts, on diet modification and other lifestyle changes.

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AN ADDITIONAL \$7 MILLION FOR THE OBSSR? *DX*

The Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR), while achieving some success in fulfilling its mission of coordinating research efforts across the NIH institutes and centers, "still has a substantial task of educating NIH about the importance of social and behavioral science research," Representative Peter DeFazio (D-OR) stated at a March 26 House Commerce Subcommittee on Health and the Environment. "The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data suggest that unhealthy behavior will account for nearly half of all deaths — that's over one million deaths in the U.S. this year," said DeFazio. Urging the Subcommittee to rise to the challenge, DeFazio stated that "an additional \$7 million a year for OBSSR would fund an additional

10 projects on behavior change." The current funding for OBSSR is \$2.7 million.

DeFazio also requested the committee to authorize OBSSR to collaborate with the Office of Alternative Medicine "to conduct a study that evaluates the impact of diet, stress, and nutrition on various forms of cancer. We should begin approaching medical research and treatment of the human condition as a whole interconnected entity rather than part by part."

COSSA SUPPORTS NIJ AND BJS BUDGET INCREASES *DH*

Lawrence Sherman, professor and chair of the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Maryland, delivered testimony April 1 on behalf of COSSA in support of proposed Fiscal Year 1999 budgetary increases for the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). Testifying before the Subcommittee on the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary and Related Agencies of the House Committee on Appropriations, chaired by Representative Harold Rogers (R-KY), Sherman lauded the benefits of social science research. In particular, he praised the research conducted and supported by the National Institute of Justice as invaluable in addressing crime and justice issues.

The President's FY 1999 budget request includes increases of 20 percent for both NIJ and BJS. The increase for NIJ is for several new initiatives, including: 1) the Violence Against Women and Family Violence Research and Evaluation Program (VAWFV), which provides funds for research in areas of violence against women and family violence, promotes collaborative research and evaluation initiatives, conducts field research to test new approaches to combating violence, and evaluates the effectiveness of those initiatives; 2) the Community Prosecutors Initiative, which would test, in a limited number of small communities, comprehensive anti-crime programs; and 3) the District of Columbia Revitalization Initiative, which supports research and evaluation on crime and criminal justice in the District. The increase for BJS is to restore funding for the States to collect data on

employment and expenditures for criminal justice purposes and to provide continued collection of use-of-force statistics from local law enforcement bodies.

Sherman noted that social science research, in general, and NIJ, in particular, receive "tiny" amounts of the total federal monies apportioned in the federal budget process. On the other hand, he stated, that health research at the National Institutes of Health receives the lion's share of the funding in the federal research portfolio. Criminal justice research, said Sherman, deserves more attention and resources from the federal government. He continued by noting that research and evaluation efforts are needed to determine which programs work in addressing crime. Sherman pointed to the congressionally-mandated study — *Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising* — performed by the University of Maryland's Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice (also known as the "Maryland study"). The Maryland study, of which Sherman was the principal author, is but one of a number of excellent research products supported and disseminated by NIJ.

Upon completion of Sherman's testimony, Chairman Rogers (R-KY) held up a copy of the Maryland study and thanked and commended Sherman and his colleagues for the excellent work they had done. Rogers told Sherman that the Maryland team had done a superb job and said that he and his fellow lawmakers have used the study in their work.

Informing the Researchers, Practitioners, and Policymakers

In the written testimony provided to the Subcommittee, COSSA enthusiastically noted that NIJ and BJS have both done extraordinary jobs disseminating information and research findings in a timely and readable manner. As part of its efforts to inform researchers, practitioners, and policymakers, NIJ sponsors a "Perspectives on Crime and Justice" lecture series. Coincidentally, on the same morning of the Subcommittee hearing, NIJ held one of its "Perspectives" lectures. Joan Petersilia, professor of criminology, law and society in the School of Social Ecology at the University of California, Irvine, delivered a lecture entitled "A Decade of Experimenting with Intermediate Sanctions: What Have We Learned."

Petersilia argued that research on intermediate sanction programs (ISPs), including intensive surveillance programs, electronic monitoring, and voice verification systems, has shown ISPs to be successful alternatives to prison sentences or probation for low-risk offenders. She noted that ISPs originated in the 1980s as a means to address overcrowding in prison. Petersilia said that the nation's first exposure to an ISP program was in Georgia. This program, according to subsequent research, was a success in reducing recidivism rates, she noted. Subsequently, many states adopted ISPs after Georgia's success.

Unfortunately, according to Petersilia, the programs have not duplicated the successes of the Georgia program. She pointed to several reasons for the failure of these newer programs, paying particular attention to lack of resource commitment. She said that the boom in ISPs occurred simultaneously with the downturn in federal funding for the Department of Justice's research and demonstration projects portfolio. In addition, Petersilia stated that judges often misused ISPs by placing inappropriate felons in the program.

CENSUS BUREAU SUBMITS QUESTIONS *DH*

On Monday, March 30 the Census Bureau submitted to Congress the questions it plans to ask in the Census 2000 and plans to use in the upcoming Census 2000 Dress Rehearsal. The short-form contains only seven questions — the shortest its been since 1832 — while the long-form contains 52 questions — five shorter than in 1990. The subjects of the questions for Census 2000 are wide-ranging and cover "everything from age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, household relationship and whether the person owns or rents ... to citizenship, ancestry, language spoken at home, plumbing and kitchen facilities, and household heating fuel." Census 2000 contains only one new subject, mandated by a 1996 law, "referring to grandparents as care-givers."

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