
CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

Volume V, Number 12
July 4, 1986

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HOUSE PASSES NSF AUTHORIZATION; BUDGET COMPROMISE REACHED

On June 26 the House of Representatives by an overwhelming vote of 405-2 passed the FY 1987 National Science Foundation (NSF) authorization bill. NSF is authorized to receive \$1.7 billion in FY 1987--the administration requested level and an increase of 13% over post-Gramm-Rudman FY 1986 figures. Included in the authorization bill is a 14% increase for Research and Related Activities and a \$3 million increase over the administration's request for the Directorate for Biological, Behavioral and Social Sciences (BBS) to be allocated for social and behavioral science research (see Update, June 6, 1986).

Despite the significant increase proposed for NSF in this era of budget constraint, there was no real opposition to the bill. There were no speeches about silly titles in the behavioral and social sciences, nor any opposition to the extra \$3 million. Social scientists have made good progress in recent years towards educating the Congress and other policymakers about the importance of their research. COSSA is pleased to have played a major role in that effort. Even Rep. Robert Walker (R-PA) (acting ranking member on the Science and Technology Committee while Rep. Manuel Lujan (R-NM) recovers from surgery), who usually vociferously opposes increased federal spending, noted that in this case it was well worth it.

COSSA Washington Update is published 20-24 times per year, normally biweekly, by the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), 1200 Seventeenth Street, NW, Suite 520, Washington, D.C. 20036 (202/887-6166). Individual subscriptions are available from COSSA for \$40.00; institutional subscriptions, \$90.00; overseas airmail, \$50.00. ISSN 0749-4394. COSSA Members, Affiliates, and Contributors are listed on the back.

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The Consortium represents more than 185,000 American scientists across the full range of the social and behavioral sciences, functioning as a bridge between the research world and the Washington community.

Risa I. Palm, *President*

David Jenness, *Executive Director*

The authorization bill still awaits scrutiny by the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee and then the full Senate. The additional \$3 million for social and behavioral science is in the Senate bill as it emerged from the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee (see Update, May 23, 1986).

In the meantime, House and Senate conferees reached agreement on the FY 1987 budget resolution. The resolution serves as a guideline for the appropriations committees when they make the actual decisions on agency funding. The Science Function (#250) for next year is funded at \$9.1 billion in new budget authority, and \$8.9 billion in outlays. Specific instructions in the report on the resolution include a \$150 million increase for NSF. According to NSF officials, this should allow the HUD-Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittees to fund NSF at the administration's requested level. These Subcommittees have yet to act. The House Subcommittee postponed its markup until after the July 4 recess. The Senate Subcommittee is still holding hearings on the National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA) which is in the same appropriations bill as NSF.

SENATE BILL IGNORES NEED FOR EDUCATION TO HALT AIDS

Last week the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources approved legislation amending the Public Health Service Act "to improve services relating to acquired immune deficiency syndrome." If the new legislation becomes law, the additional \$20 million authorized for each of fiscal years 1987, 1988, and 1989 will be used for: 1) "establishing coordinating networks of comprehensive health services which will provide, in the most cost effective manner, the full range of services required by individuals who have AIDS"; 2) encouraging "use of outpatient services by individuals infected with the [AIDS] virus instead of extensive reliance on inpatient hospital services"; 3) providing "current information for health personnel involved with AIDS"; and, 4) encouraging the "establishment of coordinating networks in areas in which there are particular public health problems, including areas with significant incidences of children with [AIDS], and areas with...individuals who are intravenous drug abusers" who have AIDS.

While the new legislation provides important new resources for the nation's number one health crisis, it is nonetheless a disappointment for many health experts (including epidemiologists and other social scientists) in that the bill does not deal with prevention. Despite wide, and highly publicized, scientific agreement that prevention education is the most viable weapon available to halt the spread of the disease for the next five years or more, the Committee deleted all provisions for an enhanced educational effort during its budget markup. Under the chairmanship of Senator Orrin G. Hatch (R-UT), the Committee held hearings on AIDS on April 8 at which witness after witness stressed the critical need for effective education and persuasion as the key to prevention of further spread of the virus. The

House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, under the chairmanship of William H. Natcher (D-KY), heard testimony underscoring the same message (see Update, May 9, 1986).

The legislation which emerged from the Senate Committee is a truncated version of a bill proposed April 21 by Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) with co-sponsorship of Senators Moynihan (D-NY), Kerry (D-MA), Simon (D-IL), Dodd (D-CT), Matsunaga (D-HI), and Metzenbaum (D-OH). The Kennedy bill, which was written in unusually straightforward language, would have supported extensive education and information activities for both people at risk of contracting AIDS as a result of behavior and people who work in occupations which bring them into frequent contact with AIDS victims. Also proposed was an HHS-wide research coordinating committee located at the National Institutes of Health to advise the directors of national research institutes with respect to AIDS research.

Committee staff indicated that the deletion of the education programs (except for health service personnel), the research coordinating committee, and all references to the homosexual population (which has suffered more than 70% of the known cases of AIDS in the U.S.) was necessary to win the support of Senator Hatch. A provision of the Kennedy bill to provide counseling services to individuals who are seropositive on the AIDS test appears to have survived as a potential federally supported service through conversion to less explicit language.

The Committee's action followed closely on the heels of a public report on the outcome of a June 4-6 meeting of 85 experts in AIDS from the Public Health Service (PHS) and other institutions which included epidemiologists, public health practitioners, researchers, and administrators. The group reviewed and revised the PHS comprehensive plan to prevent and control AIDS which was published in September 1985. The report of the meeting stressed the worsening outlook ("In 1991, we expect a cumulative total of 270,000 cases with 179,000 deaths. Of these, 74,000 will be new cases, developing during the year. In 1991 alone, there will be 145,000 who are ill and seeking treatment; 54,000 will die.) Because the PHS does not foresee over the next five years either effective drugs to treat the illness or vaccine(s) to prevent infection, the five major areas of recommended actions all center on education, persuasion, and prevention.

The Consortium has been monitoring the AIDS issue for some time. There is widespread concern that the research and methodological contributions social and behavioral scientists can bring to alleviating the crisis are not being fully utilized. One concern is that when massive intervention campaigns are launched, as they inevitably will be as the crisis worsens, the effectiveness of the effort may be hampered by a lack of historical perspective or an absence of scientifically based demonstration and evaluation projects.

Another set of concerns in the social and behavioral science community involves striking a reasonable balance among various kinds of research, and timetables and strategies for application of research. Much is already known in the social sciences about public health intervention, persuasion and opinion change, community organization, peer interactions, etc., that is obviously relevant; as yet, no one agency is assembling it. As for new research, the granting mechanisms and patterns of the NIH agencies are not conducive to intervention, demonstration, and evaluation; however, most social scientists would not welcome a centrally directed 'crash program' without scientific safeguards. Finally, the present crisis should ideally generate, in addition to 'action research,' fundamental research of a longrange nature: on the distribution of specific sexual behaviors in the population as a whole, on risk-seeking and addictive behavior, on social support and sanctions, on subcultural differences, on hedonic versus altruistic attitudes. Ironically, these topics, which public health experts now see as important to the resolution of the AIDS problem, are among those which have been underfunded on the federal scene in recent years.

RESEARCH ABUSES ALLEGED AT OJJDP

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has "violated the covenant of research" and has created a "chilling effect" on research in the juvenile justice area. These are the comments of researchers reacting to charges made by former OJJDP administrator Ira Schwartz (1979-81) at a June 19 oversight hearing before the House Subcommittee on Human Resources, chaired by Rep. Dale Kildee (D-MI).

During the hearing, which focused on state implementation of juvenile justice and delinquency programs, Schwartz told the Subcommittee "I hear...that research findings have been misrepresented and, in some instances, tampered with. That researchers may have been pressured to consider altering their conclusions to fit the philosophy and thinking of the current administration." An OJJDP staff person contacted by COSSA vociferously denied the charges of tampering and altering conclusions. Yet discussions with numerous grantees of OJJDP, most of them concerned with possible retaliation if they talked openly, support Schwartz's allegations.

According to researchers interviewed by COSSA, Alfred Regnery, who resigned as Administrator of the Office the end of May (see Update, June 6, 1986), consistently misrepresented the data on juvenile crime trends. Even though data from the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports indicate crime rates for juveniles declined from 1976-81, Regnery continued talking about a juvenile crime wave in order to justify his position of incarcerating kids. The studies demonstrating the decline in crime "never saw the light of day." There were also reports of introductions to published studies in which Regnery's discussion of the results was quite different from the thrust of the actual results when they differed significantly from the OJJDP position.

Although most researchers noted they had never been "explicitly pressured" into altering their conclusions, a number suggested that the pressure was implicit. One called it a "self-censorship" -- implied threats with unstated reprisals if the results were not congruent with the ideological goals of the Office, i.e., taking a hard line toward juvenile criminals. One researcher did say his work had been edited without his knowledge because the article was "too liberal."

Schwartz, in a conversation with COSSA, defined "tampering" as "telling someone if something isn't changed, it won't be published." It appears that a number of studies have been held up or not published at all because of results out of tune with Office policy. An OJJDP staff person admitted that publication policy was indeed discretionary, but that all the studies supported by OJJDP were available through a clearinghouse. Yet the Chairman of the National Coalition of State Advisory Groups complained that the states, whom OJJDP is supposed to be helping since most law enforcement is clearly within state and local jurisdiction, seldom get any of the research results.

OJJDP distributes approximately \$5 million annually in extramural research and demonstration funds to support studies that will contribute to the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency. It has been scrutinized by Congress repeatedly in the past five years for the nature of its operation and some of the grants it has awarded. With the departure of Regnery, the new Acting Administrator, Verne L. Spiers, has the opportunity to restore the integrity of OJJDP's research program.

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS RESPOND TO SCIENCE COUNCIL REPORT

Since May 15, when the White House Science Council released a report under on the health of U.S. colleges and universities, COSSA has been directing attention to both the strengths and the weaknesses of the report. As described in the Update of May 23, 1986, the report is a strong endorsement of the research university as the necessary base for fundamental scientific research in the U.S., and it offers a number of important recommendations for strengthening that base. COSSA has joined many scientific societies and educational associations in a coalition whose major goal is to promote acceptance of the report's basic principle of doubling the current federal commitment to basic research, a goal also shared by Erich Bloch, Director of the National Science Foundation. The coalition's other major focus is to recruit support for the report from industrial and business groups that rely on basic scientific research for the development and sales of their products.

As regards scientific education, however, COSSA has recently advised its own Contributor universities and a number of other university leaders of the narrowness of the scope of the report. Social and behavioral science tends to be excluded by omission. For example, the report suggests that portable federal

scholarships be awarded to "the most able 1% of the undergraduate students in mathematics, engineering, and the natural sciences entering colleges and universities each year..." COSSA believes that this narrowness is of no great service to the health of U.S. institutions of higher education, which have a substantial investment in social and behavioral science.

Responses from university leaders, admittedly a sample biased toward those who cared to respond, show a similar concern on their part. One president wrote, "The result...will be to underplay the importance of the social and behavioral sciences to the educational process....It is my hope that...we can bring attention to [the panel's] suggestion for development of interdisciplinary research centers...to take advantage of the social and behavioral sciences and the humanities." Another president wrote, "I will certainly be alert to the need to assert publicly that the behavioral and social sciences as well as the humanities are also indispensable 'in an era of rapid technological change and intense international competition.'" A third president wrote, "I will try, as often as I can, to point out...that the strength of American universities depends on the social sciences and humanities as well...."

The president of a large, comprehensive university underscored another aspect of the problem, writing, "I share with you the concern that a potentially good idea could be harmful to the higher education process if it encourages students to select a major based on factors other than interest and personal choice....If high achieving students are to receive federal stipends, let them freely pursue their interests...Those who opt for the humanities or the social and behavioral sciences will play a critical role in helping society...The proposed scholarship program is dangerously limited."

Prof. D. Allan Bromley, professor of physics at Yale and vice chair of the panel issuing the report, pointed out to COSSA that the report itself says, "The nation can ill afford generations of scientists and engineers unable to appreciate the economic and social consequences of their work...." He has also commented, "What we lack in [scientific policy issues] is any adequate understanding of the social, behavioral and economic consequences of various courses of action."

So far, neither the White House nor any major science agency in government has taken tangible steps to implement the report. Concentration on tax reform and on some reasonable budget compromise may have delayed such action; the spirit of deficit reduction may dictate a far less sweeping, nonincremental growth policy for science than the Science Council recommended. If the report is attended to, however, at least some university presidents seem to be aware of the problems as well as the benefits.

SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

COSSA provides this information as a service and encourages readers to contact the agency rather than COSSA for more information.

Air Force Office of Scientific Research
Life Sciences Directorate

The Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR) provides funding for basic research in several areas, including neuroscience, experimental psychology, and toxicology. Programs in the Life Sciences Directorate are focused on basic research that will ultimately lead to a better understanding of the nature of skilled human performance, better matching of equipment to human characteristics, and better ways to protect Air Force personnel. These programs emphasize research on fundamental mechanisms underlying biological and behavioral functions.

The Vision Research Program primarily supports psychophysical research on normal human adults. Other approaches may be funded if the primary objective of the research could lead to the discovery and quantitative modeling of those featural processing mechanisms that underlie visual recognition. The program currently supports research on a variety of topics related to featural processing, including mechanisms of contrast, detection and discrimination, motion, eye movement, color, and stereopsis. Other mechanisms that can be shown to influence recognition would be considered.

The Audition Program was recently instituted to support psychophysical research on the perception of complex, non-speech sounds in normal human adults. Other approaches, including electrophysiological studies and mathematical modeling of sensory processing, are welcome if results can be clearly linked to human behavioral data. Topics currently supported include research on those mechanisms that underlie recognition, pitch, localization, and speech.

Budget: The FY 1986 AFOSR budget includes approximately \$2.5 million for the Vision Program and \$1.5 million for the Audition Program.

Application/Review Process: Scientists are encouraged to contact the AFOSR program manager before submitting a formal proposal. Interdisciplinary research approaches are particularly welcome. Proposals are evaluated by ad hoc peer review panels.

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