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FEATURED NEWS

Preliminary Details of House Labor-HHS Bill Released

On July 7, the House Labor, Health and Human Services and Education (Labor-HHS) Appropriations Subcommittee passed its fiscal year (FY) 2017 appropriations bill for agencies and programs under its jurisdiction, which include the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), Department of Education, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), among others. While text of the draft appropriations bill was released to coincide with the Subcommittee markup, the Committee Report is not expected to be released until the bill is marked up by the full Appropriations Committee on Wednesday (July 13).

Read on for preliminary details of the bill’s proposals for agencies important to the social and behavioral sciences, and check back later in the week for a full analysis of the bill and report language.
COSSA IN ACTION

COSSA and CJRA Host "Ask a Criminologist" Congressional Roundtable on Increasing Homicide Rates

On July 7, COSSA and the Crime and Justice Research Alliance (CJRA) hosted the first in a series of "Ask a Criminologist" Congressional Roundtables. This briefing highlighted the work of Dr. Richard Rosenfeld of the University of Missouri, St. Louis on possible research directions to identify the causes of the sharp increase in U.S. homicides in 2015 (slides available here). Dr. Rosenfeld presented to over 130 attendees and was joined by CJRA chair Dr. Nancy La Vigne and Washington Post crime reporter Tom Jackman for a panel discussion and audience questions.

The audience of Capitol Hill staff and community stakeholders asked questions about the effectiveness and prevalence of community policing, the role of the federal government in both decreasing the homicide rate and keeping track of the homicides that occur, and how confidence can be restored in police departments. Attendees also inquired as to the next steps in research on the homicide increase, including whether demographics, changing gun laws, or comparisons of cities should be included in the analysis.

More information about the Crime & Justice Research Alliance can be found here. Rosenfeld's National Institute of Justice-commissioned research can be found here.

CONGRESSIONAL NEWS

Tri-Caucus Introduces 2016 Health Equity and Accountability Act

On June 15, led by Representative Robin Kelly (D-IL), members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) introduced the Health Equity and Accountability Act (HEAA) (H.R. 5475). The groups, also known as the Congressional Tri-Caucus, have introduced versions of the legislation since 2007, which has served to inform other health-related legislation considered by the Congress, including the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Introducing the bill, Rep. Kelly, chair of the CBC Health Braintrust, noted that HEAA "is a reminder that there is much work to be done to improve health outcomes in minority populations." She was joined at the bill's roll out by CAPAC chair Judy Chu (D-CA), CAPAC Health Taskforce co-chair Barbara Lee (D-CA), CHC Health Task Force chair Michelle Lujan Grisham (D-NM), CHC chair Linda Sanchez (D-CA), and CBC chair G.K. Butterfield (D-NC). The bill currently has 18 co-sponsors.

Among other things, if enacted, the bill would direct the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to support research addressing minority health and health disparities. Issues and topics addressed by the 800-page bill include: data collection and reporting; workforce diversity; mental health; healthcare outcomes for women, children and families; "high impact minority diseases" (cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic disease, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, lung disease); health information technology; accountability and evaluation; and social determinants of health, the built environment, and environmental justice.
NSF Seeking Division Director for Undergraduate Education

The National Science Foundation (NSF) announced a nationwide search to fill the position of Division Director for the Division of Undergraduate Education (DUE) in the Directorate for Education and Human Resources (EHR). The selected candidate will lead the activities of the Division, assess its needs and trends, and collaborate with other senior leaders across the directorates of NSF. Qualified candidates should possess a record of leadership and achievement in academe, government, or not-for-profit research and education endeavors, specifically directed at the enhancement of undergraduate STEM research. Additionally, qualified candidates must be experienced in technical, financial, and administrative management. Details can be found here.

PCORI Announces Commitments in Support for Cancer Moonshot Initiative

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) has released its plans to support the Vice President's Cancer Moonshot Initiative. PCORI's National Patient-Centered Clinical Research Network (PCORnet) has committed to (1) enhancing its national data network to facilitate large-scale cancer research; (2) creating data tables that describe characteristics of patient cohorts treated for the most common types of cancer; and (3) establishing a Cancer Collaborative Research Group within PCORnet to assist in identifying research questions, developing approaches to integrate big data in cancer prevention and treatment, and reducing disparities. More about PCORI's support for the Cancer Moonshot is available on its website.

Video Shares Insights into NIH Grant Application and Peer Review Process

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Center for Scientific Review (CSR) recently posted a video compiling insights from individuals who have participated in the NIH's peer review process, including peer reviewers, study section chairs, and NIH staff. The video is designed to guide applicants in planning and writing a competitive grant application, including writing the summary and specific aims sections of the application; explaining why the research is essential; and the importance of explaining proposed techniques, among other suggestions. The video is part of CSR's Insider's Guide to Peer Review for Applicants.

PUBLICATIONS & COMMUNITY EVENTS

Academies Report Recommends Abandoning Proposed Changes to the Common Rule

On June 29, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine released part 2 of its report Optimizing the Nation's Investment in Academic Research (the first part had been released in 2015). Of particular significance to the social and behavioral science research community is a chapter within the report on the "Ethical, Legal, and Regulatory Framework for Human Subjects Research." In it, the panel issues a stinging criticism of the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) September 2015 Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects. The chapter argues that the NPRM should be abandoned and that it "would impose additional burdens that could be detrimental to important areas of research."
National Academies Seeks New DBASSE Director

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine is searching for its next Executive Director of the Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education (DBASSE). The DBASSE Executive Director is responsible for executing the vision and strategy for division activities, directing the financial and budgetary efforts of both the Division and specific projects, as well as developing and maintaining relationships with government agencies, professional organizations, and academics. Substantial knowledge in the fields of social science, behavioral science, and/or education, a Ph.D. or Masters' degree, and a minimum of 16 years of professional experience are required. More information can be found here.

CNSF Releases Statement on American Innovation and Competitiveness Act

The Coalition for National Science Funding (CNSF), of which COSSA is an active member, released a statement on July 6 regarding the American Innovation and Competitiveness Act (S. 3084). This legislation, which was approved by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on June 29, includes language authorizing the National Science Foundation (NSF); check out COSSA’s analysis for full details. The CNSF statement highlights the important role of the NSF in the U.S. innovation and research enterprise and requests that the Senate extend the length of NSF’s authorization past the two years currently provided in the bill. CNSF also thanks the Senate for reaffirming the NSF’s peer review process, addressing the importance of broadening participation in science, and calling for changes to regulations to all researchers to spend less time attending to administrative requirements. The statement can be read here. A webcast of the Senate Commerce Committee markup of the bill is available here.

Congressional Briefing Explores Groundbreaking Research on the Health of the Aging

On June 30, the National Institute on Aging (NIA) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in collaboration with Friends of the National Institute on Aging (FoNIA) hosted an educational briefing on Capitol Hill on "Advancing the health of an aging population: Groundbreaking Research Supported by the NIA." FoNIA is a broad-based coalition of aging, disease, research, and patient groups that supports the mission of the Institute; COSSA is a longstanding member. The briefing continues the series of annual FoNIA Congressional briefings designed to share the latest aging research with Congress and its staff. Presenters included NIA Director Richard Hodes; NIA Deputy Director Marie A. Bernard; Corey T. McMillan, University of Pennsylvania; and Peter M. Abadir, the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- NSF: Dear Colleague Letter: Change Makers (NSF-16-109)
- NIH: Click here for recent NIH funding opportunities.

COSSA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT
AERA Briefing Examines the Supreme Court Decision in Fisher v. UT Austin

On June 28, the American Educational Research Association (AERA) held a briefing, After Fisher: What the Supreme Court’s Ruling Means for Students, Colleges, and the Country, to discuss the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision in Fisher v. University of Texas, Austin (Fisher II). A distinguished panel of civil rights and education research experts focused on the impact of the Fisher II ruling and its implications for ensuring quality education for all students. The Court's June 23 ruling reaffirmed "the compelling governmental interest in promoting student-body diversity in higher education and upheld the constitutionality of the University's race-conscious admissions policy under the narrow tailoring requirement of strict scrutiny." According to Angelo Ancheta, Counsel of Record for AERA et al. Amicus Curiae Brief, the Court's ruling is "fully supported by the scientific literature on diversity." This includes research on the educational benefits of diversity, the harms of racial isolation, critical mass, intra-racial diversity, and research refuting claims that race-conscious admissions policies harm minority students.

Read on for more details.

EVENTS CALENDAR

- Joint Statistical Meetings, Chicago, IL, July 30-August 4, 2016
- American Psychological Association Annual Convention, Denver, CO, August 4-7, 2016
- Rural Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Toronto, Canada, August 16-19, 2016

A list of COSSA members' annual meetings and other events can be found on the COSSA webpage.

COSSA members who have an upcoming event they would like to see listed in the Events Calendar and on our website should send an email to jmilton@cossa.org.

SAVE THE DATE!

COSSA’s 2017 Annual Meeting & Social Science Advocacy Day will take place
March 29-30, 2017 in Washington, DC

Consortium of Social Science Associations

Governing Associations

American Anthropological Association
American Association for Public Opinion Research
American Economic Association
American Educational Research Association
American Political Science Association
American Psychological Association
American Society of Criminology
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
Association of American Law Schools
Law and Society Association
Linguistic Society of America
Midwest Political Science Association

Colleges and Universities

Arizona State University
Boston University
Brown University
Carnegie Mellon University
Clark University
Columbia University
Cornell University
Duke University
Fielding Graduate University
George Mason University
Georgetown University
Harvard University


The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) is a nonprofit advocacy organization working to promote sustainable federal funding for social and behavioral science research and federal policies that positively impact the conduct of research.