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FEATURED ARTICLE

Analysis of FY 2015 Senate Labor-HHS Bill

In late July, the Senate Appropriations Committee released the text of its fiscal year (FY) 2015 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) appropriations bill. This is the annual spending bill that provides funding to the National Institutes of Health and other HHS agencies, the Department of Education, and the Department of Labor, including the Bureau of Labor Statistics. As [previously reported](#), the bill was approved by the Labor-HHS Subcommittee in June, but action has since stalled. It is unclear if or when the full Senate Appropriations Committee will take up the bill.

COSSA's full analysis of the Senate bill is available [here](#).

CONGRESSIONAL ACTIVITIES & NEWS

Uncertain Outlook for Completion of FY 2015 Spending Bills

The House and Senate have headed home for their five-week August recess. As [previously reported](#), work on the fiscal year (FY) 2015 appropriations bills stalled out earlier in the summer when Senate Democrats and Republicans could not come to agreement on a process for considering amendments. Senate Democrats have mentioned their interest in attempting an omnibus appropriations package when they return this fall. However, on the House side, Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) has confirmed that the House will consider a continuing resolution (CR) upon return in September to keep the federal government operating into FY 2015, which begins on October 1. The CR could last until December, thereby bumping the appropriations process into the lame duck session following the November midterm elections.

To recap, the House and Senate made some progress in the FY 2015 process before leaving town this month. The House has passed seven of its 12 spending bills, including the [Commerce, Justice,](#)

[Science and Related Agencies](#) appropriations bill (H.R. 4660) that includes funding for the National Science Foundation, Census Bureau, and other agencies. The Senate has not yet passed any of its 12 appropriations bills, though its version of the [Commerce, Justice, Science bill](#) (S. 2437) was on its way when it was pulled from the floor in June. Additionally, the [Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies](#) appropriations bill, the bill that funds the National Institutes of Health and other HHS agencies, the Department of Education, and the Department of Labor, was advanced out of subcommittee but still awaits full committee consideration (see [related article](#)). Congress returns September 8 for a short, yet busy work period before heading home again for the elections.

America COMPETES Reauthorization Bill Introduced in Senate

On July 31, Senator John D. Rockefeller IV (D-WV), chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, introduced the *America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2014* (S. 2757). Original co-sponsors include Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL), Bill Nelson (D-FL), Mark Pryor (D-AR), Chris Coons (D-DE), and Edward Markey (D-MA).

As previously reported, a discussion draft of the bill was released for public input last month. The bill as introduced does not differ significantly from the earlier draft. Read COSSA's earlier [analysis](#) for more details.

COSSA issued a [statement](#) in support of the legislation on August 8, urging its immediate consideration in the Senate. With Congress now on a five-week summer recess and the limited number of legislative days left this year, it is becoming increasingly unlikely that the House and Senate will come together on compromise COMPETES/NSF reauthorization legislation before the 113th Congress adjourns.

Senate Appropriations Proposes Small Increase for NEH

On August 1, the Senate Appropriations Committee released the [draft bill](#) and [committee report](#) for fiscal year (FY) 2015 funding for Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, which includes the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The bill would give NEH a \$4 million increase, bringing its FY 2015 appropriation to \$150 million. The committee report directs the agency to use some of the additional funds to "expand its new, agency-wide special initiative for veterans and active military and their families, *Standing Together: The Humanities and the Experience of War*." The President's budget request called for maintaining NEH's FY 2014 level of \$146 million, as did the House version of the bill, after the elimination of [a proposed \\$8 million cut](#).

FEDERAL AGENCY & ADMINISTRATION ACTIVITIES & NEWS

White House Issues Annual S&T Guidance for FY 2016 Budget

On July 18, the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) issued their joint [annual memorandum](#) to federal agencies outlining "Science and Technology Priorities for the FY 2016 Budget." Each year, OMB and OSTP outline specific White House S&T priorities for federal investment, which is meant to inform federal agencies' development of the fiscal year (FY) 2016 budget submission to Congress. Similar to past

memoranda, the FY 2016 guidance asks federal agencies to allocate resources to a number of multi-agency research activities, including advanced manufacturing, clean energy, earth observations, global climate change, information technology and high-performance computing, neuroscience, national and homeland security, and R&D for informed policy-making and management. The guidance further asks agencies to "identify and pursue clearly defined 'Grand Challenges'-ambitious goals that require advances in science, technology and innovation to achieve-and to support high-risk, high-return research." Investment in STEM education also remains a high priority.

White House Seeks Input on *Strategy for American Innovation*

The White House's Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and the National Economic Council (NEC) are seeking input into a forthcoming update of the [Strategy for American Innovation](#) (SAI). SAI is intended to guide the Administration's efforts to promote lasting economic growth and competitiveness via policies that "support transformative American innovation in products, processes, and services and spur new fundamental discoveries that in the long run lead to growing prosperity and rising living standards." The efforts include policies that promote "critical components of the American innovation ecosystem," including scientific research and development and the technical workforce, among others. The input provided will inform the deliberations of the OSTP and NEC. Responses are due September 23, 2014. For more information see the [Federal Register notice](#).

NIH Seeks Next Director of the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is seeking applications for the position of director of the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR). The OBSSR director provides advice and staff support to the NIH Director and the director of the Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives Associate (DPCPSI). A dual reporting position, the OBSSR director also functions as the NIH Associate Director for Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, serving in a trans-NIH capacity as the NIH focal point for establishing agency-wide policies and goals in behavioral and social sciences research, including coordinating the activities undertaken in the performance of this research.

[OBSSR](#) is a very important office for social and behavioral research at the NIH. The Office is congressionally-mandated to serve as the coordinating entity for the advancement of behavioral and social sciences research across all of the 27 NIH institutes and centers (ICs). [William T. Riley, Ph.D.](#), Chief of the Science of Research and Technology Branch, Behavioral Research Program, Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences at the National Cancer Institute, is currently serving as the Acting Director of OBSSR. In 2015, OBSSR will celebrate its 20th anniversary. Additional information on the position is available on the NIH's [website](#). Applications are due October 1.

NIH Seeks Next Director of the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is searching for the next director of the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities. The director provides leadership and direction to the Institute and advises the NIH Director and institute and center (IC) directors on the development of NIH-wide policy issues related to minority health disparities research, research on other health

disparities, and related research training and serves as principal liaison with other agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services and federal government.

NIMHD's [mission](#) is to lead scientific research to improve minority health and eliminate health disparities. The NIMHD Director also plans, reviews, coordinates, and evaluates all minority health and health disparities research and activities of the NIH; conducts and supports research in minority health and health disparities; promotes and supports the training of a diverse research workforce; translates and disseminates research information; and fosters innovative collaborations and partnerships. To carry out its mission, the NIMHD has a staff of approximately 56 employees and an annual budget of more than \$250 million.

Applicants for the NIMHD director position must possess an M.D. and/or Ph.D., or equivalent doctoral degree in the biomedical sciences, and have senior-level research experience and knowledge of research programs in minority health and health disparities. Applications are due September 15. Additional information is available on the NIH's [website](#).

The CTSA Program at NIH: The NCATS Advisory Council Working Group Response to the IOM Report

Earlier this summer, the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) Working Group on the IOM (Institute of Medicine) released its report, [The CTSA \[Clinical and Translational Science Awards\] Program at NIH](#). The report is the Working Group's response to the recommendations in an IOM report regarding the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) CTSA Program. The response included the Working Group's acknowledgement that the CTSA program is key to the goal of "accelerating the process of transforming discovery into application and to increase the rate of adoption." The CTSA program supports a national consortium of medical research institutes working together to improve the way that clinical and translational science is conducted. [Read on](#) for more details.

William Sabol Named Acting NIJ Director

National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Acting Director [Gregory K. Ridgeway](#) left the agency on July 31 for the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Criminology. [William Sabol](#), acting director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), was named this month to also serve as acting NIJ director until a permanent director is named by President Obama. You can learn more about the NIJ directorship [here](#).

ERS Presents on Local Impacts of Oil and Natural Gas Production

Although the expansion in production of shale-derived natural gas over the past decade or so has reshaped the U.S. energy landscape, until recently, the primary source of data on oil and natural gas production stopped at the state level. For researchers interested in the impacts of these shifts in energy production at the local level, this left the picture murky. However, a data set released this spring by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Economic Research Service (ERS) provides more granular data: [County-level Oil and Gas Production in the U.S.](#) Jeremy Weber, a research economist in ERS' Resource and Rural Economics Division, gave a presentation on some of the findings that have emerged from the new data during a briefing sponsored by the Council on Food, Agriculture, & Resource Economics (C-FARE) and the USDA Economists Group, entitled "Oil and Gas Development in the U.S.: Data and Recent Research on Local Consequences" (webcast available

[here](#)).

Weber described four of the areas in which research into the local impacts of oil and gas production is being conducted: negative associated impacts ("disamenities"), local economy, public finances, and agriculture. In the first category, Weber included consequences like increased truck traffic, groundwater and air quality concerns, negative health impacts, and housing price fluctuations. Studies looking at high-production counties have shown increases in automobile accidents and lower scores on tests of newborn health. Studies looking at housing values have shown mixed impacts. Regarding local economies, Weber discussed research showing that extraction creates jobs, but not as many as some have predicted (each mining-sector job creates a little more than one job outside that sector). Extraction is associated with increases in wages, but these effects are moderated by the influx of workers from elsewhere.

In the area of public finance, Weber observed that oil and gas production expands counties' revenue base, but also increases the government's liabilities. So far, the new sources of revenue (impact fees, taxation of mineral rights, and nonresidential taxes) appear to outweigh local governments' liabilities. Lastly, Weber discussed the impacts of oil and gas production on agriculture. In some sectors, particularly water and labor, energy production competes with agricultural operations. However, the two industries may also complement each other, as farmers collecting royalty payments for use of their land reinvest the money into their farms. Weber concluded by pointing out that by all estimates, U.S. oil and natural gas production will continue to rise in the decades to come, so the impacts of increased extraction on local communities will only become more pronounced.

NOTABLE PUBLICATIONS & COMMUNITY EVENTS

AAAS Seeks Nominations for 2014 Abelson Prize

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) is inviting nominations for the 2014 [Philip Hauge Abelson Prize](#). Established in 1985, the prize is awarded annually to an individual who has "made signal contributions to the advancement of science in the United States either as (1) a public servant, in recognition of sustained exceptional contributions to advancing science, or (2) a scientist, whose career has been distinguished both for scientific achievement and for other notable services to the scientific community."

The 2014 Abelson Prize will be presented at the AAAS Annual Meeting in San Jose, CA in February 2015. Nominations are due September 1.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Berkeley Law & Microsoft Seek Proposals to Study "Open Data" Issues

The Berkeley Center for Law and Technology and Microsoft have jointly issued a request for proposals (RFP) for projects studying the "civil rights, human rights, security and privacy issues that arise from recent initiatives to release large datasets of government information to the public for analysis and reuse." The RFP, [Exploring the Implications of Government Release of Large Datasets](#), seeks to fund up to six projects totaling \$300,000. Scientific papers stemming from this support will

be the focus of the 2015 Berkeley Journal for Law and Technology [Symposium](#). The RFP explicitly encourages interdisciplinary approaches and was designed to be broad enough to encompass many different disciplines, including law, computer science, economics, and statistics. Proposals are due September 25.

NIH: Enhancing Cross-National Research within the HRS Family of Studies

The National Institute on Aging (NIA) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has released a Funding Opportunity Announcement, *Enhancing Cross-National Research within the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) Family of Studies* ([RFA-AG-15-015](#)), designed to enhance the comparability among the NIA-supported HRS and the family of comparable longitudinal aging studies around the world to support cross-national behavioral and social science research in aging in high priority areas.

HRS is considered the premier source of data on population aging in the U.S. It is a nationally representative, population-based sample of individuals aged 50 and older, beginning in 1992, and contains multidisciplinary information covering many research areas including health and socioeconomic status, administrative data linkages, and objective health measures. NIA has encouraged the development of longitudinal studies of aging comparable to the HRS in other countries. This has led to a system of multidisciplinary data collections in parts of Europe, Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Ongoing collaboration among studies to produce comparable data sources is organized via the NIH-supported Network on Harmonization of Cross-National Studies of Aging.

The announcement seeks applications to develop comparable measures in the HRS-family of studies in the areas of cognition and dementia assessment, personality and non-cognitive-character-skills, social isolation and loneliness, physical activity, and life histories. NIA intends to commit up to \$2.5 million in FY 2015 to fund three to four awards. Additional funds, at least \$1 million, have been set aside to support projects focusing on cognition/dementia assessment. Applications are due November 7. For more information and to apply, click [here](#).

NIH: IDeA Program Infrastructure for Clinical Translational Research

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) established the Institutional Development Award (IDeA) program in 1993 to enhance biomedical research in states that have had historically low NIH grant funding success rates. The program currently supports competitive research in 23 states and Puerto Rico through the Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) and IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) initiatives.

The program has enjoyed tremendous support from Congress and the current funding opportunity announcement (FOA) responds to Congressional concerns. The Senate FY 2015 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) Appropriations bill would provide \$275.4 million to "fully replace the sequester cut" to the program and directs the HHS Secretary to dedicate the increase above the FY 2014 enacted level toward new COBRE awards. In the report accompanying the bill, the Committee also emphasizes that the program's focus "should continue to be on improving the necessary infrastructure and strengthening the biomedical research capacity and capability of research institutions within the IDeA States." It further notes that there are institutions in States that qualify for Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) that could benefit from the IDeA program that are ineligible for funding. The

IDeA director is instructed to "develop a plan, including legislative language, to update eligibility criteria, and specifically evaluate whether EPSCoR participation should be a factor in a State's eligibility for the IDeA program."

To support the development of infrastructure and other resources required to conduct Clinical and Translational Research (CTR) in these states, the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) which runs the program has issued an FOA, *Institutional Development Award (IDeA) Program Infrastructure for Clinical and Translational Research (Idea-CTR)*, ([PAR-14-303](#)). In addition to supporting the development of infrastructure and human resources required to conduct clinical and translational research in IDeA-eligible states, the objectives also include enhancing the ability of these institutions and investigators to develop competitive research programs, and fostering and sustaining collaboration and coordination of clinical and translational activities within and across these institutions and organizations.

The FOA provides the funding via the cooperative agreement mechanisms which will involve participation of the NIGMS IDeA program staff in the planning and execution of the proposed activities. Applications are due October 8, 2014, September 2015, and September 30, 2016.

COSSA MEMBER ACTIVITIES

***GeoHumanities*, New AAG Journal, Seeks Editorial Team**

The American Association of Geographers (AAG), a COSSA member, has put out a [call for applications and nominations](#) for an editorial team to helm their new journal, *GeoHumanities*. The team should be comprised of one representative from geography and one representative from a humanities discipline. They will be appointed to a four-year term beginning in December 2014. The new journal will "draw on and further explore the multifaceted scholarly conversations between geography and the humanities that have been evolving over the past decade." It will "serve as a home for the critical and creative interdisciplinary work of artists, authors, historians, geographers, literary and feminist theorists, environmentalists, philosophers and others working across a broad spectrum of disciplines, and at scales from the personal and local to the international and global."

Nominations and applications should be submitted by Friday, August 15, 2014. Click [here](#) for more information and instructions.

COSSA Members Advocate for Disabilities Treaty Ratification

In late July, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted 12-6 to move the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on to the full Senate for ratification. The scientific community is mobilizing in support of the Convention, which, among other things, affirms states' responsibilities to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal opportunity to pursue and enjoy the benefits of scientific progress. COSSA [endorsed](#) a [statement by the AAAS Board of Directors](#) in support of ratification. In addition, several COSSA members are also urging the Senate to ratify the treaty:

The [American Statistical Association](#) (ASA) released a [statement](#) calling on the Senate to ratify the Convention:

"ASA supports the people with disabilities who engage in the profession or practice of statistics

and the study of disability as a topic of research. Through activities of promoting the education of statistics in schools, increasing the public awareness of statistics, and supporting the use of statistics in making sound public policy, the ASA seeks to help make education, employment, and other opportunities available to all people regardless of disability status."

The Council of the [American Educational Research Association](#) (AERA) adopted a [resolution](#) urging the Senate to ratify the treaty:

The resolution reflects AERA's "longstanding commitment to access of persons with disabilities in the field of education research, in other scientific fields, and in education across the life span."

The [Linguistic Society of America](#) (LSA) adopted a [statement](#) in support of ratification:

"As an organization that studies all human languages and advocates for the language rights of all human beings, the LSA is rightfully concerned with the well-being of deaf and hard-of-hearing people, particularly with respect to access to education, medicine, employment, and full participation in civil and personal life. Likewise, the LSA is concerned with the well-being of all people who have a disorder that impacts language ability and use with respect to the same range of rights."

We will continue to provide updates on COSSA's and members' efforts to advance ratification on COSSA's [Science and Human Rights page](#).

COSSA ACTION & OUTREACH

Science Community Expresses Concern about *Secret Science Reform Act*

COSSA is among 43 organizations, led by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), who sent letters to the House and Senate expressing concern about the *Secret Science Reform Act* (H.R. 4012), which is legislation seeking to "prohibit the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from proposing, finalizing, or disseminating a covered action unless all scientific and technical information relied on to support such action is specifically identified and publicly available in a manner sufficient for independent analysis and substantial reproduction of research results." While staying neutral on the political issues that surround EPA's rule-making process, which has been a major area of concern for House Republicans in particular, the interorganizational letter asks Congress to "take additional time to evaluate the unintended consequences" of H.R. 4012. [Read on](#) for more information.

COSSA Washington Update Returns September 8

The next edition of the *COSSA Washington Update* will be published on September 8, 2014. In the meantime, updates and news can be found at www.cossa.org.

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Midwest Sociological Society
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North American Regional Science Council
North Central Sociological Association
Rural Sociological Society
Social Science History Association
Society for Anthropological Sciences
Society for Empirical Legal Studies
Society for Research on Adolescence
Society for Social Work and Research
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
Society of Behavioral Medicine
Southern Political Science Association
Southern Sociological Society
Southwestern Social Science Association

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American Institutes for Research
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Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences
Cornell Institute for Social and Economic Research
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Population Reference Bureau
RTI International
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Address all inquiries to COSSA at newsletter@cossa.org. **Telephone:** (202) 842-3525

The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) is an advocacy organization promoting attention to and federal support for the social and behavioral sciences.

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