
CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

COSSA WASHINGTON UPDATE

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OMB REVISES REGULATIONS ON LOBBYING BY NONPROFITS

After a long delay, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has published a new version of its regulations regarding lobbying by nonprofit organizations that receive federal funds. The first version of these regulations, entitled "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations" or Circular A-122, was published in January and met strong objections from both the Congress and nonprofit organizations. The objections centered on the broad interpretation that OMB placed on the term "political advocacy" by including such activities as commenting on legislation or regulations, submitting an amicus curiae brief, or even paying dues to a lobbying organization in its list of prohibited activities. The earlier OMB regulations would also have prohibited nonprofit organizations that received federal funds from using any personnel or equipment supported even in part with federal funds in these activities.

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OMB REVISES REGULATIONS ON LOBBYING BY NONPROFITS (cont.)

The new regulations, issued in the Federal Register on November 3, appear to be significantly less stringent than the earlier ones. They no longer refer to "political advocacy" when discussing unallowable activities, but use the more specific phrase, "lobbying and related activities." Proscribed activities are also less sweeping in the new revision of A-122.

As a result of testimony on the regulations heard last week by the House Government Operations Subcommittee on Legislation and National Security, its Chairman, Rep. Jack Brooks (D-TX), and Ranking Minority Frank Horton (R-NY) have written OMB Director David Stockman to ask that the period for public comment be extended for an additional 60 days. The request was made after it became apparent from witnesses' testimony that many aspects of the new regulations still needed to be clarified. Reps. Brooks and Horton also noted in their letter that two major holidays occur during the 45-day comment period, making it difficult to get broad participation in the comment process.

Unless the period for public comment on the regulations is extended, comments must be received by OMB by December 18. To obtain a copy of the regulations, call the COSSA office at 202/234-5703.

HOUSE TO VOTE ON SOCIAL SCIENCE REPRESENTATION ON NIH
ADVISORY PANELS

As the COSSA Washington Update went to press, the House of Representatives was about to consider H.R. 2350, the Health Research Extension Act of 1983. Among its many provisions affecting the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is one requiring that one-third of the members of NIH advisory committees be comprised of national leaders in the social or behavioral sciences or in the field of public health. At the present time, a very small proportion of NIH advisory committee members are social or behavioral scientists. Of those who are, all but one serve on committees advising the National Institute on Aging (NIA) and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

COSSA has written to members of the House of Representatives urging that they support this provision of H.R. 2350.

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RESEARCHERS LIMITED BY CLASSIFICATION OF DOCUMENTS

Current administration policy regarding the declassification or public release of government documents threatens to limit the access of researchers to information. The problem arises from the fact that the declassification practices of previous administrations can be altered by the current President. Materials declassified in one administration can be reclassified in a subsequent administration. The Carter Administration required that each government agency review its own documents for declassification after twenty years before transferring them to the National Archives and Records Service (NARS). In an Executive Order of August, 1982, however, President Reagan eliminated the requirement that agencies declassify materials and gave NARS sole responsibility for reviewing and declassifying all documents after they are deposited in the Archives by the agencies. This has significantly slowed the process of declassification and reduced the number of documents that are released. The Reagan Administration has also reclassified documents that had previously been open to the public.

The work of social scientists is being impeded both by the mechanics of the declassification process and by the stringent security guidelines by which classification decisions are made. For example, high-quality maps, aerial photos, and satellite-gathered information collected by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the Defense Intelligence Agency are unavailable for geographical research, although this information is not considered politically sensitive. Geographers must instead work from inferior maps and other materials. Historians have difficulty in writing diplomatic history after 1950 because so little information is accessible. The history is written, but the incomplete sources can render it incomplete or distorted.

At present, it is unclear whether anything can be done to change government declassification policies that limit the access of researchers to important information. One possibility is legislation, probably in the form of an amendment to the Federal Records Act, which would require automatic declassification of documents after a specified period of time. Alternatively, automaticity could be effected by writing a similar provision into the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). What is clear, however, is that researchers are being impeded in their work by the current administration's declassification policy.

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SENATE WAIVES FOIA FEE FOR SCHOLARS

Fears that researchers would be charged for information requested under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) have been abated by a recent decision by the Senate Judiciary Committee. In its report on the Freedom of Information Reform Act, the Committee requires federal agencies to waive fees for information requested by scholars, representatives of the news media, and public nonprofit groups. Although the 1974 amendments to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permitted the government to waive user fees for information requested under the act, many agencies have been restrictive in practice. Because of this, the new legislation, which was reported out of the Judiciary Committee on September 12, requires that fees be waived for those who request information that will be made available in some form to the public. Information requested for commercial purposes will continue to be subject to user fees.

The current legislation (S.774), which is supported by Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Patrick Leahy (R-VT), supplants earlier FOIA legislation advocated by the Reagan administration. The administration's legislation would have weakened the provisions of the act that promote easy access to government information. The legislation is expected to go to the full Senate when the Congress returns next year.

ISLAMIC ECONOMICS

To monetary economics, labor economics, and international economics has been added a new subdisciplinary specialty: Islamic economics. The recent announcement by the President of Pakistan that Islamic University in Islamabad will establish an International Institute of Islamic Economics demonstrates one of the ways that science is enlisted for political and cultural purposes -- in this case, in support of a conservative social and religious movement. According to the [London] Times Higher Education Supplement, the purpose of the Institute is not to train researchers but to train students to implement the Islamic reforms introduced by General Ziaul Haq, President of Pakistan and Chancellor of Islamic University.

It is anticipated that the Institute, which will focus in large part on reforms in banking and commerce, will collaborate with economic institutes in other Islamic nations such as the International Centre of Research in Islamic Economics at King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

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NEW COSSA AFFILIATES, CONTRIBUTORS

COSSA is pleased to welcome three new Affiliates: The Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD), the Society for the History of Technology (SHOT), and the Evaluation Network. There are, in addition, three new Contributors: New York University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the State University of New York at Stony Brook. At present COSSA has, in addition to its ten Member associations, 24 Affiliate associations and 28 Contributors. For information about how a scholarly association can become a COSSA Affiliate or how a university can become a COSSA Contributor, please contact the COSSA office (1755 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 300, Washington, DC 20036; 202/234-5703).

KEEPING THE CONGRESS INFORMED: THE CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE

Rarely does a day go by that Members of Congress and their staff are not confronted by at least one issue that is unfamiliar to them or for which they need more information before an informed decision can be made. When such situations arise, they turn to one or more of the four supporting arms of Congress -- the Congressional Research Service (CRS), the General Accounting Office (GAO), the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), and the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) for the information they need. The general mandate of these four congressional agencies is to serve the Congress by providing information that is reliable, timely, and in a form suited to the particular needs of individual Members of Congress. Each agency is characterized by a policy of strict nonpartisanship and by a very high level of staff expertise.

The COSSA Washington Update will profile each of these four supporting arms of Congress in this and subsequent issues.

The Congressional Research Service

The Congressional Research Service (CRS) is a department of the Library of Congress and a reference and research arm for Members of Congress, Committees, and staff of the U.S. Congress. Established in its present form by the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970, which gave it greater fiscal and administrative independence within the Library of Congress, it had been known as the Legislative Reference Service since 1914. Although about two-thirds of the more than 300,000 requests from Congress that are processed by CRS annually are for basic factual information, the Congressional Research Service also provides in-depth policy analysis and research on subjects of interest to Congress. To

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KEEPING THE CONGRESS INFORMED: THE CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE (cont.)

assure high quality in CRS responses, every written product must go through at least two levels of review. Reviewers assess reports' fairness, responsiveness to the request, lack of bias, absence of advocacy, and disciplinary blind spots. Because all inquiries are strictly confidential, CRS staff are not allowed to divulge which Members of Committees have requested information from CRS on particular topics.

Not all CRS reports are individualized to Members' requests. CRS prints "Issue Briefs" on topics of general interest to the Congress. For example, CRS issued the first "Issue Brief" on federal funding for social and behavioral science research last fall. The report, which is primarily a discussion of issues involved in federal support of social and behavioral science research, includes a history of the administration's attempts to cut back funding for social and behavioral science research, a review of the disciplinary groups who have lobbied the Congress on behalf of funding, and a brief review of social and behavioral science funding in different federal agencies.

CRS staff are not appointees of Members of Congress, but are covered by a merit employment system. The majority of the over 600 professional research and information staff hold advanced degrees in a variety of disciplines. They do not work for the executive or judiciary branches of the government, but serve only the Congress. The public may request assistance from CRS only through a Senator's or Representative's office. These requests, however, are only filled as time permits.

In addition to providing requested information to Members of Congress and their staff, CRS holds an average of three seminars every week that Congress is in session on topics of general interest to the Congress. CRS also conducts institutes to provide training to Congressional staff on a variety of topics.

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SOURCES OF RESEARCH SUPPORT: NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION (NSF)

COSSA provides this information as a service and encourages readers to contact the agency rather than COSSA for more information.

Grants for Research on the Teaching and Learning
of Science and Mathematics

The bill that appropriates FY 1984 funds for NSF authorizes the Director to make up to \$5 million available from the Directorate on Science and Engineering Education for "research on teaching and learning." Funds available for basic research in the teaching and learning of science and mathematics will be administered by the Divisions of Behavioral and Neural Sciences, Information Science & Technology, and Social and Economic Science, within the Directorate of Biological, Behavioral and Social Sciences (BBS). Applied research will be administered by the Directorate for Science and Engineering Education.

FY 1984 Budget: \$3 million for basic research in BBS;
\$2 million for applied research.

Purpose of Program: To provide support for "both basic and applied research on significant factors that underlie effective teaching and learning of mathematics and science at the pre-college level."

Funding Mechanisms: Grants

Review Process: Peer review, which may be mail review by experts in the specific subject matter and/or evaluation by established review panels.

Restrictions on Awards: Normally awards will not be made for periods exceeding 36 months.

Contact: Applicants will be informed of the Foundation's decision within six to nine months of the receipt of proposals. Additional information may be obtained from:

Division of Behavioral and Neural Sciences
Joseph L. Young (202/357-9898)

Division of Information Science and Technology
Edward C. Weiss (202/357-9572)

Division of Social and Economic Science
James H. Blackman (202/357-7966)

Directorate for Science and Engineering Education
Robert F. Watson (202/357-7539)

CONSORTIUM OF SOCIAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATIONS

Members

American Anthropological Association
American Economic Association
American Historical Association
American Political Science Association
American Psychological Association
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
Association of American Geographers
Association of American Law Schools
Linguistic Society of America

Affiliates

American Association for Public
Opinion Research
American Educational Research
Association
Association for Asian Studies
Eastern Sociological Society
Economic History Association
Evaluation Network
Evaluation Research Society
History of Science Society
International Communication
Association
International Studies Association
Law and Society Association
National Council on Family Relations
North Central Sociological Association
Northeastern Anthropological
Association
Population Association of America
Regional Science Association
Rural Sociological Society
Social Science History Association
Society for American Archaeology
Society for the History of
Technology
Society for Research in Child
Development
Society for the Scientific Study
of Religion
Society for Social Studies of Science
Southwestern Social Science
Association

Contributors

University of California, Berkeley
University of California, Los Angeles
Center for Advanced Study in the
Behavioral Sciences
University of Colorado
Columbia University
Cornell Institute for Social and
Economic Research
Georgia Institute of Technology
Harvard University
University of Illinois
Indiana University
Institute for Social Research,
University of Michigan
University of Iowa
University of Michigan
University of Missouri
University of Nebraska
New York University
University of Oregon
University of Pennsylvania
University of Pittsburgh
Princeton University
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State University of New York at
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Texas A & M University
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