

# COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

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## **SCIENCE CHAIR WALKER, CRITIC OF SOCIAL SCIENCE, TO RETIRE** *HS, MB*

House Science Committee Chairman Bob Walker (R-PA) stunned the science policy community with his December 15 announcement that he will not seek re-election from his Lancaster and Chester County district. Walker, serving his 10th term, became Science Committee chair at the start of the 104th Congress in January of this year.

At a press conference, Walker said "it is time for me to step aside and allow someone else to take on the challenge." His seat from Pennsylvania Dutch country has never been held by one person for more than twenty years, Walker noted. He announced no future career plans.

A close ally of House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-GA), Walker is best known for the fiery rhetoric and parliamentary cunning he employed in espousing conservative causes and attacking the former Democratic majority in Congress. This year, with the Republicans in control, he served as Chair of the Science Committee and Vice-Chair of the Budget Committee. In the former, he has espoused a return to a focus on basic research and pushed for a cabinet-level Department of Science. In the latter role, he has championed a national conservative agenda and a balanced budget, while at the same time working to protect basic research.

Earlier this year, Walker denounced the work of the National Science Foundation's Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Directorate (SBE) as "politically correct" and of lower merit than research in other disciplines. As NSF faced congressional reauthorization, many observers feared that Walker would move to eliminate NSF support for these programs. In the wake of meetings with NSF Director Neal Lane, a chorus of support for SBE from science community leaders, and a large volume of mail from individual researchers, this did not occur.

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## **SCIENCE BOARD APPROVES CONSORTIUM FOR VIOLENCE RESEARCH** *HS*

At its December 14 meeting, the National Science Board approved the establishment of a National Consortium on Violence Research. The National Science Foundation, through its Directorate for Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate, expects to award \$12.1 million over five years to Carnegie Mellon University to coordinate researchers from 24 states, Canada, and four European countries who, working as a team, will generate fundamental knowledge about the causes and consequences of violence. This rather unique "center without walls" will systematically examine this issue of major concern to the American public.

Alfred Blumstein, J. Erik Jonsson Professor of Urban Systems and Operations Research in Carnegie Mellon's H. John Heinz III School of Public Policy and Management, will direct the Consortium. Blumstein is a former President of the American Society of Criminology and a former member of the COSSA Board of Directors. He has conducted seminal research on career criminals and criminal careers.

The Consortium idea grew from efforts to implement recommendations of a 1993 National

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## GOVERNMENT SHUTS DOWN, AGAIN *HS*

With no agreement on a plan to balance the budget in seven years, the White House and Congressional Republicans have forced another partial shutdown of the federal government. With more appropriations bills enacted since the previous stoppage in mid-November, fewer departments are impacted.

However, the appropriations bills that fund the National Science Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, EPA, NASA and the Departments of Labor, Commerce, Education, Health and Human Services, including the National Institutes of Health, State, Justice, HUD, Interior, and Veterans Affairs, remain un-enacted, so these agencies are functioning with small staffs and are conducting no public business. At the National Science Board meeting on December 14, NSF director Neal Lane suggested that a prolonged shutdown could force the agency to halt payments on grants to individual researchers.

With Christmas and the end of the calendar year approaching, one could expect the two warring factions to reach some agreement, even just to procrastinate further finding a solution to their struggle on the fundamental questions facing the polity: what is the role of the federal government and how do we pay for it? Yet obstinacy seems to rule the day and political gamesmanship appears more important than compromise. Another Continuing

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The Consortium of Social Science Associations represents more than 185,000 American scientists across the full range of the social and behavioral sciences, functioning as a bridge between the research world and the Washington community. Update is published fortnightly. Individual subscriptions are available from COSSA for \$65; institutional subscriptions, \$130, overseas mail, \$130. ISSN 0749-4394. Address all inquiries to COSSA, 1522 K Street, NW, Suite 836, Washington, D.C. 20005. Phone: (202) 842-3525, Fax: (202) 842-2788

Resolution to reopen the government is probable, shifting the continuing confrontation into the New Year. A peace agreement has been reached for the Balkans; can Washington be next?

## CONGRESS ALTERS EXCHANGE PROGRAM *MB*

A provision in the Fiscal Year 1996 Defense appropriations bill, which President Clinton allowed to become law without his signature, amends the National Security Education Program (NSEP) in a way that advocates say will be devastating. NSEP, which supports area studies programs from a trust fund drawn from money that had been allocated for defense and intelligence, has survived significant legislative and bureaucratic obstacles since its 1991 creation.

The legislation changed NSEP to require grantees to serve two years in the Defense Department or in the intelligence community or repay the grant in full. Furthermore, recipients must now be engaged in a field of study that is considered a critical shortage to the defense or intelligence community. Prior to this bill becoming law, NSEP recipients could fulfill program requirements by working in any branch of the federal government or in education for a set period of time.

NSEP leaders and exchange advocates say that these changes will sharply decrease both the number of applicants and could possibly kill the program.

## MERGER OF FOREIGN POLICY AGENCIES DERAILED FOR NOW *MB*

Plans to merge three foreign policy agencies into the State Department were abandoned as part of a recent deal between Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Jesse Helms (R-NC) and Democratic leaders. However, significant funding reductions may require eventual elimination of these agencies.

Helms had been calling for merging the U.S. Information Agency, the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and the Agency for International Development into the State Department as a way of consolidating programs and saving money. Opponents of such a move said the loss of

independence would reduce the effectiveness of the agencies' work.

Under the agreement, which allowed for Senate passage of the State Department Reauthorization bill and an end to Helms' delaying of Clinton foreign policy nominations, the three agencies will remain intact, but \$1.7 billion will be cut from the foreign affairs bureaucracy over the next five years.

## SENATE HEARING LOOKS AT BILL TO REAFFIRM PARENTAL RIGHTS AS

The Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Administrative Oversight and the Courts recently held a hearing on The Parental Rights and Responsibilities Act of 1995, S. 984. The legislation was introduced by Senator Charles E. Grassley (R-IA) who is also the chairman of the Subcommittee. Comparable legislation, H.R. 1946, introduced in the House by Reps. Steve Largent (R-OK) and Mike Parker (R-MS) has been the subject of hearings by the House Judiciary Committee. According to the sponsors the legislation "reaffirms the rights of parents to direct the upbringing of their children."

"While most parents assume this right is protected, some lower courts have acted to limit this basic freedom . . . A number of decisions in recent years, have demonstrated the need for this Act," Grassley said. He cited as an example of where the courts had limited parental rights the case of a young woman who as a teenager was grounded by her parents because she wanted to smoke marijuana and sleep with her boyfriend. "She objected," said Grassley "and the Washington State Supreme Court agreed with her and removed her from her parents' home."

Other examples of "government intervention in the rightful decisions of parents," said Grassley, include "research on children without parental consent and government mandated bedtimes." This view is consistent with his ardent support for legislation (H.R. 1271) which would require uniform written consent from parents before minors can participate in federally-sponsored research. (see *Update*, November 13).

"The goal of PRRA," said Grassley, "is to simply reaffirm the parental right to direct the upbringing of their child in four major areas:

- directing or providing for the education of the child;
- making health care decisions for the child;
- disciplining the child, including reasonable corporal discipline; and
- directing or providing for the religious teaching of the child."

Largent, the lead witness at the hearing, testified that he introduced the H.R. 1946 "because parents -- not the government -- should be responsible for their children. . . The Parental Rights and Responsibilities Act supports families because it prohibits the government from interfering or usurping the rights of parents to direct the upbringing of their children." Largent concluded his testimony by saying that "the Parental Rights and Responsibilities Act is responsible legislation and is consistent with many of the reforms that have been proposed by this Congress... The Act protects the fundamental rights of Americans against unwarranted and intrusive government actions. It gets the government off the back of Americans."

Margaret F. Brinig, a Professor of Law at George Mason University who teaches courses in family law, alternative dispute resolution, and remedies testified that while she supports "many of the goals of the Parental Rights and Responsibilities Act, and believes that parents are and should continue to be the primary source for their children's upbringing," she finds the "current legislation unwise and unnecessary. . . Family law and parental decisionmaking comes primarily from the work of state legislatures and courts. . . Specifically tailored legislation, particularly at the State level, would answer many of the complaints of the Bill's proponents without ossifying the development of family law."

## NIMH REPORT BACKS PREVENTION RESEARCH AS

The National Advisory Mental Health Council has unanimously approved the recommendations outlined in the National Institute of Mental Health's (NIMH) prevention research report, *A Plan for Prevention Research for the National Institute of Mental Health*. The report is the culmination of more

than five years of work by prevention scientists, practitioners and advocates.

The report combines the findings of two earlier reports: the NIMH's, *The Prevention of Mental Disorders: A National Research Agenda* and the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) report, *Reducing Risks for Mental Disorders: Frontiers for Preventive Intervention Research*. "Both the NIMH and IOM reports form the basis for the present integrative summary of the scientific and programmatic steps NIMH should take for advancing the field of prevention science."

*A Plan for Prevention Research for the National Institute of Mental Health* emphasizes the "extraordinarily high" economic costs that result from mental disorders. According to the report, "in 1990 alone, mental health disorders cost our nation \$147.8 billion."

The plan also reiterates that "while research on services and treatment for persons with mental disorders must continue, we must invest in prevention if we are ever to reduce both the human suffering of mental disorders and the enormous financial costs to our nation." The integrated report provides a National Plan in three broad areas:

**Support of prevention research:** The report stresses that the need for a "viable scientific agenda for the prevention of the first onset of mental disorders must rest upon a knowledge base of research in the core sciences that is aimed at understanding the development of mental disorders." Additionally, "priority should be given to research that illuminates the interaction of potentially modifiable biological and psychosocial risk and protective factors, rather than restricting the research to either biological or psychosocial factors pursued separately."

**Support for training:** Citing prevention research training as "a keystone for future scientific development in the prevention field," the report calls for a multidisciplinary approach -- focusing on multiple levels, disciplines, and all career levels. The IOM study estimated a need for an additional 500 well-trained prevention researchers. The integrated report calls for a "significant effort ... to increase the participation of scientists from a wide spectrum of disciplines to ensure adequate attention to all aspects of the human condition that contribute to mental

illness." These aspects include "biological, social and behavioral factors, as well as their contexts (e.g. individuals, family and community)."

**Support and development of the organizational and policy infrastructure:** The need for a change in the NIMH organizational structure "to more effectively guide and coordinate prevention research is emphasized in the plan. The changes include: "strengthening the NIMH Office of Prevention, creating a Working Group on prevention research, and establishing an advisory committee for prevention research." Because prevention research is conducted by other federal agencies, NIMH is urged to take a "government-wide leadership role on the prevention of mental disorders."

The integrated report concludes that in addition to the scientific yield in new knowledge, preventive intervention research supported by NIMH is already demonstrating preventive effects and positive benefit-cost results. Copies of the report can be obtained by contacting the NIMH Office of Deputy Director for Prevention and Special Projects: telephone: 301/443-3533; fax: 301/443-8022

## CENSUS TO TEST NEW RACE, ETHNICITY CATEGORIES HS

The Census Bureau has requested comments on its June 1996 Race and Ethnic Targeted Test (RAETT), the principal vehicle for testing and evaluating several major proposed changes in, or alternatives to, the 1990 census race and ethnic questions. The announcement appeared in the December 1, 1995 *Federal Register* (pp. 62010-15).

The test will examine alternatives such as: a "Multiracial or Biracial" category; a "check more than one category" approach to reporting as multiracial; alternative sequencing of the race and Hispanic origin items; a combined race, Hispanic origin and ancestry question; a combined "Indian (American) or Alaska Native" category; and a "Native Hawaiian" category.

Using six forms (one control and five experimental) the test will assess how the proposed changes such as multiracial classification, and combined race and Hispanic origin questions might affect the distribution and quality of responses in the current race and Hispanic origin items. Substantial

changes, the bureau hypothesizes, could affect the historical continuity of race and ethnic data and the usefulness of data for Federal agencies that monitor and enforce legislation, such as the Voting Rights Act. RAETT will target about 90,000 urban and rural households representing American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asians, Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, Blacks, White Ethnic groups, and multiracial persons.

Written comments must be submitted by January 30, 1996. For further information contact Nampeo R. McKenney, Population Division, Bureau of the Census, Room 2011, FOB #3, Washington, DC 20233; Telephone 301/457-2075.

### **CAPITOL HILL FORUM LOOKS AT INCOME DISPARITY** HS

"We are here to address one of the most perplexing and, I believe, distressing aspects of our economy: the rich are getting richer, and everyone else, including the broad based foundation of America, the middle class, are getting poorer or at best staying put." With that premise, Rep. Charles Schumer (D-NY) played host to Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, former Bush Cabinet official Jack Kemp, Democratic pollster Stan Greenberg, social commentator Kevin Phillips, government data analysts and academic economists at a forum *Income and Wealth Disparity in the U.S. - Is There A Problem?* The forum, held on December 6, was also cosponsored by Sen. Bill Bradley (D-NJ), who was unable to attend due to the death of his mother.

Noting that a recent OECD report found the U.S. ranked highest in terms of income disparity among 18 industrialized nations, Rubin cited the consequences for American society: "It can tear at our social fabric and contribute to our sense of alienation and anger, and to a feeling that our institutions do not work, and so to reduced respect for government and other institutions of our society." Kemp argued that the nation is divided into two economies: a market driven macro economy, and an inner city, welfare statist, underclass.

Dealing with the political consequences of the income gap, both Greenberg and Phillips agreed that there was no more central issue facing the country. Greenberg noted that it was the shift of the non-college, lower middle class electorate that first helped

elect Bill Clinton in 1992, and then turned against him in 1994 and gave us the Republican-controlled Congress. These people are up for grabs in 1996, Greenberg asserted, and are attracted to a third party alternative.

Phillips agreed and cited the failures of the two major parties to deal with the income inequality issue because of their need to raise campaign funds from the rich. He pointed out that the "Emerging Republican Majority" he predicted in 1968 had indeed occurred, but was about to dissipate due to the excesses of GOP catering to the wealthy segments of American society. He called the current situation "a whole bunch of elites running a big con." Schumer expressed concern that continuing middle class insecurity could provide opportunities for "the pseudo-populist messages of the far right and far left -- to xenophobia and isolationism." All three agreed that the political party that can successfully address the income inequality issue will be the majority party into the next century.

In searching for answers to why the income disparities have become more glaring in the past 20 years, Brookings economist Gary Burtless cited stagnant wages, single parent families, women entering the work force creating two earner families, particularly in families where men were already earning high salaries, and the shrinkage in the redistributive effects of government programs. Robert Frank of Cornell University referred to his book, written with Phillip Cook, *The Winner Take All Society*. In it they note the CEO pay ratio of 190:1 in the U.S., much higher than in our economic competitors, such as Japan and Germany. In addition, there has been the growth of winner-take-all markets in computer software, and the growth of free agency, not only in sports, but in corporations as well. Steven Rattner, a former *New York Times* reporter, and now a Managing Partner in Lazard Freres, argued that imbalances in labor markets fostered by a drive for productivity, increased immigration, decreased unionization, and a lack of skills in the workforce, have produced the classic economic supply and demand situation that has driven up wages for those in demand, highly skilled workers, and stagnated or driven down wages for those not in demand. Lynn Karoly of the RAND Corporation cited structural changes in the economy.

### What are the solutions?

Kemp asserted that "I don't think poor people are poor, because rich people are rich." Most of the participants agreed that redistribution policies that would help the poor at the expense of the rich were not the answer. Thus, Kemp called for greater economic growth through the unleashing of entrepreneurial activities. He called for less government interference, reduced taxes, the elimination (not just reduction) of capital gains taxes, and greater access to credit. Rubin called for more government investments in human capital, but also initiatives with the private sector to help ease access to capital to invest. He cited the Community Reinvestment Act and its impact on revitalizing parts of the South Bronx, and the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund. He also mentioned microenterprise lending, a concept discussed by James Johnson at the COSSA seminar on poverty (see *Update*, April 24).

Tim Smeeding, Syracuse University economist and director of the Luxembourg Income Study, spoke for many of the participants, in stressing the importance of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). He noted that the Europeans believe this is America's major contribution to solving the income disparity problem. Smeeding and others decried current efforts to reduce the EITC's scope. In addition, Smeeding called for emulation of European policies to help single parent families by increasing subsidization of child care and health care for children.

Frank supported a proposal by Senators Sam Nunn (D-GA) and Pete Domenici (R-NM) for a progressive consumption tax that would reward personal savings and tax spending. Burtless disagreed that "redistribution is a naughty word." He argued that "winner-take-all" is not an efficient way to divide up the pie. He noted Japan and Germany have succeeded by distributing its reward system much differently. Edward Wolff of New York University argued for an increase in the minimum wage.

Michael Horrigan of the Bureau of Labor Statistics presented data indicating that company-supplied training could raise wages of high school graduates to levels similar to college graduates who did not receive such training. Louis Jacobson of Westat, Inc. worried that a training strategy would only benefit a small part of the population, just as the GI Bill, considered to be America's most successful

government sponsored training program, did. Left unresolved was whether education and training can overcome structural changes in the economy and society that have created mismatches in the labor market.

### REP. WALKER TO RETIRE

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The NSF reauthorization bill adopted by the Science Committee, and later approved by the full House, required NSF to reduce the number of its directorates from seven to six. While the bill did not specify which one, the committee report that accompanied the bill termed social science research "of lower scientific priority" and recommended SBE as the prime candidate for elimination. Since the bill has not been considered by the Senate, NSF has told Walker they will conduct a wide examination of their structure, in which eliminating a directorate would be an option. In recent months, Walker seems to have accepted this plan.

If the Republicans retain control of the House in 1997, Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-WI), current chair of the Space Subcommittee, would be in line to become chair of the Science Committee. Walker remains chair of the committee through next December, and as he said in his retirement statement, "our work... is far from finished and will continue next year."

### VIOLENCE CENTER APPROVED

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Research Council report, *Understanding and Preventing Violence*. One of the recommendations was to provide long-term support for basic research in this area. The report drew the attention of NSF's appropriation subcommittee, particularly its then Chairs, Rep. Louis Stokes (D-OH) and Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD). In the FY 1994 appropriations report they requested NSF to conduct a feasibility study of establishing a multi-disciplinary effort to study violence. In FY 1995 both subcommittees endorsed NSF's notion that such an effort was feasible. In February 1995, NSF announced plans to create the Consortium. Despite the change in the

congressional majority this year, the House VA, HUD, IA appropriations subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-CA), further encouraged NSF to proceed by including supportive language in its committee report.

In his attempt to eliminate funding for SBE and the directorate itself, House Science Committee Chairman Robert Walker (R-PA) pointed to research on violence as an example of "politically correct" NSF sponsored research. This led the NSB, which must approve all awards over \$3 million, to scrutinize this consortia proposal with great care. When originally presented to the NSB's Programs and Plans committee in August, Board members raised a number of issues, particularly concerning the management of the consortium, that needed revision. Months of negotiation produced enough changes to satisfy the skeptical members of the NSB and led to unanimous approval. The Board discussions also provided an opportunity for NSB's new social scientists members to assert themselves and begin to play more significant roles in NSB activities.

The Consortium, whose \$12.1 million includes funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the National Institute of Justice, will include a team of researchers from a wide variety of disciplines, including criminology, economics, geography, political science, psychology, public policy, sociology, statistics, biology, operations research, and public health.

The researchers expect to conduct basic research on violence at three levels: 1) individual development -- why people become violent and why they cease their violent behavior; 2) situational dynamics -- how and why some conflict situations escalate into actual violent encounters, while others do not; and 3) community dynamics -- how and why some communities, and particularly public housing communities, produce high levels of violence. They also expect to develop integrated theories, conduct methodological research to produce common measures, and to disseminate their findings widely.

## **PLOTT APPOINTED TO COSSA BOARD**

Charles R. Plott, Edward S. Harkness Professor of Economics and Political Science at the California Institute of Technology, has been appointed an At-

Large member of the COSSA Board of Directors. Plott will serve a two year term commencing January 1, 1996. He replaces Michael Silverstein, S.N. Harpur Professor of Anthropology, Linguistics, and Psychology at the University of Chicago, who has served on the Board for the past four years.

Plott also directs Cal Tech's Program for the Study of Enterprise and Public Policy and the Laboratory for Experimental Economics and Political Science. He has also taught at the University of Chicago, University of Southern California Law Center, Purdue University, and Stanford University. Plott holds a Ph.D. from the University of Virginia and a B.A. and M.S. from Oklahoma State University.

COSSA's new Board member has served as President of the Public Choice Society, the Southern Economic Association and the Economic Science Association. A member of the American Economic Association and the American Political Science Association, Plott was elected to the Oklahoma State University College of Business Administration Hall of Fame. He has been a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the Econometric Society, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, and the Ford Foundation.

Author of numerous articles on market forces, experimental economics, and rational choice, Plott conducted research on auctions that influenced the FCC disbursement of the electromagnetic spectrum. He serves on the editorial board of *Economic Theory*. Serving on the Biological, Behavioral and Social Science Directorate Task Force "Towards the Twenty First Century," Plott played a leading role in successfully advocating for a separate Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate at the National Science Foundation.

## **EDITOR'S NOTE:**

This is the final issue of *Update* for 1995, with publication resuming in mid-January. The entire staff at COSSA extends its warm wishes for the holiday season.

A topical index for the 1995 editions of *Update* is now available. Please contact COSSA at (202) 842-3525 to obtain a copy.

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