

**BASIC RESEARCH SUBCOMMITTEE HEARS NSF: AN INCREASE WITHOUT 'TOBACCO SMOKE AND MIRRORS'?** *HS*

On April 22, the House Science Committee's Basic Research Subcommittee asked the National Science Foundation to explain how the President's requested 10 percent increase for FY 1999 could be achieved without the "tobacco smoke and mirrors." The acting Subcommittee chairman, Representative Chip Pickering (R-MS), who succeeded to head the panel after the untimely death of Representative Steve Schiff (R-NM), was quite skeptical and wanted to know "what is the administration's plan for increasing R&D if a tobacco settlement does not materialize?"

NSF Director Neal Lane did not really have an answer to Pickering's question other than to suggest he would make the best case possible to the appropriators to fund the increase no matter what the eventual outcome to the tobacco situation. Pickering did note that the full Science Committee in its "Views and Estimates" submitted to the Committee on the Budget, supported the full NSF request, "citing the importance of basic research to U.S. economic growth and to maintaining U.S. preeminence in fundamental science." Representative Gil Gutknecht (R-MN), a member of both the Science and Budget Committees, announced that the latter "will do the best we can to get more funds for research."

The rest of the hearing mainly focused on how NSF sets its priorities. A number of committee members inquired as to the role of the National Science Board (NSB) in this process. John Hopcroft, Dean of Engineering at Cornell and a member of the NSB, noted that the Board, whose 24 members come from many disciplines and backgrounds, tries to identify emerging areas to help NSF produce overarching themes that can shape its research portfolio. Lane also noted that the use of multidisciplinary themes provided a way of avoiding the problem that you "can't get consensus that one

(Story continued on next page)

**HOUSE HEARING FOCUSES ON SCHOOL YOUTH VIOLENCE** *DH*

"Public health can make an important contribution to preventing youth violence. We all wish there were one simple solution to this problem of school violence. The reality is that there's no such thing. The problem is complex and the response needs to draw on the best that all sectors have to offer: education, psychology, social work, criminology, public health, medicine, and others," said W. Rodney Hammond. Director of the Division of Violence Prevention of the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Hammond testified April 28 before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce's Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Youth and Families chaired by Representative Frank Riggs (R-CA).

According to Riggs the hearing was designed "to explore an issue of growing concern: violence in children." Despite multiple hearings surrounding the prevention of juvenile crime, Riggs said that there has "been little focus on why children commit violent acts . . . While many programs focus on education, job training and after-school activities of methods of preventing juvenile crime. I have not heard of many which address the needs of children on a case-by-case basis and look at the factors in a child's life that place him or her at risk of committing a violent act," he said.

(Story continued on page 6)

**Inside UPDATE...**

- NSF Rejects National Institute For the Environment
- Strong Support for Continued Federal Funding of Basic Research
- Appropriators Hear COSSA and Others Support NSF Increase
- Black Caucus Forum Addresses Health Challenges Facing African American Community
- CDC Calls for Abstracts for Prevention Conference

### NSF TESTIFIES (continued)

discipline is more important than another." He did point out that most of what NSF funds come from ideas presented by scientists in proposals.

Subcommittee members indicated interest in a number of education areas. The results of the Third International Math and Science Study (TIMMS) arose again. Lane repeated the theory he posited at the appropriations hearings that the education reforms from the early 1990s had not had sufficient time to work their way through the entire elementary and secondary school process. Therefore, 4<sup>th</sup> graders who have experienced the reforms did well on TIMMS, while the 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, who did poorly, were still victims of the old science-math education. This hypothesis will get tested when TIMMS is administered again next year. Pickering expressed his opinion that NSF should not get involved in helping to prepare any kind of national test. Gutknecht brought up the recent report from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching that chastised research universities for their inattention to teaching undergraduates. Lane responded that he believed that "a lot of improvement has occurred in the last five years," and that NSF's emphasis on the integration of teaching and learning would help bring about more improvements in the future.

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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.

Pickering raised the issue of the National Institute for the Environment. Lane answered by previewing to some extent the NSF report to the Congress (See next story).

### NSF REJECTS NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT *AS*

Echoing the statement of its policy making body, the National Science Board, the National Science Foundation has rejected the idea of a National Institute for the Environment (NIE) embedded within its structure. Responding to congressional requests in its FY 1998 appropriations committee reports, the Foundation acknowledged the importance of research on the environment, however, "Establishing a stand alone entity or agency is not an effective means of achieving the proposed intellectual goals of an environmental institute. Such an entity would almost certainly introduce unnecessary costs, and would duplicate management structures, scientific staffs, and programs already in place at NSF and other agencies."

The Committee for the NIE, a group of scientists, educators, and environmentalists, has been advocating for many years that environmental research must be removed from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and given a new home. They argue the EPA is too invested in regulatory activities to carry out a scientific research program. Originally using the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as their model, the NIE advocates wanted a new independent federal agency. Recognizing that this was unlikely in an era of downsizing government, they then seized on the idea of locating the new entity within NSF. Representatives James Saxton (R-NJ) and Neil Abercrombie (D-HI) have introduced legislation to create the NIE. Last month the Committee for the NIE announced that 225 college presidents had endorsed the NIE concept. Rita Colwell, NSF Director-Designate has served on the Committee.

In its report to the Congress, NSF argued that a "coordinated response involving all Federal agencies is necessary to create an effective, national program of environmental science, engineering, education, and dissemination." The Foundation called for a revised

*National Science and Technology Strategy for the Environment*, that the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and its National Science and Technology Council would lead. The \$5 billion environmental research portfolio would include NSF's investments in fundamental research, but would also include a "wide spectrum of activities supported across the Government" that would respond to the "diverse research, education, assessment, and information needs of the many economic sectors and regions of the country."

NSF touted its *Life in Earth's Environments* (LEE) initiative as an indication of the Foundation's commitment to enhancing research in this area. It also provided a long list of multidisciplinary research activities connected to the environment, including the part of LEE focused on urban communities. Also given as evidence of NSF's already existing efforts regarding the environment are the Long Term Ecological Research Sites, the National Center for Environmental Decision-Making Research, and the Research Centers on Human Dimensions of Global Change.

It remains to be seen how this rejection of the national institute concept will play with NIE supporters. There are some indications that congressional advocates such as Saxton and Abercrombie are unhappy. They have written a sharply worded letter criticizing the earlier released NSB statement. Yet, key Science Committee members and the appropriators appear reluctant to impose this new structure on NSF. It does appear likely that with Colwell heading to NSF's Director's chair, that environmental research will receive enhanced attention and perhaps, reorganized at NSF, without resorting to a separate entity.

### **STRONG SUPPORT FOR CONTINUED FEDERAL FUNDING OF BASIC RESEARCH** AS

"[A]s we prepare for the new millennium . . . we must have a science policy in place that allows us to reap the benefits of scientific knowledge to improve the health and welfare of our citizens. The question is how best to do this," said Committee on Science Chairman F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr. (R-WI) on

April 22 as he opened the fifth in a series of hearings conducted as part of the National Science Policy Study. The Committee welcomed Claude Barfield, Director of Science and Technology Policy Studies at the American Enterprise Institute; George Conrades, President of GTE Internetworking; Michael Doyle, Vice President of Research Corporation; and William Todd, President of the Georgia Research Alliance, to discuss the "irreplaceable federal role in funding basic scientific research."

In his introductory remarks, Sensenbrenner noted that he believes there are five criteria that should be used to prioritize and fund scientific programs. First, "research and development must focus on essential programs that are long-term, high-risk, non-commercial, well-managed, and have great scientific potential." Second, he stated that "federal R&D should be focused on agency missions. Third, the marketing and commercializing of a product should be left to the private sector, as should incremental improvements in a technology or process. Fourth, partnerships involving industry, universities, the states, and foreign governments and institutions should be encouraged as ways to leverage taxpayers' investment in R&D. And fifth, the infrastructure necessary for conducting essential federal R&D programs needs to be prioritized consistent with program requirements."

Sensenbrenner bemoaned that "all too often the one measure by which our commitment to federally-funded science is gauged is funding." The issue, according to the chairman, "is much more complicated than being simply about money." The "federal government's role in funding science," said Sensenbrenner, is "central to sound science policy." And funding, he said, "should be driven by policy, not the other way around." He asked the panelists to thoughtfully and truthfully discuss their views on the federal government's "irreplaceable role" in basic research and science policy.

Barfield stated that any discussion of federal funding of basic research should begin with Vannevar Bush's 1945 report on the federal government's "new . . . role in support of research." Though he termed Bush's report "masterly," Barfield noted that it contained "flaws," the greatest of which was "Bush's espousal of the so-called linear model of innovation."

Barfield posited that current scholarship has shown the innovation process to be much more complex. The flaws contained within Bush's report, therefore, limit its usefulness in the current debate on the appropriate federal role in science policy. In determining that role, Barfield suggested that the Committee look to the National Academy of Science's (NAS) 1995 report entitled *Allocating Federal Funds for Science and Technology*, written under the leadership of former NAS President Frank Press.

The "Press report," Barfield noted, establishes two general guidelines in establishing federal priorities for future research and development. First, the report states that "federal research funding should generally favor academic institutions." Second, the report states that the "federal government should encourage, but not directly fund, private commercial technology development, with two limited exceptions: to accomplish mandated government missions or for broadly applicable technologies where the government is 'the only funder available.'"

In seconding the importance of the federal role, Conrades said that "America's long-standing endowment of basic research has been overwhelmingly successful, providing American society not only with the fruits of new knowledge, but also with the practical benefits of economic growth and improvements in the welfare of its citizens." Speaking on behalf of the Committee for Economic Development (CED), Conrades called for continuation of the "internal role of government in supporting basic research as industry continues to focus on R&D with specific product-directed goals."

As far as the federal government's role in basic research, Conrades and CED offered a list of recommendations, including:

1. Congress and the Administration should set broad national priorities for basic research that reflect the needs of the society at large.
2. Federal support for basic research should continue to be diverse in its sources and in its funding mechanisms; central control of the concentration of resources should be resisted.
3. The allocation of federal basic research funds should be based on scientific merit based on peer review.

4. Basic research should be a high priority in the federal budget for decades to come, since federal support is essential for a thriving basic research enterprise.
5. The United States should expand its efforts to benefit from international collaboration and the globalization of basic research.

Doyle, the third panelist to testify, spoke of the importance of government funding for basic research since private foundations — including Doyle's Research Corporation — cannot provide enough funds to adequately support basic research. Doyle also said that "private foundation support is minuscule" and that "the vast majority of funding for basic research in the sciences resides in the federal government and that this funding cannot be replaced by any combination of private or state-initiated programs."

Todd echoed the comments of the other panelists, but spoke specifically about the need of the federal government to fund public-private partnerships. According to Todd, his company, the Georgia Research Alliance, has facilitated strategic alliances between research universities and Georgia's state government that are "robust." These partnerships have allowed the technology industry to "grow and develop." The "Georgia Model" is working, said Todd, and is "dependent on continued and significant investment by the federal government in early-stage research [a term he prefers to basic research]." "Without a strong foundation of early-stage research, the commercial outcomes that we all seek in the name of national competitiveness will not occur," he said. Therefore, he called for the federal government to "renew its commitment to being the primary sponsor of early-stage (or basic) research."

#### APPROPRIATORS HEAR COSSA AND OTHERS SUPPORT NSF INCREASE

HS

COSSA Executive Director Howard J. Silver joined a parade of witnesses representing many groups across the sciences to urge the House VA, HUD, Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee to support the proposed 10 percent increase for the National Science Foundation (NSF)

in FY 1999. The impressive unity of the science community revolved around the endorsement of the increase by the Coalition for National Science Funding, a 70 member ad-hoc organization, that advocates for NSF funding. Silver is the Chair of this group.

In his testimony, Silver strongly supported the proposed 12 percent boost for NSF's Research and Related Activities, and the 15 percent increase for the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) Directorate. In support of the latter, he informed the Subcommittee of the increasing use of experiments in the social sciences, citing research conducted in laboratory settings on the dynamic behavior of markets, committee agenda setting and decisionmaking, and the emergence of status hierarchies in groups. He also noted how basic linguistic research on acoustic phonetics has led to computer systems that recognize continuous speech. Silver also described the importance of survey research, including the three major NSF supported data bases, the Panel Study on Income Dynamics, the General Social Survey, and the National Election Studies.

Finally, he discussed the role of the National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis in helping create the \$10 billion a year GIS industry, and how NSF investments in democratization research have "not only increased our understanding of the newly independent states [of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe], but has generated hypotheses and theories that are now being tested in other areas of the world, including South Africa."

In looking ahead, Silver cited future SBE research thrusts suggested by the Children's Initiative, the PCAST education report, and the legal, ethical, and societal implications part of NSF's Knowledge and Distributed Intelligence initiative. He also noted the extension of NSF's Long Term Ecological Research program to two urban areas, Baltimore and Phoenix.

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<http://members.aol.com/socscience/COSSAindex.htm>

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### BLACK CAUCUS FORUM ADDRESSES HEALTH CHALLENGES FACING AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY *AS*

"In recent years, we have seen unprecedented advances in biomedical research, the diagnosis of disease, and the delivery of health care services," said Representative Louis Stokes (D-OH) in his opening remarks at the Spring CBC (Congressional Black Caucus) Health Braintrust Forum entitled "Minority Health: The Time is Now." Stokes convened the forum to address the health challenges facing the African American community and the need for the Disadvantaged Minority Health Improvement Amendments Act of 1997 (HR 1895). For more than 20 years, Stokes has led the Health Braintrust in formulating policies and initiatives to address the health needs of minorities and underserved communities.

Despite the advances, Stokes, the chairman of the Braintrust who is retiring from Congress at the end of the 105<sup>th</sup> session, noted regretfully that "African Americans and others have not fully nor equally benefitted from these new discoveries." Cancer, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, stroke, and infant mortality "are among the many diseases that have created a disproportionate burden of disease incidence, morbidity and mortality among this population." And, these illnesses "factor very heavily into the estimated 70,000 excess deaths that African Americans suffer every year." Stokes told attendees that the health forum should serve as a reminder that much more work remains to be done to improve the health of minorities.

Newly appointed Surgeon General David Satcher also addressed the Braintrust and noted that in his role as surgeon general and assistant secretary for health he would work to develop, as part of the President's Race Initiative, a strategy for erasing the health disparities between the races. Satcher noted that a part of the Department of Health and Human Service's Healthy People 2000 goal is to eliminate the disparities by the year 2010. He also noted that the Clinton Administration has six targets: infant mortality, immunization for children and adults, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer. Satcher also underscored that the President's

Initiative "is not a zero sum game." Other areas will not suffer a reduction in funding as a result of the emphasis on eliminating the current disparities, he concluded.

### **CBC Wants Reversal on Needle Exchange Policy**

CBC Chair Maxine Waters (D-CA), fresh from holding a press conference to respond to the Clinton Administration's decision that federal funds cannot be used for needle exchange programs, said the press event was necessary to respond to the White House's decision. "President Clinton is our friend," but the toll of HIV/AIDS on the minority communities is "staggering." Needle exchange programs, continued Waters, "have proven to reduce HIV infection." The CBC, she said, did not come to this conclusion easily, because "our communities are devastated by drugs." On this issue, however, the CBC does "not intend to be moved . . . We want a reversal", said Waters. The CBC also called for the resignation of Drug Czar General Barry McCaffrey, who is opposed to needle exchange programs.

### **YOUTH VIOLENCE HEARING (continued)**

"Data suggest that youth violence has become worse — not because children are fighting a lot more — but because their fighting has become more lethal," Hammond said. Homicides, he continued, are only the tip of the iceberg in terms of youth violence . . . [T]here is an underlying layer of non-fatal violence behavior that should alarm us, both for its own sake and as a precursor to lethal violence." He told the Subcommittee that the CDC is addressing the problem of youth violence by asking four questions:

- ▶ What is the problem? (Surveillance)
- ▶ What are the causes? (Research)
- ▶ What works to help prevent the problem? (Intervention evaluation)
- ▶ How do you do it? (Program implementation)

Hammond emphasized CDC's support of research "to identify some of the risk factors for violence among young people, such as the impact of economic and neighborhood characteristics, access to

legal weapons, and the influence of ethnic identity on young males." The agency recently evaluated 14 youth violence programs around the country to determine which approaches, or combination of approaches, appear to be effective. Hammond said that a manual, *Prevention of Youth Violence: A Framework for Community Action*, has been developed by the CDC. He noted that the agency is pursuing projects in school-based violence prevention, comprehensive school health education, communication skills between parents and schools, parenting skills and outreach to high-risk youth.

Research undertaken by the CDC and other respected researchers, emphasized Hammond, show that there are three actions we can take now that would tremendously impact our ability to prevent school violence: 1) increase efforts to reduce the propensity of young people to use anger or to resort to any kind of violence as a response to interpersonal problems; 2) use current technology to generate better information about the nature and scope of the problem and to deliver tools to parents, teachers, and other community members; and 3) prevent the escalation of violent behavior into lethal actions.

"I can say with hesitation that media violence is a substantial contributor to our children becoming violent, becoming desensitized to the consequences of violence, and becoming fearful of becoming a victim," said Joanne Cantor, Professor of Communication Arts at the University of Wisconsin. Cantor told the subcommittee that media images of violence "make their contribution both in the short-term, immediately after viewing, and in the long-term, as a commutative effect of repeated exposure to violent images throughout childhood."

Cantor said that "research shows that the way violence is portrayed can make it more or less likely that a child will adopt violent attitudes or become violent." She cited as an example the fact that "violence that is committed by 'good guys,' that is shown as justified, and that shows little visible pain or harm is more likely to be imitated than violence committed by evil characters or violence that brings pain or punishment." If we want to help parents "socialize their children well, it will be important that research be continued to monitor the TV landscape and to keep tabs on how appropriately television programs are being rated."

Scott Poland, Director of Psychological Services for the Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District in Houston, Texas, representing the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) told the community that he "has personally seen the pain and intense emotionality" in Paducah, Kentucky and Jonesboro, Arkansas, following the recent school shootings in the two communities. The answer, he said, to the subcommittee's question "is a complex one." "Many young people do not understand the finality of death," said Poland. He also noted that "young people are very influenced by the extreme violence that is portrayed on television, in movies and video games . . . We must reduce violent behavior that is modeled for young people not only through the media but in our homes, schools and communities." Poland said that the availability of guns to children must be reduced. "There are approximately 5,000 gun deaths to children under the age of 18 each year," he said.

### The Impact of the Media and Guns

Poland said that the American Psychological Association and NASP have outlined the predictive factors of youth violence: child abuse, violence in the home, ineffective parenting, media violence, gun access, prejudice, poverty, and substance abuse. "I believe that prevention programs could reduce and eliminate the tragedies that we experience in places like Paducah and Jonesboro, he said. Public schools, concluded Poland, "are doing a good job with the limited resources that they have. Our schools are safer than our communities . . . A crisis is an opportunity to make needed changes and we have had a staggering school crisis. If we do not make changes, then our past will determine our future and we will continue to have a severe problem with youth violence."

### CDC CALLS FOR ABSTRACTS FOR PREVENTION CONFERENCE

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Association of State and Territorial Chronic Disease Program Directors are calling for abstracts for the 13<sup>th</sup> National Conference on Chronic Disease Prevention and Control — *Prevention: Translating Research into Public Health Practice*. The conference's objectives are 1) to increase the

knowledge and awareness of successful, cost-effective, public and private integrated approaches to reducing the health and economic burden of chronic disease; and 2) to provide opportunities for skill building in cross-cutting areas.

Abstracts, due May 29, 1998, should address specific policy and programmatic areas which fit into one or more of the following topics:

- **Translating Data into Public Health Practice** — using data to formulate policy, the role of epidemiology in decision making, data standards, program evaluations;
- **Targeting At-risk Populations** — addressing health disparities, segmentation of the population, applied social marketing, access to preventive services;
- **Prevention Research** — behavioral theories in action, cost-effectiveness, policy analysis, CDC Prevention Research Centers;
- **Women's Issues** — osteoporosis, hormone replacement therapy, access to care, advocacy, new initiatives;
- **Adolescent Risk Behavior** — advertising and marketing to adolescents, promoting health behaviors, risk behavior surveillance;
- **Cardiovascular Disease, Cancer, and Diabetes** — known and emerging risk factors, community/policy interventions, secondary prevention;
- **Emerging Chronic Disease Issues** — obesity, arthritis, genetics, asthma, oral health, alternative medicine;
- **Chronic Disease and Aging** — prevention opportunities/health aging, epidemiology, Medicare spending, quality of life measures;
- **Communication** — media advocacy, effective use of data, communicating "risk" to the public; and
- **Public Health and Medicine** — putting guidelines into practice, collaboration, local health department initiatives, screening and wellness promotion with managed care, workplace programs.

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