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House Passes Omnibus Spending Bill Along with Problematic NSF Amendment

After two weeks of debate and votes on hundreds of amendments, the House of Representatives has passed an omnibus spending bill for fiscal year (FY) 2018, consisting of all twelve spending bills. The omnibus includes the same funding levels for social science research as the Commerce-Justice-Science and Labor-Health and Human Services-Education bills that were passed by the House Appropriations Committee. While the proposed funding levels were moderately good for social and behavioral science research, the House approved an amendment proposed by Representative Lamar Smith (R-TX), the chair of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, that could be detrimental to the social sciences. The amendment would require that about $30 million (or 0.5 percent) of the Research and Related Activities account at the National Science Foundation (NSF) be used only to support basic research in the biological and physical sciences. NSF currently prioritizes research investments based on the advice of its own experts and scholars and if this amendment became law, it could result in political influence into the NSF research process.

Two other amendments that targeted the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and the Census...
Bureau, proposed by Rep. Francis Rooney (R-FL) and Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-VA) respectively, were not taken up for consideration on the floor and therefore did not pass.

The spending package has little chance of passing the Senate, but President Trump has already signed a short-term budget measure to keep the government open at current funding levels through December 8, giving Congress more time to come up with a deal for the rest of FY 2018. Read COSSA’s full coverage of the FY 2018 spending debate here.

**COSSA IN ACTION**

**The Computing Research Association Answers "Why Social Science?"**

This week's *Why Social Science?* guest post comes from Andrew Bernat, Executive Director of the Computing Research Association, who writes about how insights from the social and behavioral sciences enhance the work of computer scientists. Read it here and subscribe.

**CONGRESSIONAL NEWS**

**Senate Labor-HHS-Education Bill Approved by Committee**

On September 7, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved its fiscal year (FY) 2018 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) Appropriations Bill; the Labor-HHS Subcommittee advanced the bill on September 5. This bill contains annual funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Department of Education (ED), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), and Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), among other federal departments and agencies. The House Appropriations Committee passed its version of the bill on July 19; the bill recently passed the House as part of a 12-bill omnibus (see related article).

The next step for the bill is consideration by the full Senate. However, Congress recently struck a deal with the White House on a continuing resolution (CR) to keep the government funded into next fiscal year (which begins October 1) through December 8. This is intended to provide additional time for lawmakers to come to agreement on overall budget levels, including the spending caps that are currently casting a major shadow on the FY 2018 appropriations bills; the bills have been written to exceed the caps currently set in law, signaling that a budget deal could be negotiated in the weeks ahead.

Read on for COSSA's analysis of the Senate Appropriations Committee's proposals for the National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Department of Education.

**FEDERAL AGENCY & ADMINISTRATION NEWS**

**Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking Releases Final Report**

On September 7, the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking (CEP) released its final
The Promise of Evidence-Based Policymaking. The Commission was established by the bipartisan Evidence-Based Policymaking Commission Act of 2016, which had been introduced by Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) in the House and Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) in the Senate. The Commission consisted of 15 members appointed by the President, Speaker of the House, House Minority Leader, Senate Majority Leader, and Senate Minority Leader, with five members being selected for their privacy expertise. Katharine G. Abraham, University of Maryland, chaired the Commission, with Ron Haskins, Brookings Institution, as her co-chair. The CEP was given a little over a year to develop a strategy for strengthening the government's evidence-building and policymaking efforts, including identifying ways to more effectively use the data the government already collects. The Promise of Evidence-Based Policymaking is the culmination of these efforts and was approved unanimously by all 15 commissioners. COSSA's previous coverage of the Commission can be found here.

Read on for more details.

NSF Releases Dear Colleague Letter on Proposals Related to Hurricane Harvey

The National Science Foundation (NSF) released a Dear Colleague letter on September 1 encouraging submissions of proposals that seek to address challenges related to Hurricane Harvey. This includes proposals that address how to better prepare for storms, the human aspects of natural disasters, improving emergency response, and ways to reduce future damage. Proposals may be submitted as rapid response research grants, early-concept grants, or supplemental funding to existing grants. More information can be found here.

COSSA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Annual AERA Brown Lecture to Feature Alfredo J. Artiles

The American Educational Research Association (AERA), a COSSA governing member, will hold its 14th annual Brown Lecture in Education Research on October 19 in Washington, DC. The 2017 lecture will be delivered by Alfredo J. Artiles, Dean of Graduate Education and the Ryan C. Harris Professor of Special Education at Arizona State University. Artiles' work focuses on the intersection of disability with other socio-cultural differences and how to better understand and address related educational disparities. More information on Artiles and the lecture, including how to register to attend in person or watch via webcast, is available on the AERA website.

AAPSS Accepting Nominations for 2019 Moynihan Prize

The American Academy of Political and Social Science (AAPSS), a COSSA member, has opened the nomination process for its 2019 Daniel Patrick Moynihan Prize. The Moynihan Prize recognizes "social scientists, public officials and other leaders in the public arena who champion the use of informed judgment to improve public policy." More information on the Prize and instructions for submitting nominations is available on the AAPSS website.

EVENTS CALENDAR

- The Lunch @ DC: Evidence-Informed Government: Addressing New and Recurring Challenges to Old Problems, September 21, 2017, Washington, DC
- The Lunch @ DC: The Promise of Evidence-Based Policymaking: Recommendations of the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking, October 5, 2017, Washington, DC
- American Statistical Association Symposium on Statistical Inference, October 11-13, 2017, Bethesda, MD
A list of COSSA members' annual meetings and other events can be found on the COSSA events page. 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.
The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) is a nonprofit advocacy organization working to promote sustainable federal funding for and widespread use of social and behavioral science research and federal policies that positively impact the conduct of research. COSSA serves as a united voice for a broad, diverse network of organizations, institutions, communities, and stakeholders who care about a successful and vibrant social science research enterprise. The COSSA membership includes professional and disciplinary associations, scientific societies, research centers and institutes, and U.S. colleges and universities.