



CONSORTIUM of SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

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Testimony in Support of Fiscal Year 2019 Funding for the
National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for
Health Statistics, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Institute of Education Sciences,
and Department of Education International Education and Foreign Language Programs

Prepared for the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related
Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, United States Senate

Submitted by Wendy Naus, Executive Director

Consortium of Social Science Associations

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On behalf of the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), I offer this written testimony for inclusion in the official committee record. For fiscal year (FY) 2019, COSSA urges the Committee to appropriate **\$39.3 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), *in addition to the funds included in the 21st Century Cures Act*; \$8.445 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including \$175 million for the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS); \$454 million for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ); \$670 million for the Institute of Education Sciences (IES); and \$78.5 million for the Department of Education's International Education and Foreign Language programs.**

First, allow me to thank the committee for its long-standing, bipartisan support for scientific research, especially for the NIH. Strong, sustained funding for all U.S. science agencies is essential if we are to make progress toward improving the health and economic competitiveness of the nation. 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. We represent the collective interests of all STEM disciplines engaged in the rigorous study of why and how humans behave as they do as individuals, groups and within institutions, organizations, and society. Social and behavioral science often refers to the disciplines of and fields within anthropology, communication, demography, economics, geography, history, law, linguistics, political science, psychology, sociology, and statistics, as well as countless multidisciplinary subfields.

National Institutes of Health (\$39.3 billion)

COSSA urges the Committee to appropriate \$39.3 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in FY 2019 *in addition to* the funds included in the *21st Century Cures Act* for targeted initiatives. COSSA appreciates the Subcommittee's leadership and its long-standing bipartisan support of NIH, especially during difficult budgetary times. There are, however, ongoing and emerging health challenges confronting the United States and the world, which COSSA believes merits continued investment in the NIH. This funding level would enable real growth over biomedical inflation, an important step to ensuring stability in the U.S. research capacity over the long term.

As this Committee knows, the NIH supports scientifically rigorous, peer-reviewed, investigator-initiated research, including basic and applied behavioral and social sciences research, as it works “in pursuit of fundamental knowledge about the nature *and behavior* of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life and reduce illness and disability.” To be truly transformative, NIH will need to continue to embrace research from a wide range of scientific disciplines, including the **social and behavioral sciences**. Recognizing the value these disciplines add to preventing and treating most diseases, disorders, and conditions, NIH support for basic and applied social and behavioral science research can be found across its 27 institutes and centers (ICs). Knowledge about the behavioral influences on health is a crucial component in the nation’s battles against the leading causes of morbidity and mortality, namely, obesity, heart disease, cancer, AIDS, diabetes, age-related illnesses, accidents, substance abuse, and mental illness. The fundamental understanding of how disease works, including the impact of social environment on disease processes, underpins our ability to conquer devastating illnesses. NIH investment in social science research is an essential piece of the public health puzzle.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – \$8.445 billion, including \$175 million for the National Center for Health Statistics

COSSA urges the Subcommittee to appropriate **\$8.445 billion for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including \$175 million for CDC’s National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)**. As the country’s leading health protection and surveillance agency, the CDC works with state, local, and international partners to keep Americans safe and healthy. Social and behavioral science research plays a crucial role in helping the CDC carry out this mission. Scientists in fields ranging from psychology, sociology, anthropology, and geography to health communications, social work, and demography work in every CDC Center to design, analyze, and evaluate behavioral surveillance systems, public health interventions, and health promotion and communication programs that help protect Americans and people around the world from disease. Further, NCHS collects data on chronic disease prevalence, health care disparities, emergency room use, teen pregnancy, infant mortality, causes of death, and rates of insurance, to name a few. It provides critical data on all aspects of our health care system through data cooperatives and surveys that serve as the gold standard for data collection around the world. Data from NCHS surveys are used by agencies across the federal government (including NIH), state and local governments, public health officials, federal policymakers, and demographers, epidemiologists, health services researchers, and other scientists to better understand the impact of policies and programs on Americans’ health.

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality – \$454 million

COSSA urges the Subcommittee to appropriate **\$454 million for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)**. The requested funding level would allow AHRQ to strengthen its research portfolios and allow the agency to build up its base budget should the authorization of the Patient Centered Outcomes Research (PCOR) Trust Fund (which provides 25% of AHRQ’s funding) lapse at the end of FY 2019. AHRQ funds research on improving the quality, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of America’s health care system. It is the only agency in the federal government with the expertise and explicit mission to fund research on improving health care *at the provider level* (i.e., in hospitals, medical practices, nursing homes, and other medical facilities). Its work is complementary—not duplicative—of other HHS agencies. AHRQ-funded

research provides us with the evidence and tools we need to tackle some of the health care system's greatest challenges, including identifying effective strategies for helping primary care practices cope with the challenges of the opioid epidemic and reducing the incidence of healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) and medical errors. AHRQ reports and data give us vital information about the state of the U.S. health care system and identify areas we can improve. AHRQ's *Medical Expenditure Panel Survey* (MEPS) collects data on how Americans use and pay for medical care, providing vital information on the impact of health care on the U.S. economy. COSSA urges the Committee to ensure robust support for AHRQ's critical health services research.

Institute of Education Sciences – \$670 million

COSSA requests a funding level of \$670 million for the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) in FY 2019. As the research arm of the Department of Education, IES supports research and data to improve our understanding of education at all levels, from early childhood and elementary and secondary education, through higher education. Research further examines special education, rural education, teacher effectiveness, education technology, student achievement, reading and math interventions, and many other areas. IES-supported research has improved the quality of education research, led to the development of early interventions for improving child outcomes, generated and validated assessment measures for use with children, and led to the establishment of the *What Works Clearinghouse* for education research, highlighting interventions that work and identifying those that do not. With increasing demand for evidence-based practices in education, adequate funding for IES is essential to support studies that increase knowledge of the factors that influence teaching and learning and apply those findings to improve educational outcomes.

International Education and Foreign Language Programs – \$78.5 million

The Department of Education's International Education and Foreign Language programs play a major role in developing a steady supply of graduates with deep expertise and high-quality research on foreign languages and cultures, international markets, world regions, and global issues. **COSSA urges a total appropriation of \$78.5 million (\$70.5 million for Title VI and \$8.0 million for Fulbright-Hays) for these programs,** which would represent a modest increase over current budgets. In addition to broadening opportunities for students in international and foreign language studies, such support would also strengthen the nation's human resource capabilities in strategic areas of the world that impact our national security and global economic competitiveness.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony on behalf of the social and behavioral science research community.