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January 18, 2019

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COSSA Statement on the Passage of the *Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018*

Washington, D.C. — The Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA) applauds the passage of the *Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018*. The legislation represents a bipartisan recognition of the importance of science and data in helping to design and improve policies. COSSA has been closely monitoring the progress of the evidence-based policymaking movement since the passage of this bill's precursor legislation, which established the commission on whose recommendations much of this bill is based.

The overarching message of this bill is that agencies need to reframe their approach to evaluation and evidence-building from an activity that is conducted *ad hoc* to an ongoing process integrated into the everyday operations of federal programs. COSSA hopes this shift in thinking will provide more opportunities for social scientists from across the disciplines to contribute their expertise to improving the work of government.

One of the bill's most important provisions for social scientists in particular is Section 303, which directs that the government streamline the application process for outside researchers seeking to work with federal data, making it easier for social scientists to access data from agencies across the government while allowing the government to set uniform security requirements. Lowering barriers to working with data from multiple sources will allow researchers to approach problems in new ways, producing more insight into how federal programs impact communities.

The bill also makes important and long-overdue modernizations to how the government approaches evidence, including reauthorizing the *Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act* (CIPSEA), which ensures that federal statistical agencies adhere to strict standards for producing high-quality data while protecting privacy.

COSSA views this bill as the first step in a longer process of ensuring the government is fully invested in using science to improve the effectiveness of its operations. We look forward to engaging with our partners in Congress, federal agencies, and the science community to build on this progress.

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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. 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.

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