



COSSA

Washington UPDATE



February 11, 2013 Volume 32, Issue 3



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House Majority Leader Questions Federal Funding of Social Science Research

Speaking before an audience at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, House Majority Leader Eric Cantor (R-VA) declared: "Funds currently spent by the government on social science-- including on politics of all things-- would be better spent helping find cures to diseases."

This is not the first time Cantor has attacked federal support for social science research. In June 2009 he and then House Minority Leader John Boehner (R-OH) wrote a letter to President Obama suggesting ways to reduce the federal deficit. They recommended:

Refocus the National Science Foundation (NSF) on Hard Sciences

The National Science Foundation intends to spend \$198 million next year on Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences (BCS) and Social and Economic Sciences (SES). Unlike NSF's other hard science programs (such as engineering and biological sciences) these soft science programs are often more controversial and less directly related to NSF's core mission.

Although no action on this issue happened in 2011 after the Republicans retook the House after the 2010 elections, in 2012 the House voted 218-208 to eliminate NSF's political science program. The House also voted to eliminate the American Community Survey and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. In addition, a House appropriations subcommittee wanted to prohibit funding on economics research by the National Institutes of Health. With stalwart support from the Senate, none of these House amendments have become law in the FY 2013 appropriations so far.

Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), Ranking Democrat on the House Science, Space and Technology Committee, responded to Cantor's remarks. She said: "I'm starting to feel like a broken record but I'm just going to keep saying it - the social sciences are important. They help us understand what we do, why we do what we do, and how we can do things better. There is almost always a social sciences angle in the most important issues of the day like energy, national security, and health."



Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson

Reacting to the Leader's denigration of research on politics, Johnson noted: "The Political Science Program at NSF, funded at roughly \$11 million per year, advances knowledge and understanding of citizenship, government, and politics. Data from national longitudinal surveys help us understand the changing face of our own democracy and what can be done to promote civic engagement and voting among the general public. I firmly believe that it is in the interest of the American taxpayers that their leaders understand what their constituents believe and why, and attend to removing barriers to participation in our great democracy. Political science research supported by NSF also helps us understand foreign societies and governments, including the societies and governments of countries such as Iran and China. When the leaders of countries such as Iran posture about war and nuclear weapons, is it not in the interest of the American taxpayer that our own nation's leaders understand what is motivating those foreign leaders and where we have the most leverage to negotiate or take other actions? "

Carol Geary Schneider, President of the American Association of Colleges and Universities and a former member of the COSSA Board of Directors, writing in *Inside Higher Education* called the Majority Leader's statement "jarring." She expressed dismay that "a ranking national leader in a House of Representatives, initially created to reflect the political will of the people, proposes to do away with (or redirect, to be accurate) all research support for disciplines-- including political science-- that are patently basic to the fortunes of democracy and to Americans' capacity for global leadership."

Schneider asked: "How can we possibly imagine that the U.S. can continue to lead in a globally interdependent world when most Americans already know far too little about global histories, cultures, religions, values, or social and political systems-- the very subjects that humanities and social sciences scholarship can help us explore?" She added: "The only thing more chilling than the actual substance of such a policy proposal is the growing frequency with which similar pronouncements now appear."

As we move into the legislative year when the Congress may take up the reauthorization of the National Science Foundation (NSF), including its Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences directorate, and eventually the FY 2014 appropriations for NSF, once again COSSA and its allies in the scientific and higher education community may find it necessary to mobilize a response to any threat to implement the provisions of the Majority Leader's speech.

NSF Director Suresh Steps Down; Will Become President of Carnegie Mellon



NSF Director Suresh at the COSSA 30th Anniversary Colloquium

On February 5, Subra Suresh, director of the National Science Foundation since October 2010, informed President Obama that he will step down from his position at the end of March. On July 1, he will succeed Jared Cohon as President of Carnegie Mellon University.

With Suresh's departure and the current difficulties in nominating and getting the Senate to confirm nominees, Deputy Director Cora Marrett will likely become Acting NSF Director once again. She served as Acting Director following the departure of former NSF Director Arden Bement in 2010. Marrett, aside from serving as Acting Director and Deputy Director, has led the Foundation's Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences (SBE) and the Education and Human Resources directorates. She is the only person ever to

head two NSF directorates.

In announcing his departure, Suresh noted some of the accomplishments of his brief tenure. He discussed "new models for global engagement," which include NSF's leadership role in the Global Merit Review Summit (see [Update, May 29, 2012](#)) and the creation of international opportunities for American graduate students through the Graduate Research Opportunities Worldwide program (GROW-- See [Update, December 10, 2012](#)).

Suresh also touted his much pronounced "OneNSF" philosophy that helped create "new paradigms for cross-disciplinary interactions and organizational efficiency." OneNSF also sought "to facilitate greater coordination and collaboration among different entities within NSF and among different NSF-funded activities," he noted. An example of this was the INSPIRE program (Integrative NSF Support Promoting Interdisciplinary Research and Education). Suresh also suggested the OneNSF approach has "also enabled greater integration of the educational and research activities of NSF."

Another accomplishment, according to Suresh, was that NSF partnered with its "sister agencies in the federal government "on a variety of "multi-agency initiatives to enhance the technological strength, global competitiveness and economic wellbeing of the nation." Among these were the Science, Engineering and Education for Sustainability (SEES) and the Cyber-Infrastructure for the

21st Century (CIF-21) programs. He also pointed out that NSF serves as the co-chair of the National Science and Technology Council's Committee on STEM education.

The establishment of the NSF Innovation Corps (I-Corps) program is another highlight of his directorship that Suresh mentioned. The program, he proclaimed, provides a "unique mechanism to extract considerable further value from basic research by providing opportunities for NSF-funded research and students to tap into a new, virtual innovation ecosystem at the national level."

With regard to the SBE sciences, Suresh speaking at the COSSA 30th Anniversary Colloquium in 2011 acclaimed the "relevance, importance, and centrality of the social sciences" and the "seamless integration of the social sciences with the natural science and engineering as the key to the science future." The importance of the social sciences, Suresh asserted, comes from science's role in meeting the needs of society and from the new globalized culture and its breakthroughs in telecommunications and transportation. "A technologically advanced society needs the social sciences," Suresh declared.

The SBE directorate has participated in almost all of NSF's initiatives during Suresh's tenure. Yet given the budget climate of the past three years, it has been very difficult to increase funding despite the once-promised doubling of the NSF budget by both the Bush and Obama Administrations.

Carolyn Clancy Leaving AHRQ

Carolyn Clancy has announced plans to step down as Director of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) after ten years. In an email to AHRQ and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) staff, HHS Secretary Kathleen Sibelius praised Clancy's service, stating, "Under Carolyn's leadership, AHRQ has undertaken innovative new work that has improved the quality, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of the nation's health care delivery system." Prior to her appointment as AHRQ Director in 2003, Clancy directed AHRQ's Center for Outcomes and Effectiveness Research. Clancy is a Clinical Associate Professor at the George Washington University School of Medicine. She is a graduate of Boston College and the University of Massachusetts Medical School.



Carolyn Clancy

Clancy will stay on for the next few months as HHS begins a search for her replacement.

National Climate Assessment Draft Open for Public Comment

A [draft of the National Climate Assessment \(NCA\)](#) has been released for public comment. The NCA "collects, integrates, and assesses observations and research from around the country, helping to show what is actually happening [regarding climate change] and what it means for peoples' lives, livelihoods, and future." The assessment was written by a team of more than 240 experts and overseen by the 60-member National Climate Assessment and Development Advisory Committee (NCADAC), chaired by Jerry Melillo, Marine Biological Laboratory, and vice-chaired by Terese Richmond, Van Ness Feldman GordonDerr, L.L.P., and Gary Yohe, Wesleyan University. The NCADAC seeks public input on the draft of the NCA report, which is administered by the Global Change Research Program. Comments may be submitted through the [Review and Comment System](#). **The deadline for comments is 5 p.m. Eastern on April 12, 2013.**

After revision based on comments from the public and the National Research Council of the National Academies and approval by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and other agencies, the NCA Report will be submitted to the federal government. This will be the third National Climate Assessment (previous reports were released in 2000 and 2009).

The draft argues that "climate change, once considered an issue for a distant future, has moved firmly into the present." The report analyzes the impact of climate change on seven sectors--human

health, water, energy, transportation, forests, and ecosystems and biodiversity--and looks at its impact on the major regions of the United States. It is also the first NCA report to assess the current state of decision support and adaptation and mitigation efforts. The report concludes that climate change is happening and it is due primarily to human activities; the effects of climate change are already being felt; and climate change will accelerate if emissions continue to increase. The authors note that climate change poses a threat to human health and well-being, U.S. infrastructure, water reliability, crops and livestock, and natural ecosystems, including ocean life. Finally, the report notes that while adaptation and mitigation efforts have increased, there has only been limited progress in implementing these plans.

Supreme Allied Commander of NATO Calls for More Language and Cultural Training

At a time when the federal government has been reducing its commitment to international education and foreign language training, Admiral James Stavridis, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe and Commander, US European Command, writing in his blog on February 4, calls for more training in foreign languages and the "attendant skills of regional expertise and cultural understanding."

The Admiral quotes Charlemagne that "to know another language is to have a second soul." He notes that "in this rapidly globalizing 21st century world that simple statement summarizes the gift of regional expertise, cultural understanding, and the ability to communicate directly in the language of an ally, partner or colleague."

He provides a few concrete examples of the importance of this need particularly in holding coalitions together and understanding the operating environment:

- Afghanistan has 50 troop-contributing nations operating together in a nation with incredibly complex language, cultural and historical challenges. It is the largest single security mission in the world today.
- In the Balkans, the NATO mission in Kosovo includes not only the 28 NATO countries, but additional partners from Finland, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland, and Morocco, to name a few. And they operate in a largely Muslim country with historical connections to Albania -- and an extraordinary history dating back centuries.
- At sea in counter-piracy efforts off the Horn of Africa, NATO ships from a dozen different allied nations operate alongside Chinese, Russian, Indian, and even Iranian military vessels, all involved in the same globally recognized and sanctioned mission.

Assessing the current situation, Stavridis declares that "this is an area in which we [DOD] have much work to do." He asserts, "As opposed to many of our European partners, who effortlessly speak four or five languages and have a deep knowledge of each other's background and culture, we in the U.S. are failing to fully train and prepare for this kind of international work."

He calls on DOD to consider:

- Strengthening our various language programs, perhaps requiring all officers to know a second language at a minimum; providing incentives and training to support this; and studying at what level in the enlisted career pattern this should occur.
- Building stronger Foreign Affairs Officers by providing a path to Flag/General Officer rank in each of the services for FAOs, recruiting our best and brightest into these specialties, and ensuring appropriate graduate education.
- Having not only "Afghan-Pakistan" Hands, but likewise "Asia Pacific" Hands, as well as comparably rigorous programs for Latin America-Caribbean, Africa, and other regions. These individuals would be the equivalent of "special forces" in the world of global engagement, with truly deep, repetitive tours in the region, utter fluency in the language, and graduate level knowledge of history, literature, geography, economics and the like: think Lawrence of

Arabia level of engagement.

He further points out: "I've learned that the shipmates who truly have the language, culture, and regional skills are often 'silver bullets' that can transform a difficult challenge into a success."

This will require investment of public funds in a difficult fiscal climate, Stavridis argues, but it must be done but because a "belief that part of providing security in this turbulent 21st century will mean we must 'know the world' so much better than we do today."

For the full blog entry go to: <http://www.eucom.mil/blog-post/24610/to-know-the-world>.

Healthy People 2020 Reviews Cancer and Genomics Progress

On February 6, the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion held the first in a series of webinars to assess progress in reaching the objectives set by the Healthy People 2020 initiative (see [Update December 13, 2010](#)). The webinar reported on progress toward goals for Cancer and Genomics. A recording will be posted on the [healthypeople.gov website](http://healthypeople.gov). The discussion was led by Assistant Secretary for Health Howard K. Koh.

Edward J. Sondik, National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), gave an overview of the current progress towards the cancer (focusing on breast and colorectal cancer) and genomics goals. He noted that though cancer death rates are declining, cancer is projected to surpass heart disease as the leading cause of death by 2013; the 2008 costs of cancer were about \$201.5 billion. Two in five Americans will have a cancer diagnosis; one in five will die from cancer. He noted that four types of cancer account for 50 percent of deaths (lung, lymph/blood, colorectal, and pancreatic) and that when gender-specific cancers (like breast and prostate) are considered, that number reaches 70 percent. Regarding genomics, Sondik pointed out that genetics play a role in nine of the ten leading causes of death, so genetic screening can serve as a key tool in early detection.

While the rates of both colorectal cancer deaths and female breast cancer deaths have declined since 2000, Sondik expressed concern that the death rates for both cancers were far higher for the Black population than any other group. Similarly, new diagnoses of colorectal cancer and late-stage female breast cancer were more prevalent for the Black, non-Hispanic population. Rates of colorectal and female breast cancer screening were more stable for different races; however, those in low-income groups are less likely to get screened. Sondik noted that although it appears that the target for screening women with a family history of breast or ovarian cancer has been met, it remains to be seen whether those results will remain stable over time. Overall, Sondik characterized the progress toward the cancer and genomics goals as encouraging, but he observed that there are still challenges ahead, including evening disparities by race and income, collecting data from small population groups, and, for the genomics goals, monitoring progress in relatively small target populations.

Robert T. Croyle, Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences at the National Cancer Institute (NCI), discussed NCI's efforts in reaching the Healthy People 2020 goals. He highlighted a number of projects NCI and its partners have undertaken, including Population-based Research Optimizing Screening through Personalized Regimens (PROSPR), the Health Care Systems Research Collaboratory (HCS), the Cancer Intervention and Surveillance Modeling Network (CISNET), the HMO Cancer Research Network (CRN), and several national surveys that measure progress toward Healthy People 2020 objectives.

Marcus Plescia, Division of Cancer Prevention and Control at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, talked about some of the CDC's efforts. He highlighted the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP) and the Colorectal Cancer Control Program. Plescia praised Minnesota and New York's state health departments for their innovative approaches to cancer screening. The Cancer Prevention and Control Research Network, supported by both the CDC and NCI, assists academic institutions in applying research to community-level cancer prevention

and control needs.

Muin J. Khoury, Office of Public Health Genomics at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, discussed efforts to increase genetic screening. He noted that the CDC supports state genomics programs in Michigan, Oregon, and Georgia that identify candidates for genetic counseling, facilitate genomic screening coverage, and develop new data sources and evaluation methods. Khoury also noted that implementation of the Affordable Care Act's provision to cover services recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) will include screening for hereditary breast and ovarian cancer.

Carolyn Clancy, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), discussed some of the recommendations of the USPSTF in the Healthy People 2020 objectives, such as screening for cervical cancer, counseling young people about skin cancer, and genetic counseling for women with family histories of breast cancer. Clancy mentioned a number of AHRQ's tools for implementation of USPSTF recommendations, including the Guide to Clinical Preventive Services 2012, the Electronic Preventive Services Selector (ePSS), the online MyHealthFinder platform, consumer fact sheets, and a clinical decision support tool.

AHRQ Report Shares Lessons on Advancing Patient-Centered Care through Health IT

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)'s Ambulatory Safety and Quality (ASQ) program released a report entitled "Findings and Lessons from the Enabling Patient-Centered Care through Health IT Initiative." The report is based on the experiences of 16 recipients of a 2007 grant under AHRQ's Enabling Patient-Centered Care through Health IT Initiative. It focuses on four key areas: 1) patients' self-management of their health, 2) access to medical information by patients, caregivers, and providers, 3) in-person and electronic patient-clinician communication, and 4) shared decision-making between patients and clinicians. The report suggests that more research is needed to address how health IT can support shared decision-making between patients and clinicians and how to effectively use health IT to support care during transitions across settings. The full report can be downloaded at: <http://healthit.ahrq.gov/asqpccreport>.

PCORI Governing Board Discusses Priority Setting for Patient Oriented Research

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), a congressional authorized body, convened its Board of Governors meeting on February 4. The meeting's agenda included an update on PCORI's first Advisory Panels. The Panels will play a central role in helping PCORI prioritize and select specific research topics for each of its five national priorities for research in addition to providing general guidance. The Institute has identified five topics to consider for an initial round of Targeted PCORI Funding Announcements (PFAs): 1) treatment options for uterine fibroids; 2) treatment of severe asthma in African-Americans and Hispanics/Latinos; 3) fall prevention in the elderly; 4) treatment options for chronic neck and back pain; and 5) obesity prevention and treatment in diverse populations. There was subsequent discussion regarding limiting the neck and back pain topic to just back pain. The Panels will consist of patients, clinicians, researchers, and other experts with the relevant experience and expertise needed to help PCORI advance its research agenda.

The Board also discussed PCORI's plan to develop funding announcements on a set of specific high-impact research topics. Accordingly, the Institute is seeking applications for four advisory panels: [Addressing Disparities](#) (AD); [Assessment of Prevention, Diagnosis, and Treatment Options](#); [Improving Healthcare Systems](#); and [Patient Engagement](#). It expects to create additional advisory panels, as needed, including those required by PCORI's authorizing legislation. The panels will identify and prioritize research topics; review and comment periodically on PCORI's research portfolio; including identifying gaps and overall impact of the portfolio; provide input on possible

refinements to PCORI's research priorities; and provide feedback on specific research questions and study design. For more on the panels, see: <http://www.pcori.org/pcori-advisory-panels/>.

NIJ Seeks Proposals for Research on Firearms and Violence

The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) is seeking applications for research on firearms and violence. Applications are due on May 2, 2013.

NIJ has a long history of research concerning firearms and violence. The agency, along with other public agencies and private organizations, sponsored a 2005 report by the National Research Council on firearms and violence that provided a number of recommendations, including a call for continued research on the topic (www.nap.edu/openbook.php?isbn=0309091241).

An NIJ Research Working Group on Firearms and Violence recently reviewed the 2005 report, and many of the original recommendations were again emphasized and updated (www.nij.gov/topics/crime/gun-violence/working-group/2011-summary.htm).

With this solicitation, NIJ is requesting applications to continue research on this important issue. As evident from the report of the Research Working Group on Firearms and Violence, more research is needed concerning many issues involved with the problem of firearms violence. NIJ is requesting applications focusing on the criminal use of firearms, gun violence, and the relationship between guns and public safety. Some examples of research in this area include, but are not limited to, the effects of criminal justice interventions on reducing gun violence, improving data systems for studying gun violence, illicit gun markets, and the effects of firearm policies and legislation on criminal justice and public safety.

For applications proposing evaluation research, NIJ will give funding priority to experimental research designs that use random selection and assignment of participants to experimental and control conditions. When randomized designs are not feasible, priority will be given to quasi-experimental designs that include contemporary procedures such as Propensity Score Matching or Regression Discontinuity Design to address selection bias in evaluating outcomes and impacts.

NIJ will not fund proposals providing training or direct service; purchasing only equipment, materials, or supplies; receiving funding under another specific solicitation; lacking a research component; not responding to the specific goals of this solicitation.

NIJ anticipates that up to \$1.5 million may become available for 1-3 awards made through this solicitation. All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and to any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law. NIJ funding for an individual research project rarely exceeds \$500,000, though total funding for projects requiring multiple years to complete has exceeded \$1 million in some cases. Applicants should be aware that the total period for an award ordinarily will not exceed 3 years.

Applicants must use grants.gov. The full solicitation is available at: <https://ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/sl001048.pdf>.

William Julius Wilson Announced as Recipient of Moynihan Prize



The American Academy of Political and Social Science (AAPSS) has announced that William Julius Wilson, Lewis P. and Linda L. Geyser University Professor at Harvard University, is the recipient of the 2013 Daniel Patrick Moynihan Prize.

Named for the social scientist and late Senator from New York, AAPSS created the prize in 2007 to recognize social scientists and other leaders in the public arena who champion the use of informed judgment to advance the public good. According to the Academy, the award "honors those who, like the late Senator,

have promoted the use of sound analysis and social science research in policy-making, while contributing to the civility of public discourse and pursuing a bipartisan approach to society's most pressing problems."

Wilson, a former President of COSSA and the American Sociological Association, has spent his career documenting and analyzing the impact of public policies on race, concentrated poverty, and employment opportunities in America. His books, *The Truly Disadvantaged*, *The World of the New Urban Poor*, *The Declining Significance of Race*, and, most recently, *There Goes the Neighborhood: Racial, Ethnic, and Class Tensions in Four Chicago Neighborhoods and Their Meaning for America*, are essential to understanding how public policies affect the nation's prospects for mitigating poverty and inequality.

Prior to coming to Harvard in 1996, Wilson taught for many years at the University of Chicago and before that at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He has received numerous honors and awards, including the National Medal of Science. He was a MacArthur Prize Fellow and has been elected to the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the National Academy of Education, the American Philosophical Society, the Institute of Medicine, and the British Academy. His Ph.D. in Sociology is from Washington State University.

He will receive the prize on May 9, in Washington DC, at the Academy's annual gala dinner. Earlier in the day, Wilson will deliver the inaugural Daniel Patrick Moynihan Lecture on Social Science and Public Policy.

Sheldon Danziger Named New President of Russell Sage Foundation

The Russell Sage Foundation (RSF) has announced the appointment of Sheldon H. Danziger as its next president. Danziger, the Henry J. Meyer Distinguished University Professor at the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan, will join the Foundation on September 1. He succeeds Eric Wanner, who has led the Foundation since 1986.



In addition to his professorship at the University of Michigan, Danziger is director of the National Poverty Center, director of the research and training program on poverty and public policy, research professor at the Population Studies Center, and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Danziger's research focuses on social welfare policies and on the effects of economic, demographic, and public policy changes on trends in poverty and inequality. His work includes an examination of how the 1996 welfare reform affected the work effort, family income, and material wellbeing of single mothers and of the impact of poverty on children and youth. He is currently studying the effects of the Great Recession and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 on workers and families.

His books, many published by the RSF, include: *The Price of Independence: The Economics of Early Adulthood* (co-edited with Cecilia Rouse); *Working and Poor: How Economic Conditions and Policy Changes Affect Low-Wage Workers* (co-edited with Rebecca Blank, now Acting Secretary of Commerce, and Robert Schoeni); *America Unequal*, co-authored with Peter Gottschalk; *Detroit Divided*, co-authored with Reynolds Farley and Harry Holzer; *Securing the Future: Investing in Children From Birth to College* (co-edited with Jane Waldfogel); and *Changing Poverty, Changing Policies* (co-edited with Maria Cancian).

Danziger has twice spoken at COSSA Congressional Seminars: *Is Welfare Reform Working? The Impact of Economic Growth and Policy Changes* in 1999 and *Overcoming Poverty: What the Research Demonstrates* in 1995.

He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The new RSF President received his

bachelor's degree from Columbia University and his Ph.D. in economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Sequester Looms Larger; NDD Coalition Assesses Current Fiscal Deal

The nation continues its march toward sequestration, significant budget cuts, on March 1. The Senate Democrats are attempting to put together and pass a package that includes revenue enhancements and spending cuts prior to the deadline. However, House Republicans seem content to allow sequestration to happen. The Administration issued a statement on February 8 about the consequences of sequestration that suggests dire problems for the economic recovery and federal government operations as employees are furloughed.

Among the cuts the White House warned about Friday are: 70,000 children kicked off Head Start, 10,000 teacher jobs "at risk," thousands fewer federal research grants at the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation, and reduced staffing at the IRS, which the White House warns would lead to delayed customer service and cost the government billions of dollars in uncollected revenue.

In the meantime, on January 29, the Non-Defense Discretionary (NDD) Coalition, a group strongly opposed to further spending cuts on domestic programs, held a town hall meeting to discuss the current state of the deficit reduction debate. Former Rep. Steve LaTourette (R-OH) spoke about his experience in the House and the work he is doing now with the Republican Main Street Partnership, a group of moderate who support bipartisan solutions to the nation's problems. LaTourette criticized Congress for having too few centrist voices, noting that moderate Republicans often face attacks and primary challenges from the right wing. He said that the January 1 deal to postpone sequestration "stunk" and is the type of deal you get when "legislators choose not to legislate."

LaTourette called for a more orderly legislative process so programs aren't constantly being patched or paid for with projected future revenue. He argued that Congress' reluctance to reform Social Security and Medicare leaves the discretionary programs at greater risk for severe cuts. Finally, LaTourette expressed hope that Speaker Boehner and President Obama can come together to strike a deal and present it as "America's deal" to avoid partisan fighting.

Sharon Parrott, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, gave some background on the current state of the fiscal crisis (slides are available [here](#)). She noted that the goal of these fiscal deals has been to merely stabilize debt as a share of GDP, which is a short-term goal. Accomplishing this would create some breathing room to deal with the rising cost of health care (primarily entitlements). Since 2010, \$2.3 trillion in deficit reduction has been enacted, with a remaining \$1.4 trillion needed to stabilize the debt. Of that \$2.3 trillion, 72 percent has come from cuts to programs (the remainder comes from revenue increases)-and over half of those program cuts have been from NDD programs.

Even without sequestration, NDD funding is projected to reach a historic low as a share of the economy by 2017; if sequestration goes into effect, it will reach that level sooner. The January 1st deal to postpone sequestration, the American Taxpayer Relief Act (ATRA), lowered the amount of automatic cuts by \$24 billion and maintained the 50/50 split between defense and non-defense (now security and non-security). However, it also decreased the caps on the amount of money Congress can appropriate by \$4 billion for 2013 and \$8 billion for 2014. Parrott noted that even if sequestration is prevented, the lower caps will remain the new starting point.

Ellen Nissenbaum, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, spoke about where we go from here. She noted that House Republicans (notably Budget Committee Chairman Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI)) have expressed a commitment to achieve a balanced budget in ten years (initial analysis suggests that it would not look much worse than Ryan's last budget). However, in the Senate, Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) expressed commitment to a balanced approach to deficit reduction (most recently in a Dear Colleague letter, see [Update, January 28, 2013](#)).

Nissenbaum predicted that sequestration will probably go into effect before it is replaced by a different configuration of cuts. She noted that the defense sector is likely to be very vocal once sequestration hits, so the non-defense side should be prepared to make its case as well to avoid having further cuts shifted toward NDD. However, the precedent of continuing to split cuts 50/50 means neither side has much to gain by attacking the other.

PAA Holds Congressional Briefing on Immigration

On February 1, the Population Association of America (PAA) sponsored the seminar "Immigration and the Foreign-Born Workforce in the United States." COSSA was one of the co-sponsors of the event.

The United States foreign-born population has seen dramatic changes in the last four decades. Between 1970 and 2010 the foreign-born population increased by a staggering 315 percent compared to only 39 percent for the native born population. The total population increased by 106.1 million from 203.2 million in 1970 to 309.3 million in 2010. However, although the foreign-born population increased at a rate greater than the native population, as a proportion of the total growth, the foreign-born accounted for less than one third of the change. The native population represented 71 percent of that growth, with the increase in foreign-born population accounting for 29 percent.

Mary Jo Hoeksema director of government affairs for PAA, noted that: "In the last 50 years the foreign-born population has gone from an older European population primarily living in the Northeast and Midwest to a younger Hispanic population living in the South and West."

Since 1960, the U.S. foreign-born population has undergone dramatic changes. In 1960 the foreign-born population accounted for only one in 20 residents comprised mostly of people from Europe who primarily settled in the Midwest and Northeast. By 2010 that number had increased to one in eight residents mostly from Latin America and Asia, who settled primarily in the West and South.

Elizabeth Grieco, Chief of the Foreign Born Population Branch, U.S. Census Bureau, indicated that the demographic shift occurred not because "the number of Europeans decreased, but due to the dramatic increase in the numbers from Latin America and Asia." Over the last decade the U.S. foreign-born population has increased by 8.8 million people. In 2010, the foreign-born population was 40 million, or 13 percent of the total population of 309.3 million people.

Since 1960, the Asian foreign-born population has increased from half a million to 11.6 million in 2011, representing one fourth of the total foreign-born population. Compared with other immigrants, immigrants from Asia are better educated and more likely to become American citizens. In 2011, 83 percent of the foreign-born from Asia aged 25 and older were high school graduates or higher, in comparison to 63 percent for immigrants from all other regions. Forty-eight percent of the Asian born population have a bachelor's degree or higher compared with only 19 percent of the rest of the foreign-born population. Foreign-born people from Asia were also more likely than those who came to the U.S. from other regions to be naturalized citizens, with 55 percent of the foreign-born from Asia becoming naturalized citizens, compared with 40 percent from other regions.

The other region that has fueled the increase in immigration is Latin America and the Caribbean. During the last 50 years the number of foreign-born from Latin American and the Caribbean has increased rapidly, from less than one million in 1960 to 21.2 million in 2010. They currently represent over half of the foreign-born population. Most of the immigrants arriving from Latin America are from Central America, with 70 percent of the foreign-born Latin American population coming from that region. This increase from Latin America includes the dramatic increase in illegal immigration from Mexico. In 1960 there were about half a million immigrants from Mexico; by 1980, that number had increased to 2.2 million, and by 2010 to 11.7 million. Although they make up the majority of foreign-born residents, immigrants from Latin America are less likely to become

naturalized citizens. Only 32 percent of the foreign-born population of Latin American becomes naturalized citizens, the lowest percentage of all regions.

The U.S. Department of Commerce reports that over the last decade growth in STEM field jobs was three times greater than for other types of jobs and are expected to continue to grow at a fast pace. Foreign-born populations are represented in STEM fields in particular making up 33 percent of all bachelor's degree holders in engineering fields, 27 percent in computers, math and statistics fields, 24 percent in physical sciences and 17 percent in biological, agricultural and environmental sciences. Of the 4.2 million foreign-born with sciences and engineering bachelor's degrees 57 percent were born in Asia, 18 percent in Europe, 16 percent in Latin American and the Caribbean. In addition, "Foreign-born residents make up a large percentage of the U.S. total population with a masters degree at 33 percent and 45 percent of those with a Ph.D. This highly skilled migration is dominated by India," said B. Lindsay Lowell of the Institute for the Study of International Migration at Georgetown University.

Pia Orrenius of the Federal Reserve Bank in Dallas, echoed this, noting that immigrants are located at both ends of the educational attainment scale. Most of those at the low end are employed as farm workers, hairdressers, gardeners and groundskeepers, childcare workers, and in the food preparation and hospitality industry. These workers earn less, but are willing to relocate to where the jobs are, as well as take positions shunned by natives, she remarked.

The Obama Administration and Congress are starting to wrestle with immigration reform not only for those immigrants who entered the country illegally or those that high tech firms clamor for, but for all foreign-born residents whether skilled or unskilled.

AAAS Science and Human Rights Coalition Discusses Children's Rights

The January 31-February 1 meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science and Human Rights Coalition focused on children's rights. The Coalition, a project of the AAAS Scientific Responsibility, Human Rights, and Law Program, consists of 50 members and affiliated organizations, including COSSA, and is dedicated to exploring the role of science (and scientists and engineers) in human rights.

The Children's Rights Framework

An opening plenary session moderated by Martha Zaslow, Society for Research on Child Development, focused on the children's rights framework. Jo Becker, Human Rights Watch, discussed the background of children's rights in international treaties and agreements. She noted that children's rights have evolved as thinking has shifted from viewing children as objects of aid to recognizing them as autonomous individuals. Because children are both more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse and have fewer avenues to redress their grievances, they are entitled to special protection. Beginning in 1948, with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and ending in 1989 with the passage of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), children's rights had been established in a piecemeal fashion. The Declaration of the Rights of the Child (a nonbinding UN declaration adopted in 1959), the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (1966), and the International Labour Organization's Minimum Age Convention (1973), had earlier established some rights for children. However, the CRC was the first comprehensive, binding agreement for children's rights; it covered both civil and political rights and economic and cultural rights. Among the rights enshrined in the CRC are: the right to protection from violence, abuse, and neglect; the right to birth registration, education, expression, privacy, religion, association, health, social security, rest, leisure, and play; and the right to protection from sexual exploitation, drugs, and armed conflict. It also established the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child as an enforcement mechanism.

While the U.S. signed the Convention, it is one of three countries that has failed to ratify it (the others being Somalia and South Sudan). Becker noted that some elements of the U.S. juvenile justice system are in conflict with the CRC. Until recently, the U.S. permitted capital punishment

and life imprisonment without parole for those who committed crimes as minors (and it still allows life without parole as a punishment for capital offenses). However, Becker suggested that the real reason the U.S. has not ratified the CRC is that some religious groups have characterized it as "anti-family" or "anti-parent" and asserted that it would take rights away from parents.

In 2000 and 2002, the UN adopted two Optional Protocols to the CRC, one raising the age of military recruitment from 15 to 18 and the other requiring states to prohibit child trafficking, prostitution, and pornography. The U.S. ratified both these protocols and changed its deployment practices to prevent 17-year-olds from participating in combat. In 1999, the International Labour Organization adopted the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, which mandated that states take special measures to eradicate child slavery, sexual exploitation, criminal labor, and dangerous work. The U.S. also ratified this convention.

Becker conceded that the children's rights framework does not prevent abuse on a daily basis. She argued, however, that it has had a practical impact in the form of plans to end child labor, domestic legislation to promote children's rights, the creation of juvenile justice systems, the establishment of international enforcement mechanisms, and, importantly, by creating a shift to thinking of children as autonomous and entitled to a voice.

Theresa Betancourt, Harvard School of Public Health, spoke about human rights approaches to war-affected youth and her research in Sierra Leone. She argued that the nature of war is changing; there has been a shift toward conflict among non-state actors and intra-national conflict. Civilians have become targets as these actors pursue conflicts of destabilization. One billion children live in countries affected by armed conflict. In the past 10 years, conflicts in 87 countries have involved child conscription, affecting 250,000-300,000 children. Betancourt noted that the human rights framework for helping former child soldiers is out there (article 39 of the CRC mandates that states promote the recovery and reintegration of children affected by armed conflict) and that effectively serving these children is a question of implementation. Betancourt discussed some of the mental health issues faced by war-affected youth; 1/3 of former child soldiers in Uganda and 55 percent of those in Nepal exhibited symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), for example. She noted that most studies on this issue have been cross-sectional; there has been little longitudinal research into patterns of mental health adjustment or the effectiveness of interventions for war-affected youth.

Betancourt discussed her research working with former child soldiers in Sierra Leone. She noted that Sierra Leone's civil war (1991-2002) displaced 75 percent of its population and involved more than 200,000 children. However, only 7,000 children are involved in reintegration efforts. Some efforts take the form of interim-care centers, which attempt to cater to children's psychosocial and physical health, trace the children back to their homes, and work with communities to find if reintegration is possible. Betancourt noted that such centers are less effective at following up to see if reintegration has been successful.

Her own research looks at factors contributing to and detracting from successful reintegration of former child soldiers into their communities. It has consisted of three waves of data collection, with a sample size of more than 500 children. The children in the sample were an average of 10 years old when they were forced into conflict and spent an average of 4 years fighting; nearly all were conscripted by force. Five percent of the boys and 45 percent of the girls experienced sexual violence; more than a quarter killed or injured others; and half were given drugs or alcohol. Betancourt found that factors predicting negative outcomes (both externalized violent behavior and internalized symptoms like anxiety and depression) were greater length of time spent with the armed group and exposure to rape and killing, as well as less time spent in school, post-conflict exposure to hardship, and low social support from the community. Factors that protected individuals from experiencing negative outcomes were community acceptance, low amount of stigma, high levels of social support, and access to school.

Betancourt stressed the importance of school for troubled youth, noting that the children who need the most help would benefit the most from being in school. She noted a need for more research into

interventions to more successfully reintegrate children affected by conflict. A pilot program focused on teaching children coping skills has shown positive outcomes, but more research is needed.

Children's Rights in Scientific Research

Jerry A. Menikoff, Office of Human Research Protections, moderated a panel on children's rights in scientific research. Eric Kodish, Cleveland Clinic, discussed some of the ethical issues involved in using children as research subjects. Kodish argued that research should be conducted from an advocacy position (which is not the same as "protecting" children from all research risks). Kodish noted the tension between thinking of the benefit to an individual child versus children as a class. He asserted that there is an ethical imperative to study children, and that overprotection of children can be considered an ethical problem in itself. He noted that the typical U.S. research framework of weighing the risk to the individual versus the potential benefit to both the individual and society is circumscribed in children; researchers are unable to consider the benefit to society--they must only consider the impact on the individual. He noted that the concept of "informed consent" changes when it comes to children; a combination of parental permission and the assent of the child can be used, but it is not the same as true informed consent. Kodish pointed out that most research involving children is on sick children; not as much is done on healthy children. He argued that while parental rights are important, they should be thought of as inseparable from parents' responsibilities to their children.

Gary Melton, University of Colorado School of Medicine, discussed the standing of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in U.S. law. Though the CRC is not ratified, the U.S. is a signatory, so the Convention has power as long as a subsequent administration does not renounce it. Furthermore, the Supreme Court has considered laws among nations relevant to interpretation of the Constitution. He noted that one of the most important values enshrined in the CRC is its recognition of the dignity of children as people. Melton also noted that there is no reason why organizations can't voluntarily adhere to the CRC's standards. He discussed how the American Psychological Association (APA) encouraged its state associations to push for local governments to adopt CRC principles. The APA also established a working group to explicate the implications of the CRC for its members and enshrined the CRC framework in its standards.

Maya Sabatello, Columbia University, spoke about the rights of children with disabilities. She argued that the CRC doesn't do much to assist the 150-200 million children with disabilities, 80 percent of whom live in developing countries. One problem, she suggested, is the medical "fixing" approach to disabilities, as well as a tendency to view disabled children as passive aid recipients. Furthermore, she argued, the principle of non-discrimination can stigmatize the disabled because it leads to different treatment. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which was signed by President Obama but failed to pass the Senate, enshrines the principle of "inclusion." Like the CRC, the CRPD is a comprehensive treaty. It argues that states have positive obligations to provide reasonable accommodation for those with disabilities. It also mandates that states promote the development and availability of scientific and assistive technologies. Sabatello argued that children with disabilities should be consulted as experts about what they need and what will work.

Michael D. A. Freeman, University College London, argued that science can be a double-edged sword when it comes to children's rights. Some scientific developments can assist children's rights, such as the development of assistive technologies like the cochlear implant. Freeman brought up the ethical issues surrounding embryonic selection as an example of when scientific developments can undermine children's rights. He noted that there hasn't been a comprehensive application of the CRC to scientific research, but noted several challenging issues. One issue Freeman raised was the idea of when life begins in the context of "savior siblings" (children conceived to provide a needed donation for a sibling affected by a terminal illness). He also suggested that perhaps children have a right "not to be born," as in the case of children conceived via IVF by much older parents. Freeman also argued that there are dangers in assuming that children's only rights are those listed in the CRC. He suggested the right to have responsible parents as one example.

Researching Children's Rights

Lauren Fasig, American Psychological Association, moderated a closing plenary on researching children's rights. Thomas Parsons, International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP), discussed his work using DNA analysis to identify victims of disasters and mass atrocities. Parsons noted that his work not only provides posthumous justice for the victims but also assists the survivors, who tend to be women and children. Identifying victims can bring closure to families undergoing psychological trauma and who have a right to know the fate of their loved ones and pursue justice. Furthermore, identification can provide legal closure, leading to reparations. Parsons discussed his experience identifying victims of the conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo. The ICMP collected 90,000 reference samples from family members looking to find over 30,000 missing individuals. The ICMP was able to identify over 17,000 individuals. Parsons discussed some challenges, including the need to protect the genetic data of vulnerable populations, which could put individuals at risk (such as when infidelity is inadvertently uncovered). Parsons discussed the work of a group in El Salvador called Pro-Busqueda which uses genetic testing to identify children abducted from their biological families and placed for adoption. The organization was able to identify over 400 abducted children and reunite 250 families. Parsons concluded by identifying a need to homogenize the international community's approach to victim identification; currently, we start from scratch with each new tragedy, delaying justice for victims and families.

Yvonne Rafferty, Pace University, shared her research about the commercial sexual exploitation of girls. She argued for a rights-based approach to child sex trafficking and suggested that law enforcement focus on the victims, placing children at the center of its approach. Rafferty noted that hard data about trafficking is hard to produce, but that the largest group is young women and girls, who are trafficked for sexual exploitation. Though there is not much empirical research on the impact on these children, anecdotal evidence points to physical, mental, and emotional health problems, as well as lost opportunities like education. Rafferty called for additional research on strategies to fight demand, identify facilitators of child sex trafficking, strengthen the legal framework, create awareness, and target the supply by protecting vulnerable children, ensuring safe migration, and preventing the marginalization of women and girls. Research opportunities also exist in the areas of victim support and empowerment; we need ways to identify victims, collect and report data, and develop effective intervention strategies.

Ian Kysel, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), spoke about research he conducted on behalf of the ACLU and Human Rights Watch on the use of solitary confinement on juveniles held in adult prisons. A legal trend, beginning in the mid-1980s, of treating juveniles as adults has led to the transfer of children into the adult criminal justice system with no accompanying attention to confinement procedures. In 2011, more than 92,000 offenders under the age of 18 were in the adult criminal justice system. Some states have requirements that juvenile prisoners be separated from the adult population, which can leave adult facilities with no choice but to put youth in solitary confinement. Other facilities place juveniles in solitary confinement for their own protection or as a disciplinary measure (using the same rules for youth and adults). There are no specialized resources for young people in adult prisons. Youth placed in solitary confinement have no access to treatments, and no consideration is given for the special physical and mental developmental needs of minors. Kysel suggested a number of policy reforms, including banning the use of solitary confinement on minors, transferring youth out of facilities without resources to meet their needs, and limiting or regulating the use of isolation on adults. Although research shows that the brain continues developing into the mid-20s, there is no data on how solitary confinement affects brain development. Research is needed on the psychological and developmental impact of the confinement and isolation of young people.

NSF, NEH, IMLS Join International Partners to Fund Another Round of Digging into Data Challenge

The National Science Foundation (NSF), National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the

Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMS) will join with seven international research funders to jointly participate in round three of the "Digging into Data Challenge (DiD)," a grant competition designed to spur computationally intensive research in the social sciences and humanities.

This third round aims to address how "Big Data" changes the research landscape for the humanities and social sciences by asking what "Big Data" means for researchers in these disciplines.

According to the solicitation, "Data mining has arrived for the humanities and social sciences, yielding myriad opportunities to ask research questions about human history, society and social phenomena that could never have been realistically entertained before--and research funders want scholars and applicants to ask those questions with an emphasis on new, computationally-based research methods that would be used to address them."

For example, the National Science Foundation (NSF) funded a project last year that will make use of novel data-mining technology to exploit one of the largest population databases in the world. This vast collection of harmonized 19th- and early 20th-century census microdata from Britain, Canada and the United States was originally digitized for genealogical research. The research goal is to shed light on the impact of economic opportunity and spatial mobility on the social structure in Europe and North America.

The funding organizations in addition to NSF, NEH and IMS include: the Canada Fund for Innovation; the Natural Sciences and the Engineering Research Council of Canada; the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada; the U.K. Arts & Humanities Research Council; the U.K. Economic & Social Research Council, and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research in collaboration with the Netherlands Science Center; and the U.K. Joint Information Systems Committee, which will assume an administrative support role for the project.

The first two years of the DiD sparked enormous interest from the international research community. In 2012, a major report was issued by the Council on Library and Information Resources, noting that "the Digging into Data Challenge investigators have demarcated a new era--one with the promise of revelatory explorations of our cultural heritage that will lead us to new insights and knowledge, and to a more nuanced and expansive understanding of the human condition."

Final applications are due on May 15, 2013. Further information about the competition and the application process can be found on the [Digging into Data website](#).

NSF Solicits Applications for Building Community and Capacity for Data-Intensive Research in the SBE Sciences

As part of NSF's Cyberinfrastructure Framework for 21st Century Science and Engineering ([CIF21](#)) activity, the Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences (SBE), the Directorate for Education and Human Resources (EHR), and the Office of Cyberinfrastructure seek to enable research communities to develop visions, teams, and capabilities dedicated to creating new, large-scale, next-generation data resources and relevant analytic techniques to advance fundamental research for the SBE and EHR areas of research. Successful proposals will outline activities that will have significant impacts across multiple fields by enabling new types of data-intensive research. Investigators should think broadly and create a vision that extends intellectually across multiple disciplines and that includes--but is not limited to--the SBE or EHR areas of research.

Proposals are due February 27. Applicants are encouraged to contact the relevant program at: nsf-bcc-team@nsf.gov.

The full solicitation is available at:
http://www.nsf.gov/publications/pub_summ.jsp?WT.z_pims_id=504747&ods_key=nsf13519.

Proposals Designed to Examine School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies, Obesogenic Behaviors, and Weight Outcomes Wanted

Childhood obesity can have serious consequences such as hypertension, insulin resistance, type 2 diabetes, fatty liver disease, obstructive sleep apnea and psychosocial difficulties. Data collected from the 2009-2010 National Health and Nutrition Survey (NHANES) indicates that 26.7 percent of youth aged two - five years, 32.6 percent of youth aged six - 11 years, and 33.6 percent of youth aged 12 -19 years are either overweight or obese, or have a body mass index (BMI) equal to or above their age- and gender- adjusted 85th percentile.

The school setting provides an ideal context for childhood obesity-prevention strategies. American youth consume approximately one-third of their energy intake while at school, and are expected to expend about half of their energy at school. Despite numerous recommendations for environmental- and policy-level strategies to combat obesity, the focus of most obesity-prevention strategies in the school context has been at the individual level. To date, such individually based intervention strategies have resulted in relatively modest changes in behavior. Given the high cost of such interventions they have limited opportunities to significantly impact obesity at the population level. School policy strategies are increasingly being proposed for addressing childhood obesity; at the same time, there is a desperate need to build the scientific knowledge base to inform policy development in this rapidly emerging field.

The home and community environment can complement or hinder the effectiveness of school-based intervention to prevent childhood obesity. Therefore, studies that consider the various levels of influences and the socio-cultural context on the school environment are imperative to elucidate when, with whom, and under what conditions, are school policies effective on youths' obesogenic behaviors.

The National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), National Cancer Institute (NCI), the National Heart Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), and the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR) are seeking proposals that responds to the investigator-initiated, exploratory/developmental research and the NIH small research grant mechanisms and proposed to address three specific goals:

1. Foster multidisciplinary research that will evaluate how policies (federal, state and school district levels) can influence school physical activity and nutrition environments, youths' obesogenic behaviors (e.g., nutrition and physical activity behaviors), and weight outcomes;
2. Understand how schools are implementing these policies and examine multi-level influences on adoption and implementation at various levels (e.g., federal, state, school district, and school); and
3. Understand the synergistic or counteractive effect of school nutrition and physical activity policies on the home and community environment and body weight.

Specific research areas of interest include:

- What effect do school physical activity and nutrition policies, enacted at various levels, have on: youths' obesogenic behaviors (physical activity and nutrition behaviors) inside and outside of school; youths' weight; cardiovascular and other chronic disease risk, cancer, and school outcomes (e.g., academic achievements and school revenues)?
- Under which conditions (e.g. social climate), settings (e.g. public vs. private), and for whom (e.g., racial/ethnic and/or socioeconomic groups) are school policy strategies more likely to be effective in changing obesogenic behaviors, chronic disease risk factors or weight outcomes?
- What is the best way to measure the aggregate effect of multiple policies on the school environment as well as youths' obesogenic behaviors and weight outcomes? Can single/individual policies have any noticeable effect on obesogenic behaviors, weight outcomes, cardiovascular and other chronic disease? Do multiple policies (enacted at various

levels) have a cumulative, synergistic, or counteractive effect on youths' obesogenic behaviors, weight outcomes, and chronic disease risk factors?

- Do home and community environments influence the efficacy or effectiveness of school-based policies aimed at improving the nutrition and physical activity environment of schools?
- To what extent do factors within (e.g., organizational climate, resources, infrastructure, competing priorities) and outside (e.g., federal, state, and school district, taxpayers and parents socio-cultural influences) the school environment influence the development, adoption and implementation of healthier policies?
- What factors impede or facilitate the adoption and implementation of policies within the school setting? Under which conditions (e.g. social climate) and settings (e.g. public vs. private) are schools more likely to implement physical activity and nutrition policies enacted at various levels or develop policies that create healthier school environments? How do these factors interact and what can be done to optimize their influence?
- How does the enactment of school policies at the state versus the district levels compare in their influence on the school environment? How much variability within policy provisions exists across state, school district, and school levels?
- To what extent can current school obesity-related policy classification systems (such as the [NCI tracking system](#)) be used to track state and local (school district and school) policies as well as be used to evaluate implementation of policies in the school setting? What policies should be tracked and how does one validate the efficacy of such classification systems?
- What is the best way to test the effects of school policy changes on youth diet, physical activity and risk factors for cancer (e.g., obesity, hormones) and cardiovascular disease (e.g., blood pressure, blood lipids)?
- What is the best way to test the effects of obesity related school policy changes and their impact on home environment changes (e.g., reduction in TV and media usage) and health behaviors (e.g., diet, physical activity) of youth and families?

For more information and/or to apply see: [PA-13-099](#), Small Grant Program; [PA-13-098](#), Exploratory/Developmental Grant; or [PA-13-100](#), Research Project Grant.

Policy Fellowship Opportunity at Human Research Protections' Office

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) has a policy fellowship position available in the Division of Policy and Assurances. OHRP provides leadership in the protection of the rights, welfare, and wellbeing of subjects involved in research conducted or supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The Division of Policy and Assurances prepares policies and guidance documents and interpretations of requirements for human subject protections and disseminates this information to the research community. The Division also administers the assurances of compliance and implements the institutional review board registration process.

The fellow will:

- Assist in developing OHRP policy and guidance documents regarding regulatory requirements for biomedical and behavioral research involving human subjects;
- Assist in developing and revising regulatory requirements related to the Department of Health and Human Services Protection of Human Subjects Regulations, 45 CFR part 46, as needed;
- Collect, analyze and evaluate information in developing or revising guidance documents, policies and procedures, and HHS regulations involving human subjects.
- Coordinate responses to requests for information, technical assistance and guidance related to human subject research policy;
- Assist in reviewing and approving certifications for HHS-conducted or -supported research involving prisoners;
- Assist in reviewing protocols submitted for HHS Secretarial panel review of certain research involving children or prisoners, and assisting in the coordination of Secretarial panels, as

- needed; and,
- Assist in posting policy documents on OHRP's website and with other website-related tasks, as assigned.
 - Apply his/her strong writing skills and their ability to accurately communicate research protection information and data to diverse audiences.
 - Increase his/her understanding and experience of policy issues related to health and human research protections. Participants will have opportunities to interact with other Federal agencies and non-governmental groups on research issues.

Applicants should have earned a Bachelor's, Master's or Doctorate degree in public health, public policy, science, law, ethics, philosophy, or related fields. A focus on health, as well as research experience, is beneficial. In addition, experience in writing papers that address specific aspects of the protection of human subjects in biomedical and behavioral research is a plus.

The Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE) administers the program. The initial appointment is for one year, but may be renewed upon OHRP's contingent on the availability of funds and project needs. The participant will receive a monthly stipend based on educational level and experience. The participant must show proof of health insurance. The appointment is full-time at OHRP in the Rockville, Maryland, area. Further information about OHRP's programs, projects and activities can be found at: <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/index.html>.

To apply please send a cover letter stating your interest, CV/resume, writing sample and the names and contact information for three persons who will provide references for you to DeAnna Copeland at DeAnna.Copeland@orau.org. Please reference Project #DHHS-OHRP-2013-0103 in all communications.

AERA Solicits Applications for Institute on Statistical Analysis

The American Educational Research Association (AERA) Grants Program is seeking applications for a special [Institute on Statistical Analysis for Education Policy: Causal Inference](#) that will be held on May 29-31, 2013, in Washington DC. It is supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF).

The goal of the Institute is to assist in developing a critical mass of U.S. educational researchers using the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and NSF data sets for basic, policy, and applied research. The Institute will be conducted jointly with an international group from Europe. The focus of the 2013 Institute will be on these issues and the methodologies available to support causal inferences. Topics that will be covered include the design of randomized experiments and the difficulties of implementing them in educational settings as well as several approaches and methodologies for estimating causal inferences in situations where randomized studies are impossible or too costly. Such methodologies include propensity scores, regression discontinuity, instrumental variables, path analysis, and structural equation models, as well as related sensitivity methods. During the Institute examples will be provided in addition to working sessions in which participants will gain experience with implementing selected methods with real data.

Selected participants will receive support to cover fees, transportation, housing, and meals. Advanced doctoral students and recent doctorates are especially encouraged to apply. **The deadline to apply is Monday, February 25, 2013.**

For more information about AERA and/or the Institute on Statistical Analysis for Education Policy: Causal Inference, review the [Call for Applications](#), visit www.aera.net/grantsprogram or contact Kevin Dieterle, AERA Grants Program Manager, at grantsprogram@aera.net or (202) 238-3227.

SAGE Makes Open Access Publications More Available to Social Science and Humanities Scholars

SAGE, a leading international academic and professional publisher, announced on January 24, 2013 that the price of publication in SAGE Open has been discounted to \$99 per article. SAGE Open, launched in May 2011, was the world's first broad-based open access journal for the social sciences and humanities.

According to the publisher, this move aims to make high-quality, peer-reviewed open-access publishing a more accessible option for researchers in the humanities and social sciences, where often little or no direct research funding is available for payment for publication.

Since its launch in May 2011, SAGE Open has received more than 1400 manuscripts, and has published more than 160 articles. A recent survey revealed more than 70 percent of accepted authors had personally paid the article processing charge (APC) to enable their research to be published in SAGE Open. Author declarations further show that less than 15 percent of all articles published across SAGE's Humanities and Social Sciences portfolio in 2012 had allocated funding.

The current increase in demand for open access publication does not always come with funding to support scholars who are facing requirements to make their research immediately available. The fee covers peer review, copy editing, typesetting, and electronic delivery provided by SAGE.

SAGE Open was a winner of the 2012 Apex Award for Excellence.

For further information visit <http://sgo.sagepub.com/>

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Society for Social Work and Research
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
Southern Political Science Association
Southern Sociological Society
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The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) is an advocacy organization promoting attention to and federal support for the social and behavioral sciences.

UPDATE is published 22 times per year. ISSN 0749-4394.

