

BUDGET NEGOTIATIONS COMMENCE; NEW CR KEEPS GOVERNMENT OPERATING

The long awaited and predicted negotiations between the White House and the Congress to complete the Fiscal Year (FY) 2000 appropriations process have begun. In the meantime, a new Continuing Resolution (CR) to keep the government functioning until October 29 has been passed. The President has now signed six of the thirteen spending bills. This leaves seven bills still in the process. Two have already been vetoed, D.C. and Foreign Operations.

The Congress has adopted a novel way to deal with the troublesome Labor, HHS, Education bill. It went directly to a conference committee — without consideration and passage by the full House — where the Senate-passed version and the version that emerged from the House Appropriations committee were reconciled. The conference agreement will then be attached to a new version of the D.C. appropriations bill that will be brought before both Houses and hopefully passed. In order to keep from spending the surplus attributed to the Social Security Trust Fund, the GOP-led Congress has included language in the Labor-HHS-Education spending bill providing for a 1.4 percent across-the-board cut on all 13 appropriations bills. The White House does not want this. Stay tuned!

PRESIDENT SIGNS VA, HUD BILL INCLUDING NSF FUNDING

On October 20 President Clinton signed the FY 2000 VA, HUD, Independent Agencies Appropriations bill that included \$3.912 billion for the National Science Foundation (NSF). The Research and Related Activities account received \$2.664 billion. Within that account is \$90 million for Information Technology (IT) research. [This is a correction from the previously reported \$105 million.]

The Conference Report noted that these funds should be used for many areas of IT research including “to study privacy and access to information, and to further the understanding of the impact information technology advances have on issues that are of significant societal, ethical, and economical importance.” In addition, the conferees asked NSF to “explore the feasibility of establishing a multi-disciplinary research program that will estimate the benefits and costs of gambling,” pursuant to the recommendations of the federally-mandated National Gambling Impact Study Commission.

AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS AGREEMENT

After much discussion and debate over emergency farm aid and milk price supports, the House and Senate conference committee reached an agreement on the FY 2000 Agriculture and Rural Development Appropriations bill. The compromise bill has cleared both Houses and now awaits the president’s signature.

The bill provides \$65.4 million for the Economic Research Service, slightly less than FY 1999 spending. Of that amount, \$12.2 million is for

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studies and evaluations of child nutrition, Women and Infant Children (WIC), and food stamp programs, of which \$1 million is transferred to the Food and Nutrition Service; and \$453,000 is for estimating the benefits of food safety, as requested in the budget. The conferees denied the requested \$1 million for a study of why food stamp program participation has declined, citing a General Accounting Office (GAO) study on the same topic released in July 1999.

The National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS) received \$99.4 million, about \$5 million less than in FY 1999. The Census of Agriculture, within NASS, will receive \$16.5 million to finish up its activities in FY 2000.

Hatch Act Formula Funding received the same amount as last year, \$180.5 million. The National Research Initiative Competitive Grants program (NRI) at \$119.3 million, was also level-funded in FY 2000. Within the NRI, Congress appropriated \$4.6 million, same as last year, for the Markets, Trade and Development component. The conferees agreed on \$63.2 million for Special grants, including \$644,000 for the Rural Policy Institutes. No funding was provided for the Initiative for Future Agriculture and Food Systems.

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HOUSE AND SENATE APPROVE CJS FUNDING BILL; VETO BY PRESIDENT PROBABLE

The House and Senate approved the bill that funds the Departments of Commerce, Justice, State, and Related Agencies. The House approved the measure by an extremely close 217-215 vote, while the Senate approved the bill by voice vote. President Clinton, as well as many Democrat lawmakers, however, warned that the bill is subject to a veto because, among other things, it does not fully fund the president's request for the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program and it places restrictions on how the Census Bureau can spend its funds. As expected, Democrats derided the Republicans for skimping on some of the president's priorities, as well as the accounting gimmicks used in the bill to comply with budget caps established through the 1997 Balanced Budget Act.

The Census as an "Emergency"

The conferees agreed to provide the Census Bureau \$4.759 billion. For the 2000 Decennial Census \$4.476 billion, nearly full-funding, and designated this as "emergency" spending. Despite the high level of funding, several Democrats criticized the emergency designation. Representative David Obey (D-WI), ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, took particular umbrage with the accounting gimmick. During floor debate, he said, "This bill avoids counting \$4 billion in spending under the budget ceiling by designating the census as being emergency spending. I guess we did not know that the clock was going to tick and that we were going to run into another 10-year census requirement."

Another contentious point that was roundly criticized by Democrats was a provision in the bill that restricts how the Census Bureau spends its money. The bill, which divides the \$4.476 billion into several broad categories of Census 2000 activities, requires the Census Bureau to receive Congressional approval to reprogram (or move) funds between different activities. Census Bureau Director Ken Prewitt, in an October 15 letter to Representative Dan Miller, chairman of the Census Subcommittee and member of the Appropriations Committee, noted that census spending decisions

need to be made quickly based on changing conditions in the field. The reprogramming provision, he said, could "compromise" census operations.

NIJ Funding; Conferees Call for Second, Limited Reorganization Plan

The conferees agreed to provide the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) base funding of \$43.4 million, \$1 million more than the House bill, but \$7.5 million less than the Senate proposed level. On top of the base funding, NIJ will receive \$5.2 million from the Violence Against Women (VAW) Grants program for research and evaluation on the causes and impact of domestic violence; \$15 million from technology funding in the State and Local Law Enforcement account for the development of new, more effective safety technologies for safe schools; and \$20 million from the Local Law Enforcement Block Grant program to assist local law enforcement units to identify, select, develop, modernize, and purchase new technologies for use by law enforcement.

The conference agreement also provided the NIJ \$30 million for "research into the social and political causes and effects of terrorism and development of technologies to count biological, nuclear, and chemical weapons of mass destruction, as well as cyberterrorism through our automated information systems." The conferees direct the NIJ to evenly divide the money between the Oklahoma City Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism and the Dartmouth Institute for Security Studies.

The bill also commends the OJP's reorganization plan, submitted to Congress earlier this year. Nevertheless, the conferees direct the Assistant Attorney General of the OJP to submit a second reorganization proposal to Congress by February 1, 2000 to specifically address three issues: the creation of a "one-stop" information center, the establishment of state desks for geographically-based grant administration, and administration of grants by subject area.

The conferees agreed to provide the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) \$25.5 million, slightly more than the FY 1999 level, \$3.4 million more than the House proposed amount, and \$3.4 million less than the Senate amount.

Exchange Programs Gain Slight Increase

The Educational and Cultural Exchange programs of the old United States Information Agency, now part of the State Department's Diplomatic and Consular programs, received a slight increase over last year to \$205 million for their FY 2000 funding. These programs include: Fulbright Scholarships, Humphrey Fellowships, Pepper Scholarships, Citizen Exchange, Muskie Fellowships, International Visitors, Oversea Exchanges, and others. The conference report extends the Muskie Fellowship program to allow participants to undertake doctoral graduate study in the social sciences, including economics, in universities in the United States. The Muskie program brings young professionals from the former Soviet Union to study in the U.S., who previously could only pursue Masters degrees.

NIH LOSING A CHAMPION; PORTER ANNOUNCES PLANS TO RETIRE

Representative John Edward Porter (R-IL), a 21 year veteran of the House and an ardent supporter of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), announced October 12 that he will not seek reelection in 2000. Porter made biomedical and behavioral research one of his highest priorities, and effectively advocated for the NIH, providing large budget increases in a very difficult environment. His leadership will be sorely missed. The announcement comes after NIH's unprecedented 14.6 percent increase in its FY 1999 budget, and an expected 15 percent increase in FY 2000.

As chairman of the House Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, Appropriations Subcommittee Porter, along with his Senate counterpart Arlen Specter (R-PA), is widely credited for providing the NIH with its recent budget increases. Porter noted in his released statement that as the representative of his northeastern Illinois district, he has been allowed to "focus on human rights, environmental issues, biomedical research, education, Social Security reform, gun control, family planning, foreign affairs, and other policy matters . . . that I have felt are important to our nation. I have attempted to be quietly effective while always acting within a framework of fiscal responsibility."

As chair of the powerful appropriations subcommittee that provides funds to the NIH, and the Departments of Education and Labor, Porter is giving up one of the most highly coveted subcommittee positions in the Congress. Had he returned to Congress, Porter would not have continued as Labor-HHS-Education appropriations chair because of rules limiting members to six years of service as the chair of any one committee. Thus, would-be suitors are already positioning themselves to become the next chair of this subcommittee.

With Porter's retirement, the list of NIH champions leaving in 2000 grows. Earlier this year, Senator Connie Mack (R-FL) announced that he would retire upon the completion of the 106th Congress after spending 12 years in the Senate and six years in the House. Additionally, NIH Director Harold Varmus and Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research (OBSSR) Director Norman Anderson recently announced their intentions to leave the agency (See *UPDATE*, October 11, 1999).

REAUTHORIZATION OF AHCPR PASSED BY THE HOUSE

By a resounding 417-7 vote, the full House September 28 passed the Health Research and Quality Act of 1999. The bill (H.R. 2506) reauthorizes the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (AHCPR), but renames the office the Agency for Health Research and Quality (See *UPDATE*, May 17, 1999).

Before final passage, the House adopted a number of amendments to the bill, including one offered by Representative Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) to establish an Office of Special Populations within the agency, and to include "in inner-city areas" when conducting research regarding access to primary care. Two of Representative Danny Davis' (D-IL) amendments were also adopted. The first requires the Director of AHCPR to submit an annual report to Congress regarding prevailing disparities in health care delivery related to racial and socio-economic factors in priority populations. The second allows minority institutions of higher learning to be eligible for grants and contracts.

The companion bill, S. 580, introduced in the Senate by Senator Bill Frist (R-TN), has not been considered. Identical language to that of S. 580 was incorporated in S. 1344, the Patients' Bill of Rights, recently passed by the Senate. That bill, however, was passed in a cloud of controversy meaning the Senate may choose to consider the House bill as its vehicle to reauthorizing the AHCPR. H.R. 2506 is currently awaiting consideration in the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, and will likely not see action before the end of the year.

NEW RESEARCH MISCONDUCT RULES ISSUED; COMMENTS SOUGHT

The administration has proposed a new government-wide federal policy that addresses research misconduct. The proposed policy was published in the October 14, 1999 issue of the *Federal Register* (pp. 55722-55725) and is posted at www.whitehouse.gov/OSTP.

The public has 60 days to comment on the new policy. Comments are due by December 13, 1999 and should be addressed to Sybil Francis, Office of Science and Technology Policy, Executive Office of the President, Washington, DC 20502. Francis is also the contact for further information: 202/456-6040; sfrancis@ostp.eop.gov.

The new proposed policy consists of a definition of research misconduct and establishes basic guidelines for the conduct of fair and timely investigations of alleged or suspected infractions. The policy will apply to all federally-funded research regardless of where the research is conducted or by whom. The goal of the new policy is to "establish uniformity among the federal agencies."

The proposed policy defines research misconduct as: "fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results."

According to the proposal: "Fabrication is making up results and recording or reporting them. Falsification is manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting

data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record. Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit, including those obtained through confidential review of other's research proposals and manuscripts. Research misconduct does not include honest error or honest differences."

In order to find research misconduct: "There must be a significant departure from accepted practices of the scientific community for maintaining the integrity of the research record; the misconduct must be committed intentionally, or knowingly, or in reckless disregard of accepted practices; and the allegation must be proven by a preponderance of evidence."

The proposal also establishes responsibilities for federal agencies and research institutions and guidelines for fair and timely procedures to investigate allegations of misconduct.

SBE AWARDS INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS

In a major effort to enhance the infrastructure of its sciences, the National Science Foundation's Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate has announced the winners in its recent competition. The Directorate awarded six grants for approximately \$19.5 million over the next five years. The competition received over 100 proposals. Multidisciplinary review panels selected more than 20 proposals as excellent, but available funds allowed for only six awards. The recipients are:

1) University of California, Santa Barbara. *Center for Spatially Enabled Social Science*. Building on the efforts of the National Center for Geographic Information and Analysis, the new Center will help accelerate the adoption and use of spatially based technologies — geographic information systems, Global Positioning System, and remote sensing — by the social and behavioral sciences. Michael Goodchild and Richard Appelbaum are the principal investigators.

2) Carnegie Mellon University. *TalkBank: A Multimedia Database of Communicative Interactions*. This project will develop computational tools to facilitate the linguistic

analysis of transcript data in the Child Language Data Exchange System (CHILDES) database. The principal investigators are Brian MacWhinney, Scott Stevens, Mark Liberman, O. Peter Buneman, and Howard Wactlar.

3) Dartmouth College, *The National Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging Center*. This project will bring together a multidisciplinary team to create a data center to help speed progress in understanding cognitive processes and the neural substrates that underlie them. The principal investigators are Michael Gazzaniga, Javed Aslam, and Daniel Rockmore.

4) Cornell University. *Dynamic Employer-Household Data and the Social Data Infrastructure*. This grant will create three prototype data sets based upon the Census Bureau's demographic and economic products and will use link information that permits the data sets to be longitudinal. The project will also advance the knowledge of both linkage technology and the statistical properties of linked data so that researchers in all disciplines can use these techniques. The principal investigators are John Abowd, Jon Haltiwanger, and Julia Lane.

5) University of Michigan. *Finding Aids, Bibliographic References, Expert Training, and Integrated Hyperlinks*. This project will enhance user support for the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. ICPSR is the major data archive in the social sciences. Richard Rockwell is the principal investigator.

6) University of Minnesota. *International Integrated Microdata Access System*. This project will create and disseminate an integrated international census database composed of high-precision, high-density samples of individuals and households from seven countries. Principal investigators are Deborah Levinson and Robert E. McCaa.

If funding permits, the directorate hopes to sponsor another competition for FY 2001.

NIH ESTABLISHES MIND-BODY RESEARCH CENTERS

The National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) and 12 cosponsoring NIH Institutes awarded \$10 million to establish five Mind-Body Research Centers to support research on mind-body interactions and health. The research supported by these new centers will seek to understand how beliefs, attitudes, values, and stress affect physical and mental health.

"These new research centers represent innovations in the integration of behavioral, social, and biomedical research. It is hoped that the findings they produce will accelerate our understanding of mind/body interactions, and lead to more effective approaches for the treatment and prevention of disease," said OBSSR Director Norman Anderson.

Congress, in its FY 1999 multi-billion dollar Omnibus Appropriations bill, included language calling for the creation of "Mind/Body Centers" within the NIH's Office Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, and provided \$10 million for OBSSR to coordinate the initiative. That mandate was the result of a Fall 1998 Senate hearing held by the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education. At the hearing, Subcommittee chair Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) emphasized that mind/body approaches to health are "an important part of medical treatment."

Twelve NIH Institutes agreed to cosponsor the initiative, but five Institutes will support the five new centers: the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR), and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH).

The locations of the five centers are:

- ◆ University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Department of Psychiatry and Carnegie Mellon University Department of Psychology;

- ◆ University of Michigan School of Public Health, Department of Epidemiology;

- ◆ University of Wisconsin Department of Psychology;

- ◆ University of Miami Department of Psychology; and

- ◆ Ohio State University, College of Medicine and Public Health, Department of Microbiology and Immunology.

The seven other Institutes supporting the initiative are the: National Institute on Aging, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institute of General Medical Sciences, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, and the National Institute of Nursing Research.

At this time, there are no plans for an immediate re-issue of the RFA for Mind/Body Research Centers. It is possible that the RFA will be re-issued in a few years to allow for re-competition. At that time, new applications and renewal applications will be solicited. Researchers interested in this area, however, may submit proposals for unsolicited Research Project (R01) and Program Project (P01) grants through the regular extramural research programs of the NIH Institutes. For answers to questions regarding program project grants, individuals should contact the NIH Institute most likely to fund their project. Permission must be obtained from an Institute prior to submitting a grant application costing more than \$500,000 in one year. The web address for the NIH is: <http://www.nih.gov>.

"FROM CELLS TO SELVES;" NICHD SEEKS COMMENTS ON ITS FRAMEWORK FOR A STRATEGIC PLAN

The National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), like the other Institutes of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), is seeking comments from the extramural community on its strategic plan.

In developing its plan, the NICHD has convened several expert panels to help the Institute identify critical scientific topics, and within those topics key research or strategic emphasis areas. The results of those panels are currently posted on the NICHD's website

(http://www.nichd.nih.gov/strategic_plan.htm).

The Institute is seeking comments on the following topics by November 1, 1999 to help it refine NICHD's strategic directions: Biology and Genetics of Development; Biobehavioral Development; Genetics of Disease Susceptibility; and Reproductive Health for the 21st Century.

Research Emphasis Areas in Biobehavioral Development

Biobehavioral Development research is defined by NICHD as research that "focuses on the study of the emergence and interrelations of molecular, genetic, cellular and neural systems, and whole organ processes, with behaviors and environmental factors, to understand how these interrelations contribute to maturational factors in normal and atypical development in humans and in animal models." Behavior includes both internal and external actions or responses originating from such factors as: cognition, language, learning, memory, academic skill acquisition, affect, cognitive-based social interactions, and planned motor function. Environment includes external factors such as nutrition, health care, environmental toxins, schooling, and the full range of positive and negative experiences of children in the family, community and broader society.

Biobehavioral Bases of Developmental Continuities and Discontinuities: From Birth Through Parenthood including research on influences of sex/gender throughout the developmental process; fetal behavior; development of children with disabilities and chronic diseases; comprehensive biobehavioral research on adolescence; and interaction of neuroendocrine and environmental influences; developmental neurobiology underlying the emergence of social behaviors (prosocial versus violent and aggressive social behaviors).

The plan also targets specific technical development areas relevant to research in biobehavioral development including data collection and analysis related to neural networks and dynamic

systems for analysis of development (innovative methods of statistical/mathematical analysis).

Reproductive Health for the 21st Century

NICHD's plan emphasizes that reproductive health "impacts significantly on the overall health of individuals and society and has been the subject of increased attention both from a health standpoint as well as from an economic one." To explore the new opportunities in management of fertility, NICHD proposes to undertake research on male reproductive behaviors; behavioral factors leading to infertility, the use of infertility services, and the ethics of infertility treatment.

NIH NAMES DIRECTOR TO HEAD ITS NEWEST CENTER

On October 6, Stephen Straus became the first director of the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala made the announcement October 5, and noted that "Straus brings exceptional expertise and leadership to this position and will continue to ensure high-quality complementary and alternative medicine treatments and modalities." Straus replaced NCCAM Acting Director William Harlan, who returned to his position as director of the NIH Office of Disease Prevention

Since 1991, Straus has served as the chief for the Laboratory of Clinical Investigation at NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID). According to NIH officials, he has a broad basic and clinical research experience related to many diseases for which there are alternative remedies, including chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), Lyme Disease, AIDS/HIV, and chronic hepatitis B virus. NIH Director Harold Varmus said, "The appointment of Dr. Straus, with his experience in alternative therapies and his expertise in clinical evidence, will result in significant expansion of clinical research in this field."

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CONTRIBUTORS

American Council of Learned Societies
American Institutes for Research
University of Arizona
Bowling Green State University
Brookings Institution
Brown University
University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Davis
University of California, Los Angeles
University of California, San Diego
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Consortium of Social Science Associations

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

