

LABOR-HHS SUBCOMMITTEE APPROVES SPENDING BILL AS

On October 3, the House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education Subcommittee (Labor-HHS) approved a bill containing significant increases for programs and agencies in the health and education departments for fiscal year 2002.

“The bill is balanced and bipartisan, providing sufficient funding to address the President’s education reform priorities, while meeting the many pressing needs of the health of all Americans,” said Subcommittee Chairman Ralph Regula (R-OH). Rep. David Obey (D-WI), Senior Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee and ranking member of the Subcommittee, also expressed his satisfaction with the bipartisan agreement. “This bill makes sure that we continue to increase our commitment to education and health care, while preserving our most important worker protection programs,” Obey said.

The bill increases the **National Institutes of Health’s** (NIH) budget by \$2.5 billion to more than \$23 billion in FY 2002, the same as the President’s request but less than the \$3.4 billion increase sought by NIH advocates.

The **Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality** received the President’s request of \$306.2 million, a \$35.2 million increase above FY 2001. The Subcommittee provides \$4.1 billion in funding to the **Centers for Disease Control** (CDC), a \$200 million increase over FY 2001 and \$393 million more than the President requested.

In response to the September 11 terrorist attacks, the Subcommittee provides \$393 million, a \$100 million increase, for biological and chemical warfare research at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), NIH, and the Office of Emergency Preparedness.

The bill would increase education spending by \$7 billion over FY 2001 to \$49.3 billion. The **Office**

of **Educational Research and Improvement** would receive \$147.6 million for research, a \$27 million or 22 percent increase over FY 2001. **Regional educational laboratories** would receive \$70 million, \$5 million more than last year. The **National Center for Education Statistics** would also receive \$5 million more for a total of \$85 million.

The bill provided **International Education and Foreign Language Studies** with \$93 million, \$15 million more than FY 2001. Domestic programs increased from \$67 to \$80 million; Fulbright-Hays went from \$10 million to \$11.5 million; and the Institute for International Public Policy increased from \$1.0 million to \$1.5 million.

The bill also begins the President’s Faith-Based Initiative, including providing the Compassion Capital Fund with \$30 million and increasing the Promoting Safe and Stable Families program by \$70 million.

For the **Bureau of Labor Statistics**, the bill allocates \$477.1 million, an increase of 5.8 percent.

The House Appropriations Committee plans to mark up the bill on October 9. The Senate’s committee plans to mark up its version the same week.

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MERITS OF SCIENTIFIC EARMARKING DEBATED

A group of associations convened a workshop on the Congressional earmarking of scientific research on October 3 at the Carnegie Institution of Washington. The format featured remarks by the event's moderator, University of Virginia President John T. Casteen, and two experts. The sponsors included the National Academies, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), the Association of American Universities (AAU), and the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC).

The first panel discussed definitions and contexts of earmarking. Sarah Horrigan of the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) explained that her agency defines scientific earmarking as research performed at Congressional discretion. Ron Southwick of the Chronicle of Higher Education commented that total earmarked funds have ballooned in the last two fiscal years and that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration had to cut all standing grants to researchers by five percent in Fiscal Year 1999 to pay for earmarks.

Jeff Brainard, also with the Chronicle, added that members of Congress often specify earmarks in conference reports, but he noted that these are not law. Daniel Pearson of the House Science Committee Democratic staff picked up on this last point by saying that if President Bush is really serious about reducing earmarking, as some recent articles have suggested he is, he should issue an executive order forcing agency heads to award only those earmarks written into law. Kei Kozumi of the AAAS remarked that his organization agrees with the OMB's definition of earmarking, but that its definition also includes funds specified for research facility construction at institutions.

Offering some historical background, Casteen explained that academic earmarks first started appearing in Congressional appropriations in 1980. He then went on lay out some of the basic arguments in favor: they can better reach institutions that have traditionally been neglected by the peer review system, and most major research universities seek them out anyway. Arguments against these earmarks, said Casteen, include: they undercut peer review, the funds are often wasted, and they create hypocrisy in academic research – it amounts to “the

earmarking of science.” He noted that the AAU has twice called on its member institutions to refrain from seeking earmarks, and that every U.S. president since Jimmy Carter has opposed earmarks.

In the ensuing discussion, freelance writer Dan Greenberg asked the panel to comment on the assertion that peer review processes are risk adverse and may not finance cutting-edge research (thus necessitating earmarking). Horrigan countered that agency directors and program managers are allocated discretionary funds for this type of research; she also noted that there has been some consideration given to the idea of setting aside some funds for proposals receiving high standard deviations in their peer review scores. She contented that such marks generally indicate that the proposal is controversial, cutting-edge research.

The second panel was tasked with discussing interpretations and policy implications of earmarks. Former U.S. Senator J. Bennett Johnston (D-LA) dominated the session by stressing that earmarks are going to continue no matter how much effort is made to eradicate them. He further asserted that earmarked funds are not likely to go towards peer reviewed research even if they are removed from appropriations.

The workshop made it clear that the jury on scientific earmarking is still out, and no resolution to the debate seems imminent.

PANEL PASSES BILL TO CREATE EPA SCIENCE COORDINATOR

The House Science Committee, chaired by Rep. Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY), passed H.R. 64, a bill to create a Deputy Administrator for Science and Technology at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Rep. Vernon Ehlers (R-MI) introduced the legislation based on a June, 2000 report by the National Research Council, *Strengthening Science at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Research-Management and Peer Review Practices*, recommending new positions at EPA to enhance the role of science in Agency decision-making.

The new Deputy Administrator would be responsible for coordinating the scientific effort

among EPA's numerous offices and, according to the Committee, "ensuring that sound science is the basis for regulatory decisions."

The legislation also set a fixed five-year term for the EPA Assistant Administrator of the Office of Research and Development (ORD). This would provide more continuity across administrations, enabling the individual to better focus on the science conducted at the Agency. The ORD Administrator would also be designated EPA's "Chief Scientist."

The ORD supports competitive research by university-based investigators through its Science to Achieve Results (STAR) program. It also provides almost \$10 million for fellowships.

The bill also expresses Congress' desire that the EPA maintain a balance between "core research" and "problem-driven research." EPA is also strongly encouraged to improve its scientific research dissemination efforts including, at the urging of Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX), improved efforts at reaching historically black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving universities, minority communities, and rural communities.

The legislation now moves to the House floor.

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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.

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www.cossa.org

REPORTS ASSESS CENSUS 2000, LOOK TO 2010

With the expiration of the Census Monitoring Board's legal mandate on September 30 (see *Update*, September 24, 2001), the Board released two final reports to Congress characterizing the process of Census 2000 and outlining recommendations for the 2010 census. Not surprisingly, the reports differ significantly.

The first, released on September 1, was produced by the four Congressional Members, who were appointed by Republican congressional leaders when the Board was created by Congress in 1997 to oversee planning for and implementation of Census 2000. The second report was released on September 26 by the four Presidential Members, who were appointed by President Clinton.

"An Unexpected Success"

The Congressional Members' report stressed the success of Census 2000, proclaiming "We have witnessed one of the most remarkable achievements in the American experience: the most accurate census in our history." The report stressed the improvements in reducing the country's net undercount (to 1.18 percent) and the black-white differential undercount. The members acknowledge that the results were not perfect, but stress that research by the Board and by the Census Bureau "indicate that it was a clear success."

The report also points to several factors that the members believe contributed to its success. These include: giving Regional Offices the flexibility and resources to meet the needs of local communities; partnering with other organizations to promote the Census; working with local governments to improve address lists; paying for an advertising campaign; paying census workers competitive rates; and fully funding Census 2000.

Acknowledging the problem of a differential undercount (the difference in undercount rates between races), the report goes on to assert that "statistical adjustment will never completely eliminate the differential undercount or the overall net undercount."

Instead, the congressional members recommend that the Bureau "make an effort to reach every

person and to create every opportunity for people to participate in the census."

The Congressional Members' full report is available at www.cmbc.gov/Reports/Report_FINAL.pdf.

"Plagued by the Undercount"

In contrast to the Congressional Members' analysis, the Presidential Members' report was more reserved in its evaluation of success, using the phrase, "To the degree that Census 2000 was a success . . ."

The source of their discontent lies with the differential undercount and their belief that adjustment could have resulted in a more accurate census. "Even after the Census Bureau's operational successes . . . the differential undercount, while reduced, remains," asserted Gilbert Casellas, Presidential Co-Chair.

Casellas lamented that the undercount hampers Congress in directing federal funds to where they are needed, and that statistically adjusted numbers "would have made a major difference in people's lives."

While the use of statistical adjustment for the purpose of redistricting has already been rejected, the use of adjustment for other purposes, such as distributing billions of dollars in federal grants, is not yet settled. The Bureau is currently evaluating the accuracy of Census 2000 and has set a deadline of October 15 to recommend for or against adjustment. The public release of adjusted data is on hold pending that decision.

The report outlined 18 recommendations to improve the 2010 census, which include: remove partisan politics from the process; set a fixed term for the Census Director (who currently serves at the pleasure of the President); continue Congressional funding for a post-enumeration survey; adequately fund the 2010 Census; require the Census Bureau to develop greater capacity to measure immigration; use gross error rather than net error as the primary basis to determine the accuracy of the census; and ensure the census complies with its pre-determined data products release schedule.

The Presidential Members' full report is available at www.cmbp.gov/reports/final_report/FinalReport.pdf.

JUSTICE STATISTICS RELEASES HATE CRIMES REPORT *CR JW*

The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) unveiled a study on September 23 compiling hate crimes committed between 1997 and 1999. The report's release comes as hate crimes receive a new wave of attention in the wake of last month's terrorist strikes. Recently, President Bush and other leaders have called on the American public to shun crimes that some have committed against individuals of Middle Eastern and South Asian descent since the attack.

The Hate Crime Statistics Act of 1990 mandated the collection of hate crimes information, and the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting program has been collecting data ever since. As time passes, more and more law enforcement agencies are reporting incident-level hate crime data to the FBI, which has created the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Hate crimes are defined by the FBI as criminal offenses motivated by an offender's bias against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity.

The study breaks down nearly 3,000 reported hate crimes from 17 states into categories such as bias motivation, victim and offender characteristics, and type of offense committed. It found that the majority of these hate crimes were motivated by race (61.2 percent of the total); smaller percentages were driven by religion (14.4 percent), sexual orientation (12.7 percent), ethnicity (11.1 percent), and disability (0.6 percent). Turning to the targets of hate crimes, blacks were the victims of a majority of the racially motivated crimes; crimes against Jews, male homosexuals, Hispanics, and physically disabled individuals led the tallies in the other categories.

The report found that more than half of the victims of violent crimes were under the age of 25. Offenders also tended to fit into younger age groups: 31 percent of violent hate crimes and 46 percent of property offenses studied can be attributed to individuals under the age of 18. The report also lists statistics for the relationship between the victim and the offender. Among victims of violent hate crimes,

38 percent listed their attackers as acquaintances, 26 percent as strangers, and 7 percent as intimates, relatives, or friends. The relationship was unknown or unreported in the other 29 percent of cases.

The 17 states reporting to the NIBRS in 1999 were Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia. Copies of the report are available at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/hcrn99.htm.

REPORT ENCOURAGES COOPERATION BETWEEN SECULAR AND FAITH COMMUNITIES TO REDUCE TEEN PREGNANCY AS

Over the years, numerous studies have reported associations between adolescents' sexual attitudes and behaviors and their religious affiliations, practices, and beliefs. More recently, religious institutions have increasingly been called upon by policy makers and the public to address social problems – with or without government funding.

Given this trend, the authors of the recently released report, *Keeping the Faith: The Role of Religion and Faith in Communities in Preventing Teen Pregnancy*, were “struck by the nascent state of research on religion and adolescent sexual behavior, despite the fact that researchers have been [studying] the topic for at least four decades.” The report was produced by the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy and the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

The report finds that morals, values, and/or religious beliefs affect teens' decisions whether or not to have sex more than concern about sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs), fear of pregnancy, or other reasons.

While the report shows that religious teens tend to hold more conservative views regarding sex and are more likely to delay having sex, it also suggests that some religious teens may be less likely to use contraception if they become sexually active. Other findings include:

- Approximately 90 percent of teens report affiliation with a particular religious denomination.

- Regardless of gender or race, teens who attend religious services frequently are less likely to have permissive attitudes about sex.
- Girls with no religious affiliation have higher rates of sexual activity and lower rates of condom use.

Because of the limited research, the report does not examine the effectiveness of faith-based programs to prevent teen pregnancy.

Reason for Hope: A Review of the Research

Keeping the Faith also examines the research and what it reveals about the role religion plays in teen decisions about sex, and “makes the argument for increased cooperation and understanding among secular and faith communities.”

A section authored by former COSSA Board Member Brian Wilcox, with Sharon Scales Rostosky and colleagues, provides a comprehensive research review of the role of religiosity in teen sexual behavior, considering approximately 50 studies published between 1980 and 2000. Some of the theoretical and methodological issues raised by research are summarized in the report.

The authors qualify that the report does not address a number of issues, including:

- Studies examining the effectiveness of faith-based adolescent pregnancy prevention programs
- Research summarizing evaluations of teen pregnancy prevention programs
- Studies examining effects associated with attending religious schools; and
- Aspects of religious experience – grace and miracles – that are not amenable to empirical scrutiny.

Future Directions of Research

The authors observe that the research designs used in the studies are “almost exclusively cross-sectional in nature,” which hindered their ability to assess the likely directionality of influence.

They stressed that assessing the causal ordering of variables such as religiosity and sexual behavior will require that future studies collect data at multiple points in time. Longitudinal studies, they assert, are essential to capture the changes (patterns of religious practices and beliefs, sexual attitudes, and behaviors) and assess the direction of causality.

The authors also expressed their "surprise by the largely atheoretical nature of the research in this field. Most studies treated the religion measures as control variables, and, as such they were not the focus of the studies."

They also point out that few studies explored the core questions regarding what it is about adolescents' religious experience that might influence their sexual behaviors. Similarly, the studies reviewed ignored the possible role of religiosity within an adolescent's peer group. None of the studies examined adolescents' specific religious beliefs and perceptions regarding the appropriateness and potential consequences of various sexual behaviors.

The report calls for research that:

- Examines the role that race and ethnicity may play in the religiosity/sexual behavior relationship.
- Addresses the question of how religiously-involved youth differ from those who are not involved or what role those differences – personal, social, or contextual – might play in accounting for any relationship between religiosity and sexual behavior.
- Approaches the question of relationship between adolescent religiosity and sexual behavior from a developmental viewpoint.
- Addresses the "complex interrelationships that exist between adolescents, their families, their peers, and the social contexts, both micro and macro, in which they live."

The authors concede that such studies are extremely complex and call for large-scale longitudinal studies that are expensive and difficult to manage. For more information, contact the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy at 202/478-8510.

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT

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

Health and Human Services: Short-Term Courses in Research Ethics

Despite research that has led to important advances in health care and life expectancy, and an improvement in the quality of life, there have been some highly visible cases of serious lapses in the ethical conduct of research involving human participants. To provide a key learning opportunity for researchers to obtain and develop their understanding of ethical issues that pertain to research, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Agency for HealthCare and Research Quality (AHRQ) are seeking grant applications to develop, conduct, evaluate, and disseminate short-term courses on ethical issues in research.

The long term objective is to increase the number of researchers who have both awareness and skills in the ethical aspects of research involving humans.

Topics that can benefit from this short course approach include:

- Practical problems arising in the design and conduct of research.
- Issues in handling the needs of specific populations participating in research.
- International issues in research ethics.
- Theoretical approaches to understanding ethical, legal, and social issues.
- Issues arising in the context of institutional review board (IRB) review.

Application receipt dates: **March 12, 2002;** March 12, 2003 and March 12, 2004. Inquiries are encouraged. Contact Lawrence Friedman, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, 301/496-9899 or lawrence_friedman@nih.gov or see <http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PAR-01-143.html> for more information.

**National Institute on
Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism:
Alcohol-Related Problems Among College
Students: Epidemiology and Prevention**

The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism seeks research proposals on alcohol use by college students (RFA-AA-02-001). Studies should focus on the epidemiology and natural history of college drinking and related problems and on designing and/or testing interventions to prevent or reduce alcohol-related problems among college students.

Topics include, but are not limited to: patterns of alcohol consumption and the distribution of alcohol-related problems in the collegiate population as a whole and in specific subpopulations of students; risk and protective factors (including ethnic, cultural, family, genetic, and environmental influences); differences between racial/ethnic groups in college with respect to alcohol consumption and alcohol-related problems; special populations particular to campus life; the influence of school characteristics (e.g., size, location, religious affiliation if any) in attracting students to varying drinking proclivities and habits and in affecting the drinking behavior of students on campus; understanding the impact of alcohol consumption on high risk sexual behavior, sexual assault and other types of aggression among college students.

A letter of intent is due by **January 18, 2002**. Applications are due by **February 19, 2002**. For additional information regarding epidemiology and natural history contact Vivian B. Faden, 301/594-6232 or vfaden@willco.niaaa.nih.gov; for prevention and intervention contact Gayle Boyd, 301/443-8766 or gboyd@willco.niaaa.nih.gov.

**National Cancer Institute:
Exploratory Grants for Behavioral Research
in Cancer Control**

The Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences and the Division of Cancer Prevention of the National Cancer Institute invite research proposals to conduct developmental and formative behavioral research in cancer prevention and control (PA-02-001).

Priority areas include, but are not limited to: enhancing risk communication, comprehension, and informed decision making under uncertainty; integrating preventive and early detection services into changing health delivery systems; enhancing survivorship of cancer patients; promoting a healthy diet and physical activity; prevention, treatment, and control of tobacco use among children, teenagers, and adults; improving the outcomes of genetic testing for cancer susceptibility; prevention of cancer (adherence); consideration of ethnicity, social class, and culture; methods and measurements; and research settings.

For additional information contact Sabra F. Woolley, Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences, at 301/435-4589 or sw215x@nih.gov; or Claudette Varricchio, Division of Cancer Prevention, at 301/496-8641 or cv9h@nih.gov.

**National Institute of Mental Health:
Research on Quality of Care for
Mental Disorders**

The National Institute of Mental Health seeks grant proposals for multidisciplinary research, especially mixed-methods, that will characterize, examine, and assess the quality of mental health services provided to people with mental disorders (PA-01-145). Research questions include, but are not limited to: Is patient or client satisfaction related to quality, as defined by treatment guidelines or standards of care, or to client outcomes? How do typically measured aspects of quality relate to client or parent satisfaction, clinician motivation and involvement, and clinical and functional outcomes for clients? Do personality and cultural differences between clients and clinicians affect the client's expectations from treatment, perception of quality, and his or her clinical and functional outcomes?

For more information contact Karen Anderson Oliver at 301/443-3364 or koliver1@mail.nih.gov.

All of the announcements may be viewed at:
<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/2001/01.10.05/index.html>.

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