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# COSSA Washington Update

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## CONGRESS BEGINS TO TACKLE FY 2009 SPENDING BILLS

As the Congressional calendar grows shorter with the summer and convention recess drawing ever closer, the appropriations committees have begun their annual ritual of marking up next year's spending bills. In the meantime, the House and Senate continue to struggle with the FY 2008 War Supplemental appropriations bill.

The plan is to get as many of the 12 bills through the House and Senate Appropriations' Committees. The question remains of whether the Democratic Congressional leadership wants to confront President Bush, who has threatened to veto bills that exceed his discretionary spending limit. Since the Congressional Budget Resolution does just that by over \$24 billion, the current strategy appears to wait until early 2009 to complete the process. Since the fiscal year begins on October 1, this once again will create difficulties for the agencies, but they have become accustomed to not getting their spending bills on time.

### NSF GETS INCREASE; CHAIRMAN CRITICIZES CENSUS BUREAU

The House Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Subcommittee (CJS), chaired by Rep. Alan Mollohan (D-WV) marked up its bill on June 12. The panel provided the National Science Foundation (NSF) an overall appropriation of \$6.9 billion, an increase of \$450 million over the FY 2008 allocation, and about a \$50 million increase over the President's request. The boost will seem smaller if the \$200 million in the Senate version of the War Supplemental survives.

The Subcommittee gave the Census Bureau its originally requested level of \$2.635 billion. The additional \$540 million recently requested by the Administration to fix the problems the Bureau has encountered with the preparations for the 2010 count (see other story) was not provided. An angry Chairman Mollohan called the Census "the elephant in the room." He further chastised the Bureau and the Commerce Department and the contractors, by suggesting they "should be embarrassed at the abysmal management of the decennial contract." He went on: "I fear that the Bureau of the Census is standing on the precipice of ruin, but it will not be for the lack of funds." The \$540 million could be added at the full Appropriations Committee mark up on June 19.

The Senate CJS panel, chaired by Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) is scheduled to mark up its version of the FY 2009 bill on June 18.

#### HOMELAND SECURITY'S UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS RECIEVES SMALL INCREASE

On June 11, the House Homeland Security Appropriations panel, chaired by Rep. David Price (D-NC) marked up its bill. The Subcommittee recommended \$887 million for the Science and Technology Directorate (S&T), an increase of \$56.7 million over the FY 2008 level and \$18.1 million more than the President requested. Within S&T, the panel allocated \$12.5 million for the Human Factors division, the same as the request, and slightly less than the FY 2008 appropriation. That level included a one-time earmark of \$7.5 million for an Institute for Homeland Security Solutions, housed at RTI International. The University Programs account would increase to \$51.3 million over FY 2008's \$49.3 million, and significantly above the President's request of \$43.8 million. These funds support the research Centers for Excellence, whose number has grown recently and a scholarship and fellowship program that has become greatly diminished. The full House Appropriations Committee will take up the Subcommittee's recommendations on June 18.

## ARMY RESEARCH OFFICE SEEKS RESEARCH PROPOSALS AS PROJECT MINERVA GETS OFF THE GROUND

The U.S. Army Research Office (ARO) has heeded Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' call for more Department of Defense (DOD) support for social science research (see Update, [April 21, 2008](#)) and issued a Broad Agency Announcement seeking proposals for research areas designated by the Secretary as Project Minerva.

According to the announcement, "the Minerva Research Initiative (MRI) is a DOD-sponsored, university-based social science research program focusing on areas of strategic importance to U.S. national security policy. It seeks to increase the Department's intellectual capital in the social sciences and improve its ability to address future challenges and build bridges between the Department and the social science community."

The Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, which is working with the National Science Foundation to produce its own part of the initiative, and the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology and Logistics, of which ARO is a part, are working to achieve Gates' vision by piloting several approaches for engaging the social science community.

White papers and full proposals are solicited which address the following topics:

- 1) Chinese Military and Technology Research and Archive Programs;
- 2) Studies of the Strategic Impact of Religious and Cultural Changes within the Islamic World;
- 3) Iraqi Perspectives Project—analyzing archives from the Saddam Hussein era;
- 4) Studies of Terrorist Organization and Ideologies; and
- 5) New Approaches to Understanding Dimensions of National Security, Conflict, and Cooperation.

White papers are due by July 25, 2008 and full proposals by October 3, 2008.

ARO estimates spending \$50 million over five years for this part of Minerva. Awards should range from \$500,000 to \$3 million per year. ARO expects, but does not require, that proposals will come from multidisciplinary, multi-university teams of investigators. The White Papers as well as the Full Proposals will be evaluated by a panel chaired by the responsible research topic. These people are:

For number 1 above: Chris Skaluba, 703/692-3908, [chris.skaluba@osd.mil](mailto:chris.skaluba@osd.mil) .

For number 2 above: Harold Hawkins, 703/696-4323, [harold.hawkins@navy.mil](mailto:harold.hawkins@navy.mil) .

For number 3 above: Joseph Psotka, 703/602-7945, [joseph.psotka@us.army.mil](mailto:joseph.psotka@us.army.mil) .

For number 4 above: Terence Lyons, 703/696-9542, [terence.lyons@afosr.af.mil](mailto:terence.lyons@afosr.af.mil) .

For number 5 above: Joseph Psotka, 703/602-7945, [joseph.psotka@us.army.mil](mailto:joseph.psotka@us.army.mil) .

For more programmatic information contact: Jonathan Porter, [Jonathan.Porter@osd.mil](mailto:Jonathan.Porter@osd.mil).

The Broad Agency Announcement Number is: W911NF-08-R-0007. A link to the PDF can be found at: <http://www.arl.army.mil/www/default.cfm?Action=6&Page=8>.

## NIH BEGINS IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW PROCEDURES TO ENHANCE PEER REVIEW

“Critical changes to enhance and improve the National Institutes of Health (NIH) peer review system,” were announced by Director Elias Zerhouni at the 96th Meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Director (ACD) on June 6. The announcement marks the culmination of year-long discussions and efforts to determine ways to further enrich the peer review process (See Update, [December 10, 2007](#)). A prominent element of the new plan is an increased commitment to investigator-initiated, high-risk, high-impact research to prevent a slowdown of transformative research, despite difficult budgetary times.

Lawrence Tabak, Director of the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) and co-chair of the two peer review panels, internal and external, established by Zerhouni to address the increasing number of applications being received by the agency in a flat budget climate and the diminishing availability of quality reviewers informed the ACD that implementation of the new “comprehensive framework” will be accomplished over the next 18 months.

Four main priorities and highlights make up the Implementation Plan Report:

- 1. Engage The Best Reviewers** - Increase flexibility of service, formally acknowledge reviewer efforts, further compensate time and effort, and enhance and standardize training. This would be accomplished by spreading 12 session reviewer commitments over four-six years and allowing duty-sharing by colleagues as appropriate. To recruit additional reviewers to serve some certain classes of NIH grant awards would include a service expectation of principal investigators (PIs) (e.g., Merit/Javits, Pioneer Award, grants where the PI is on three or more investigator-initiated (R01s) or Type 2 renewals with greater than \$500,000 in direct costs). More formally acknowledge the efforts of all reviewers along with making the review experience intellectually more rewarding. Reviewers would be compensated for outstanding and sustained service for those who serve for a minimum of 18 full study section meetings as chartered members or equivalent service. To enhance review quality, additional training and mentoring to all study section chairs, reviewers, and Scientific Review Officers would be provided. This includes the development of an NIH-wide standardized core curriculum based on best practices augmented by Institutes and Centers and study section-specific additions.
- 2. Improve Quality and Transparency of Reviews** - Modify the rating system to focus on specific review criteria, with less emphasis on methodological details and more emphasis on potential scientific impact. Reviewers would provide individual scores for five specific review criteria: impact, investigator(s), innovation/originality, project plan/feasibility and environment, plus a global score. Applicants would be provided specific feedback including a score for each criterion, representing the average from all reviewers. The Plan would restructure the summary statement to align with the explicit rating criterion, including an optional field for reviewers who wish to provide applicants with additional advice (“mentoring”) including the opinion that the proposal should not be resubmitted unless fundamentally revised as a new application. Shorten and redesigned applications to align with NIH review criteria for applications utilizing grant mechanisms R01, R15, R21, R03, K and F.
- 3. Ensure Balanced and Fair Reviews Across Scientific Fields and Career Stages** - Peer review should fairly evaluate proposals from all scientists regardless of their career stage or discipline and avoid bias towards more conservative and proven approaches at the expense of innovation. Peer review should also be designed to minimize the need for repeated or multiple applications from meritorious scientists to achieve funding support. It should encourage “transformative” research. In 1980 the average age of a new investigator was 37.2. In 2006 it was 42.2 years. Between 2002 and 2007 the number of scored applications remained almost the same, but 535 fewer applications from first time investigators were scored.

One goal is to continue to support and develop policies to fund a minimum number of early stage investigators (ESI) and new (to NIH) investigators, as appropriate. For more experienced investigators, equal emphasis would be placed on a retrospective assessment of accomplishments and a prospective assessment of what is being proposed. Within a study section, clinical research applications being reviewed would be clustered, discussed, scored and ranked. “Transformative” research would be encouraged, expanding on the Pioneer, EUREKA, and New Innovator awards. The Transformative Research portfolio would grow to approximately one-percent of R01-like awards. Pioneer and New Innovator awards would grow to more than \$500 million over five years. The EUREKA Award would grow to approximately \$100 million over five years. New, investigator-initiated

“transformative” R01 research using the NIH Roadmap authority and funding would grow to approximately \$250 million over five years. To reduce the burden on applicants, reviewers and NIH staff, the goal is to reduce the rate of resubmission from applications with high likelihood of funding, as well as those with very low or no likelihood of funding by establishing policies to carefully rebalance success rates to increase system efficiency.

4. **Develop a Permanent Process for Continuous Review of Peer Review** - The agency plans to pilot and evaluate new models of review, including the two-stage reviews (editorial board models) and the use of “prebuttals.” It also plans to pilot and evaluate different methods for ranking relative merit of applications and high bandwidth electronic review. There is also a plan to develop metrics for monitoring performance of review.

### Next Steps

Next steps include establishing an Ad-hoc Peer Review Task Force, chaired by NIH Deputy Director Raynard S. Kington. The Task Force would develop detailed plans and oversee the initial implementation. A new office is also being created within the Division of Program Coordination, Planning and Strategic Initiatives to oversee continuous assessment of the peer review system.

For more information see Enhancing Peer Review at NIH and to learn about the Implementation Plan see <http://enancing-peer-review.nih.gov>

## CONGRESS ENACTS FARM BILL OVER BUSH’S VETO; CHANGES MADE TO RESEARCH STRUCTURE

Both the House and Senate overrode President Bush’s veto of the new Farm Bill and most of the bill became law on May 22. Because one provision regarding trade was inadvertently left out of the bill enacted on May 22, Congress had to redo that title on June 5.

The new law reauthorizes crop subsidies, boosts funding for food stamps, expands land conservation programs, and offers new incentives for alternative energy. The research provisions also make significant nomenclature and bureaucratic changes.

One change is the renaming of the Cooperative State Research Extension and Education Service as the Research, Extension, and Education Office (REEO). This Office will be integrated into the office of the Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics. The Undersecretary is now required to “have specialized training or significant experience” in agricultural research, education, and economics.

The law organizes the REEO into six Divisions:

- 1) Renewable energy, natural resources, and environment;
- 2) Food safety, nutrition, and health;
- 3) Plant health and production and plant products;
- 4) Animal health and production and animal products;
- 5) Agriculture systems and technology; and
- 6) Agriculture economics and rural communities.

Each division will be led by a chief limited to a four-year term of service. Congress expects the chiefs to “coordinate the research, extension, and education activities across the Department.” This includes intramural and extramural research, education and extension activities, and tracking, reporting and identifying research gaps, unnecessary duplication among programs, and assessing future needs.

The bill also establishes by October 1, 2009, a National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to administer competitive research grants programs. NIFA is “to be an independent, scientific, priority-setting agency for the food and agricultural sciences.” Its director will be a distinguished scientist appointed by the President for a six-year term. The director will “ensure an appropriate balance between fundamental and applied research programs,” and “promote the use and growth of competitively awarded grants.” The goal, according to Congress, is to “raise the profile of agricultural research, extension, and education,” and make NIFA “commensurate in stature with other grant-making agencies across the Federal government, such as the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation.”

To help NIFA, Congress also created a new competitive research program. Combining the National Research Initiative (NRI) and the Initiative for Future Agricultural and Food Systems (IFAFS), the new law gives us the Agriculture and Food

Research Initiative (AFRI). There are six priority areas in AFRI, which mirror the six divisions of REEO noted above. The law requires peer review and that AFRI funds get allocated in the following manner: 60 percent for fundamental research and 40 percent for applied research. Of the funds for fundamental research, "not less than 30 percent will be made available for multidisciplinary research and not more than two percent will be made available for equipment grants." Some awards may also go for capacity building to certain institutions. The law authorizes AFRI to receive \$700 million in funding annually. The NRI appropriation for FY 2008 is \$191 million.

In other provisions of the new law's research section, Congress raises the level for indirect costs of research from 19 to 22 percent. The new law adds a new emphasis to the Human Nutrition Intervention and Health Promotion Research Program to examine the efficacy of agricultural programs in promoting the health of disadvantaged populations. It establishes a Specialty Crop competitive grants initiative authorized at \$100 million in appropriated funds and \$215 million in mandatory funds in FY 2008 as well as a Specialty Crop Policy Research Institute. The legislation authorizes a new research program focusing on critical rural and agricultural transportation and logistics issues. Under the research priority areas of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act, reauthorized in the new law, Congress added: agricultural practices related to Climate Change, women and minorities in STEM fields; and an agricultural workers safety initiative.

## CONGRESS CONTINUES SCRUTINY OF CENSUS BUREAU: OUTREACH PROGRAMS LAUNCHED

In early April, the Full Committee and the Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census and National Archives held a joint hearing to examine the rising cost of the decennial census. The Bureau had intended to automate field data collection activities as a way to reduce costs and improve data quality and operational efficiency for Census 2010. However, the handheld computers manufactured by the Harris Corporation had been reported problematic during the testing phase and uncertainties arose as to whether they would hinder rather than aid Census plans.

After analyzing several options to revise the design of the decennial, the Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez announced the Bureau's plan to abandon use of the handhelds and resort to a paper-based Non-response Follow-Up (NRFU) (see Update [April 21, 2008](#)). The additional costs accrued to revert back to paper would require an increase of \$2.2 to \$3 billion dollars through FY 2013, bringing the total lifecycle cost of the 2010 Census to between \$13.7 and \$14.5 billion. Despite the expressed disappointment in the rising cost of the decennial among committee members, on June 9 the President requested an amendment to his FY 2009 budget proposal to provide \$546 million to the Department of Commerce to ensure an accurate and on-time 2010 Decennial Census (see other story about FY 2009 appropriations).

On June 11, Census Bureau Director Steve Murdock was joined by representatives from the Harris and MITRE Corporation at a follow-up hearing before the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, chaired by Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA), to again assess the Bureau's plans for the NRFU, management of the Field Data Collection Automation (FDCA) contract and its latest cost estimates, and the status of the Bureau's integrated 2010 project schedule.

In the redesigned plan to conduct a paper-based NRFU, Murdock reiterated that paper maps, address registers, assignment tracking reports and paper enumerator questionnaires and forms would be utilized. The current plan for the address canvassing operation relies primarily on the FDCA contract to supply substantial portions of software for the operation. Scheduled for April 2009, a comprehensive logical test plan with Bureau stakeholders will include FDCA testing, Large Block testing, Geography Division's testing, Interface testing (primarily FDCA interfaces with the Census Bureau), and an Operational Field Test.

Also present at the hearing was Mathew J. Scire, Director of Strategic Issues of the Government Accountability Office (GAO), who acknowledged the Bureau's initiative to address FDCA program management and oversight, but stressed cost estimates required timely reconciliation. According to the GAO the Bureau has obtained FDCA cost estimates based on the recent changes to the scope of the program from both Harris and MITRE which reportedly differ by nearly \$600 million.

Michael P. Murray of the Harris Corporation affirmed the significant difference between cost projections but clarified that they were due the "rough order of magnitude" or ROM delivered by Harris and the Independent Government Cost Estimate (IGCE) model prepared by MITRE. "The numbers projected separately by Harris and MITRE cannot rightfully be compared, because they were based upon fundamentally different assumptions," said Murray. To address this matter, Murray assured the Committee that Harris is jointly working with the Census Bureau to develop a detailed proposal, consistent with the requirements, which will include the revised program costs. The updated program costs, along with complete transparency throughout the process, will be provided to the Census Bureau in mid-July.

The GAO recommended a final cost estimate from Harris, as soon as possible, in order to have a sufficient amount of time to complete modifications to the contract by the end of the fiscal year. After the contractor develops its detailed cost estimate, the Bureau will in fact reconcile the two cost estimates and renegotiate the contract. Murdock declared that the final contract will be clearly justified, and that management of the contract will be transparent and rigorous.

### 2010 Census Partnership Program

At the June 6 quarterly meeting of the Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS), Timothy Olsen of the Census Bureau provided a detailed overview of the 2010 Census Partnership program. The goal of the 2010 partnership program is to combine the strengths of local governments, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, schools, media, businesses and others, to ensure a complete and accurate 2010 Census.

"It's In Our Hands," the slogan promoting Census 2010 participation, encourages communities, state and local governments, non-government organizations, and others to take ownership of the count. Olsen was pleased to announce that national partnerships were well underway with up to 250 organizations already on board as official partners. These partnerships would support the increase in mail responses, reduce the differential undercount, and improve cooperation with enumerators.

Complete Count Communities (CCC) and governmental Tribal Liaison programs are vital roles in the partnership to create an accurate 2010 Census count as well, remarked Olsen. Complete Count Committees are volunteer teams consisting of community leaders, faith-based groups, schools, businesses, media outlets and others who are appointed by elected officials and work together to make sure entire communities are counted. The Tribal Governments Liaison Program (TGLP) began during the 1990 Census and continued throughout Census 2000. It is one of the Bureau's core strategies to successfully building partnerships with tribal governments and their communities.

Olsen made note of the Language Assistance Program that will implement a targeted mailing of 10 million bilingual Spanish/English questionnaires. Multilingual telephone questionnaire assistance (TQA) operators will supplement this outreach effort in addition to assistant center programs to support individuals in completing their questionnaire.

In summary, Olsen emphasized the importance of participating in the 2010 Census indicating that businesses and corporations rely on an accurate census in developing new businesses, and the awarding of federal funds is based on census data. More information about the partnership program can be found on the census website at [www.census.gov/2010census](http://www.census.gov/2010census).

## HOUSE PANEL EXAMINES NATION'S GANG PROBLEM

The Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security held a hearing on June 10, *Addressing Gangs: What's Effective? What's Not?*, to discuss how to effectively tackle the nation's youth gang problem. Subcommittee Chairman Robert Scott (D-VA) set the tone for the hearing by stating that all but a dozen or so of the 2,200 juveniles sentenced to life without parole are in the United States suggesting that current enforcement policies have created a "cradle to prison pipeline."

The two key members on the Republican side wove in one America's most volatile issues, illegal immigration, to the gang situation. According to the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee, Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-TX), there are currently one million gang members in America. He stated that 70 to 75 percent of gang members are here illegally and that illegal aliens make up 90 percent of MS-13 members, one America's most notoriously dangerous gangs. Rep. Lamar Smith (R-TX), Ranking Member of the full House Judiciary Committee, reinforced the idea that gangs and illegal immigrants are strongly tied and stated we need to secure our borders and facilitate deportations.

According to the testimony of the witnesses, there are many reasons why adolescents join gangs. Charles Ogletree, Director of the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice, said that most children who join gangs do so out of a need to have affiliation and connect with others. Robert Macy, Executive Director of the Boston Children's Foundation, testified that often incarceration actually forces young teens to choose a violent gang to protect themselves so that these adolescents often join gangs in prison in order to survive.

Frank Straub, Commissioner of the White Plains, NY Department of Public Safety, cited the Pew Center on the States report, *One in 100: Behind Bars in America 2008*, which finds that 2.3 million people are now incarcerated in the United States, and around five million citizens are on probation and/or parole. Those numbers mean that a staggering one in every 100 adults is confined in jail or prison. The incarceration numbers are especially startling when you examine Black males from the age of 20 to 34, where one in nine is incarcerated. That number has a significant effect on the children these men leave behind. The Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice's report, *No More Children Left*

*Behind Bars*, estimates that 7.3 million children have a parent in prison, jail, on probation, or on parole. One in forty children has at least one incarcerated parent and for Black children the number may be as high as one in 14, according to the report.

Ogletree told the Subcommittee that racial disparities within the juvenile justice system are “deeply troubling.” He cited that in 2003, Black youth were detained at a rate four and a half times higher than that of their white counterparts. That year minority youth represented 61 percent of all youth detained, despite accounting for only about one-third of the total youth population. He said this harms not only the children, their families and communities, but the entire nation. He referred to a report from economists Henry Levin, Clive Belfield, Peter Muennig & Cecilia Rouse, *The Costs and Benefits of an Excellent Education for America’s Children*, which estimated that increasing high school graduation rates would decrease violent crime by 20 percent, and property crime by 10 percent. They also calculated that each additional high school graduate would provide a savings on average of \$36,500 in lifetime costs.

Straub also noted that Blacks face disparities not only within the criminal justice system, but as victims of violence themselves. He reminded the Subcommittee that the murder rate for Blacks is more than three times the national average; there are 19 Black murder victims per 100,000 people, in contrast with just five for the general population. And according to 2007 statistics from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 77 percent of Black male homicide victims, between the ages of 17 and 29, were killed with a firearm.

### Department of Justice Gang Prevention Programs

Kevin O’Connor, Associate Attorney General of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), outlined the Department’s efforts to combat gang violence. One of its enforcement initiatives is the creation of a new national gang task force, called the National Gang Targeting, Enforcement and Coordination Center (GangTECC), which coordinates overlapping investigations. DOJ is also involved in prevention efforts, although with significantly less funding, with the Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.) program, whose primary objective is prevention. In FY 2007, G.R.E.A.T. programs were awarded nearly \$15 million in funding for 167 local programs.

Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA), said it was time we formulated some good sound sensible public policies. She also questioned whether DOJ was really helping and working with communities to solve the gang problem. “We have got to stop thinking we can lock everyone up,” she said.

Chairman Scott stated it is curious that we have continued to rely on the get tough approach, and asked whether these measures really work. Ogletree replied that get tough on crime policies are counter productive. By stepping up prosecutions of non-violent youth, Ogletree testified we end up incarcerating children and teenagers who are not violent, but in need of adult guidance, direction and opportunities. We remove them from their communities, and isolate them with a group of criminals who will only reinforce and harden their negative behavior. He said there needs to be more focus on providing opportunities for the majority of kids who are non-violent to help them develop skills, talents, and interests. By focusing our energies on the youth that can be saved we “will make them contributing adult members of our society and that will make our communities safer,” Ogletree concluded.

Full committee Chairman, Rep. John Conyers (D-MI), summed up by suggesting “this is a bureaucratic legislative hearing that touches the nerve endings of us all.” He called for a round-table discussion to be held in the near future. Chairman Scott concurred.

## HOUSE HOMELAND PANEL REPORTS LEGISLATION TO CODIFY ‘CONTROLLED UNCLASSIFIED INFORMATION’

On May 9, the Bush Administration issued a memorandum to clarify the use of Sensitive But Unclassified (SBU) information. They have decided to rename it Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) (see Update, May 19, 2008). On June 10, the House Intelligence, Information Sharing, and Terrorist Risk Assessment Subcommittee of the House Homeland Security Committee recommended legislation that would help codify and implement the Administration’s proposal.

Sponsored by Subcommittee Chair, Rep. Jane Harman (D-CA), with strong support from Ranking Republican Rep. Dave Reichert (R-WA), the bill, “The Improving Public Access to Documents Act of 2008” (H.R. 6193), would require the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) “to develop and administer policies, procedures, and programs to promote the implementation of the Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) Framework applicable to unclassified information” concerning homeland security, terrorism, and weapons of mass destruction.

At a hearing on the legislation, just before the Subcommittee reported it, Harman called the new CUI framework “a workable replacement for the out-of-control SBU practices, policies, and procedures that plague the Federal government.” The CUI “brings order to the chaos,” she declared.

Reacting to the overuse of the SBU markings, the legislation tells the DHS to “start with the presumption that all homeland security information that is not properly classified or marked as controlled unclassified information...should be shared with the public.”

The bill asks DHS to work closely with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), State, local, and tribal governments, organizations with expertise in civil rights, civil liberties, and government oversight (three of these testified at the hearing: the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Security Archive, and the OpenTheGovernment.org), and the private sector.

The Subcommittee’s legislation also requires DHS to create a standard format for CUI designated information, to maintain a publicly available list of documents marked as CUI, and to establish an ongoing auditing mechanism to assess the use of the CUI designation. The bill specifically prohibits using the CUI designation to “conceal violations of law, inefficiency, or administrative error...to prevent the embarrassment to the Federal government or any Federal official...or to prevent or delay the release of information that does not require such [CUI] protection.” There is also a section requiring training of Federal personnel in how to use the CUI designation, again with NARA playing an important role.

Both Harman and Reichert hope the bill can move through the House quickly.

## POTERBA REPLACES FELDSTEIN AS HEAD OF THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH

James Poterba, Mitsui Professor and Chair of Economics at MIT, has been chosen to become the next President of the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER). Poterba, who also directs NBER’s Program on Public Economics, succeeds Martin Feldstein, who has led the Bureau since 1977. The new president’s term begins on July 1, 2008.

Poterba has been associated with NBER almost as long as Feldstein has been president. The new President began as a research assistant to Feldstein and Lawrence Summers during his sophomore year at Harvard in 1978. After receiving his D.Phil. degree in economics from Nuffield College, Oxford, he began and has maintained his entire academic career at MIT. He also rejoined NBER as a Faculty Research Fellow in 1982. Poterba has edited the *Tax Policy and the Economy* series, a set of annual volumes containing papers presented at the NBER tax policy seminar in Washington, which he has shepherded for many years.

A long time researcher on the affect of various tax policies, in 2005, Poterba was a member of the President’s Advisory Panel on Federal Tax Reform that made recommendations to change the federal income tax system. He has been a Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences and a Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution. Poterba has served on the Executive Committee of the American Economic Association, on the Board of Directors of the American Finance Association, and is currently First Vice President of the National Tax Association.

Founded in 1920, the National Bureau of Economic Research is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization dedicated to promoting a greater understanding of how the economy works. The NBER is committed to undertaking and disseminating unbiased economic research among public policymakers, business professionals, and the academic community. NBER is a member of COSSA.

## RESEARCH LIBRARIES’ ASSOCIATION APPOINTS LOWREY AS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Charles Lowrey, currently Dean of Libraries at the University of Maryland, College Park, will be the new Executive Director of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) He succeeds Duane Webster, who has led the organization since 1988. Lowrey begins his new position on July 1, 2008.

Lowrey has directed the Maryland library system since 1996. Previously, he was University Librarian at Carnegie Mellon University, Director of Libraries at the University of Texas at Arlington and at the University of South Alabama in Mobile.

He has also held other library positions, including Social Science reference bibliographer at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. In addition, early in his career Lowrey chaired the Social Sciences Division at Faulkner State Community College, Bay Minette, Alabama.

Co-founder of two journals: *Library Administration and Management* and *portal: Libraries and the Academy*, which he currently edits, Lowrey has been granted a leave of absence from Maryland for three years, after which he expects to return to teaching and research. He earned a B.S. degree in History from Spring Hill College in Mobile, an M.A. in History from the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, a M.S. in Library Science from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and a Ph.D. in history from the University of Florida, Gainesville.

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) is a nonprofit organization of 123 research libraries in North America. Its mission is to influence the changing environment of scholarly communication and the public policies that affect research libraries and the diverse communities they serve. ARL is a member of COSSA.

## NIH SEARCHES FOR NEW HEAD OF OBSSR

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is seeking a director for the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR). The Director, who also functions as the NIH Associate Director for Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, serves as the NIH focal point for establishing agency-wide policies and goals in behavioral and social sciences research, coordinates the activities undertaken in the performance of this research, and provides advice and staff support to the NIH Director, Deputy Director, and Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives within the Office of the Director.

Additionally, the position functions as a liaison between the NIH and the extramural behavioral and biomedical research communities; and with other Federal agencies, academic and scientific societies, national voluntary health agencies, the media, and the general public on matters pertaining to behavioral and social sciences research. Specifically, the Director is responsible for: (1) advising the NIH Director and other key officials on matters relating to research on the role of behavioral and social factors in the promotion of health and prevention of disease; (2) fostering research projects in the behavioral and social sciences conducted or supported by the NIH Institutes and Centers (ICs); and (3) working collaboratively with the ICs to develop new research and training programs in the behavioral and social sciences. The Director, OBSSR, manages a staff, demonstrating commitment to work force diversity enhancement. The OBSSR (<http://obssr.od.nih.gov/content>) employs approximately 14 full time positions: 9 scientific staff, 2 program analysts, 1 communications specialist, and 2 support staff, and has a FY 2009 estimated budget of more than \$26 million.

Applicants must submit a current CV and bibliography electronically to Ms. Regina Reiter (301- 402-1130) at [SeniorRe@od.nih.gov](mailto:SeniorRe@od.nih.gov). Applicants are strongly encouraged to prepare a supplemental narrative statement that addresses the qualifications requirements, and to provide the names, titles, and telephone numbers of 4-5 references. **Applications must be *received by close of business August 15, 2008*.** For additional information regarding the announcement see <http://www.jobs.nih.gov/vacancies/DirectorOBSSR.pdf>

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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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